

WASC

Focus on Learning Self-Study



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STANFORD SCHOOLS CORPORATION

**East Palo Alto Academy
(Grades 9 through 12)**

SELPA Proposal

Presented to

San Mateo County Office of Education

Submitted by the Stanford Schools Corporation (A California Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation) in cooperation with the Stanford University Graduate School of Education and the extended learning community of students, families, and staff of East Palo Alto Academy.

I. INTRODUCTION

History

East Palo Alto Academy (EPAA) is a public charter high school located in a quiet residential neighborhood in Menlo Park that serves students primarily from the community of East Palo Alto. East Palo Alto has a long history of poverty and violence and at one time in the 90's was known as the murder capitol of America. While the demographics have shifted from predominantly African-American to predominantly Latino, issues of poverty and violence continue to dominate the community and the majority of youth in East Palo Alto suffer from significant degrees of personal and family trauma. In 1976 the Sequoia Union High School District, because of both declining enrollment and to address desegregation, closed Ravenswood High School, the only high school in the community. For the next 25 years, students from East Palo Alto were bussed to comprehensive high schools within the SUHSD but far from the East Palo Alto community. The majority of these students were not served well by these schools -- drop out rates for students of color from East Palo Alto soared and very few kids from East Palo Alto were able to matriculate to college.

In 2001 a cooperative effort by Stanford University, the Ravenswood City School District (RCSD) and Aspire Public Schools, a Charter Management Organization, opened East Palo Alto High School in an effort to address these issues and better serve the youth of East Palo Alto. The high school, with some modifications, has operated continuously since 2001.

In May 2003, the San Mateo County SELPA granted East Palo Alto Academy the authority to operate as its own Local Educational Agency (LEA) for the purposes of providing special education services to its students. The LEA status was made permanent following a compliance review in spring 2004. At the start of the 2004-05 school year, a full-time fully credentialed resource specialist was hired. In addition, a counselor was hired to assist with counseling and student services. Speech and language services, as well as psycho-educational assessment services provided by licensed school psychologists, were provided by contractual agreements.

At that time, the Stanford Schools Corporation agreed to the following:

- a) To contribute to non-public schools and agencies at the same per pupil rate as set for all districts in the SELPA
- b) To secure the services of an attorney for special education as is required for all SELPA member districts

- c) To comply with the IDEA Act, Section 504, and the American Disabilities Act, and that the school facilities used by the charter would be ADA compliant
- d) To acknowledge and agree that the LEA has an obligation to search and serve students with disabilities
- e) To be responsible for all obligations, policies, and agreements as required by SELPA membership.

In accordance with state law requiring that schools must include grade levels offered by the district that authorizes the charter, a new K-12 charter was issued by the RCSD to the Stanford Schools Corporation (SSC) in 2005 and that charter was renewed in 2010. Between 2005 and 2010, in addition to the high school, SSC operated several elementary school grades but in 2010 the RCSD and SSC made the decision to discontinue operation of the elementary grades and a process was initiated to obtain a new charter under the Sequoia Union High School District. The new charter was authorized in the spring of 2012, became operational in July of 2012, with the new school year beginning in September of 2012. The 2012-2013 school year has seen a reboot of the school with a new charter, a new CDS Code, a new Principal, a new Chief Operating Officer and several new teachers. While we are technically a new school, we made the decision to build on the lessons we have learned over time. The academic program, while refined, is not materially different.

Mission

The mission of East Palo Alto Academy is to ensure that students are prepared for college and for the 21st century world and workplace by enabling them to graduate with the full array of knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for success in a complex world, and with the ability to learn independently throughout their lives.

All East Palo Alto Academy students have access to a college preparatory curriculum, and they demonstrate mastery through performance assessments, presenting and defending their work to a graduation committee. The school's vision statement states:

East Palo Alto High School students will be critical thinkers who are academically and socially prepared to be responsible citizens of a global society. The East Palo Alto High School community fosters self-confidence and creativity for students to be productive, ethical, responsible, and involved with school and community.

Expected School Wide Learning Results (ESLR'S)

East Palo Alto Academy's Expected School Wide Learning Results – the ESLR's -- have emerged from the Five Habits that were originally created as a critical component of the foundation and framework of the school. These distinguishing habits of mind and action support students in achieving not only academic success, but also self-regulated learning and collaborative problem solving and are a rubric-based component of each and every class taught at EPAA.

Habit 1 – Personal Responsibility

EPAA students will demonstrate habits of self-monitoring, self-awareness, and self-control:

- Manage time
- Find and use resources effectively
- Be mentally and physically present and prepared

EPAA students will demonstrate ownership of academic and personal success:

- Complete work that improves over time
- Self-advocate effectively
- Use reflection and feedback for personal growth

Habit 2 – Social Responsibility

EPAA students will effectively collaborate within their community by thinking critically and interacting respectfully in group settings.

- EPAA students will assume shared responsibility, give and receive effective feedback, and participate actively both inside and outside of the classroom within diverse group settings.
- EPAA students will demonstrate the ability to collaborate productively in the workplace environment

Habit 3 – Critical and Creative Thinking

- EPAA Students will use 21st century skills to synthesize and make connections between academic content and their personal experiences and the world.
- EPAA students will be able to evaluate a variety of sources to analyze a problem and develop a plan for solving it.

Habit 4 – Application of Knowledge

- EPAA students will apply the knowledge and academic skills required to be successful in college and be able to contribute positive change to their communities.

Habit 5 – Communication

EPAA students will communicate logically by presenting an oral and/or written argument supported by relevant evidence

- EPAA students will communicate effectively through active listening and the application of feedback, accepting critiques of or challenges to assertions by providing logical explanations or refutations
- EPAA students will communicate academically by using the conventions of language and academic discourse (in verbal and written output)
- EPAA students will communicate responsibly in a variety of different social and cultural contexts and be able to advocate for themselves
- EPAA students will communicate creatively through the arts, the use of 21st century technology skills and second language study

Students are assessed in every class on their performance of the five Community Habits or ESLRs outlined above. This assessment system reflects more than a “grade:” it reflects a process of learning, and it encompasses both formative and summative assessments. Students receive specific feedback on their areas of strength and growth.

Each of these learning outcomes has explicit standards outlined in five categories: Exceeding the Standard (XS), Meeting the Standard (MS), Approaching the Standard (AS), Emerging Competency (EC), No Evidence (NE). If a student receives an NE on a major assessment, the teacher must record the No Evidence in the database grading system and the student must make up the assignment before he or she is eligible to pass. The school has a revision/redemption policy that allows student to revise or make up work, to provide an opportunity for them to reach mastery or to exceed the standard.

II. SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESSES

Plan for Students With Disabilities

East Palo Alto Academy recognizes its responsibility to enroll and support students with disabilities and ensures that a free and appropriate education is provided to all students with special needs. EPAA complies with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities, including, but not limited to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and any other civil rights enforced by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR), as an independent local educational agency (LEA) and member of the San Mateo Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA).

Child Find Activities

Prior to the beginning of each school year, incoming students are evaluated as a means of determining which students will benefit from additional support, such as reading intervention classes or special education services. No assessment or evaluation is used for admission purposes. Students possibly in need of special education are screened from already available data (i.e. school tests, teacher observations, grades, etc.) regarding the student's progress or lack of progress within the general program prior to enrollment at East Palo Alto Academy. Through collaboration between the faculty and administration, East Palo Alto Academy identifies any students who do not currently have an IEP but may be in need of a pre-referral intervention plan.

General Education Program Modifications

Each student at East Palo Alto Academy is assigned a faculty advisor upon enrollment. This advisor serves the same students throughout all four years of their high school enrollment. The advisory program at East Palo Alto Academy allows advisors to closely track the academic and emotional needs of each student, and provides a strong means of determining which students may benefit from additional support. Advisors maintain on-going contact with their advisee's parents/guardians, and contact them whenever they have initial academic concerns. The advisory program is a direct means of determining which students need general education interventions.

Providing general education program modifications is a strength at East Palo Alto Academy. The faculty has an acute awareness that some students require instructional accommodations or modifications to achieve success. Entering freshmen students are assessed for reading skills and comprehension prior to the starting at East Palo Alto Academy, and those determined to be in need of a reading intervention program are placed in a reading intervention class in addition to their English I class. These classes are available to any freshman in need of improving his or her reading skills, and are general education classes.

General education teachers at East Palo Alto Academy are skilled in providing accommodations and modifications to ensure student success. Assignments are frequently scaffolded to provide support for students who are English Learners or have learning differences. An emphasis on project based learning in all curricular areas at East Palo Alto Academy provides students with active learning that connects to real-life skills. This high-interest, constructivist model engages students with a wide spectrum of academic abilities.

All teachers at East Palo Alto Academy have been provided with professional development in differentiated instruction. Following a workshop on differentiation provided by the special education director at East Palo Alto Academy at the start of the 2012-13 school year, teachers rated their implementation of differentiated strategies in four domains- planning, scaffolding/tiering, linking assessment to instruction, and grading on a rubric.

The results of the teacher self-assessment demonstrated that teachers at East Palo Alto Academy are implementing differentiated strategies in general education classes. The staff is also continuing to expand its skills in this area through on-going training and collaboration. This ability to differentiate pedagogical practices helps to ensure that a wide variety of learners' needs are addressed.

Beyond our general education program, EPAA offers a host of additional supports and opportunities to students. These include a Mental Health and Counseling program that offers access to a full time social worker, a health van that visits the campus every other week, Lucille Packard Children's Hospital psychiatry interns, and crisis management support through site administration. Students can also participate in teachers' weekly office hours, our Tutorpedia after-school tutoring program, and tutoring at the Boys and Girls Club in East Palo Alto. Finally, we have an English Language Development focus, supported by our ELD coordinator and

teacher. Our team works together to provide for each individual student's needs as they arise and evolve.

We also have attractive opportunities in athletics, art partnerships and performance opportunities, an Early College program through which students can complete as much as a year's worth of college credits during high school, and a variety of connections to Stanford University from physics collaborations to undergraduate and graduate student mentors. We have enough computers to provide one for each student's use during the school day, and our class sizes have remained relatively small – typically 22 or fewer students in a room.

Referral Process / SST

Advisors are responsible for convening pre-referral meetings in which the grade level team, consisting of a student's current teachers, meets to determine and agree upon specific classroom interventions and complete a Pre-Referral Intervention Plan. Parents are informed of this meeting, and often attend as well. The grade level team reconvenes within four to six weeks to review the success of the interventions and determine if a student needs a referral to the Student Study Team (SST). The SST includes the parents, student, advisor, content teachers and an administrator, often the Special Education Director. The team creates an action plan that includes school-wide interventions such as tutoring or counseling services in addition to classroom modifications determined to be successful during the pre-referral process. The SST reconvenes in three to six week to review whether the action plan resulted in the student making adequate progress. If the Student Study Team finds that the action plan is not sufficient to meet the student's needs, they will recommend that student for a formal special education assessment or 504 plan, if appropriate. Parents are informed that special education and related services are provided at no cost to them.

If a student enrolls at East Palo Alto Academy with an existing IEP, the IEP is reviewed and implemented, or an IEP meeting is convened within 30 days to review the existing IEP to discuss the student's present levels of performance and needs, and offer an appropriate placement and services.

The referral process is a formal, ongoing review of information related to students who are suspected of having special needs and show potential signs of needing special education and related services. East Palo Alto Academy's internal method for referral for assessment is the

Student Study Team. Additionally, the parent of any student suspected of needing or qualifying for special education services may also make a referral for an evaluation. Any such referral is responded to in writing by East Palo Alto Academy within 15 days. If East Palo Alto Academy determines that an assessment is appropriate, the parent receives a written assessment plan within 15 days.

Pre-Referral Academic Intervention Plan	
Student:	Date of Initial Meeting:
Advisor:	Date of Follow-Up Meeting:
Grade:	Teachers Present:

Briefly describe areas of concern addressed by this plan: _____

Successful strategies _____

Environment	Materials	Assignment	Teaching Techniques	Miscellaneous
<input type="checkbox"/> Change Seating <input type="checkbox"/> Change groups/partners <input type="checkbox"/> Create more physical space for learner <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange to test in alternative environment <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide student with manipulatives, audiobooks, checklists <input type="checkbox"/> Provide student with copies of teacher's notes <input type="checkbox"/> Provide student with supplemental learning materials (games, websites) <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce length <input type="checkbox"/> Extended time <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative means of completion (i.e., verbal answers) <input type="checkbox"/> Provide graphic organizers, templates <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Clarify directions <input type="checkbox"/> Break directions down into manageable parts, limit oral instructions <input type="checkbox"/> Vary delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule check-ins with student re: organization, understanding, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Create plan for office hours and tutoring <input type="checkbox"/> Other

Accommodations were implemented from _____ to _____.

Describe the outcome of the above accommodations: _____

Assessment Procedures

Assessments are conducted only upon receipt of written parent permission. Assessments are completed and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting held within 60 days of receipt of the parent's written consent for assessment. The Director is responsible for gathering all pertinent information. Information gathered is used to determine the student's disability, eligibility for services, and determining the required services. Assessments are conducted in the student's primary language, and an interpreter or Spanish-speaking assessor is provided if

needed. The types of assessments that are used for determining eligibility for special education and services include the following:

- Individualized, normative academic testing
- Psycho-educational testing
- Teacher observations
- Interviews
- Review of school records, reports, and work samples
- Parent input

SELPA policies and procedures are followed in determining eligibility for special education at East Palo Alto Academy. Students are evaluated in all areas related to their suspected disability by a multi-disciplinary team which can include, but is not limited to a credentialed special education resource teacher, a licensed school psychologist, a licensed mental health therapist, and a licensed speech and language therapist. All assessors are knowledgeable of students' suspected disabilities.

Assessment instruments are selected and administered so as not to be racially, culturally, or sexually biased and are established as valid, reliable, and age-appropriate to the specific student being assessed. Instruments are adapted as necessary for students with sensory, physical or speech/language impairments.

For students suspected of requiring speech services only, a referral for assessment is made to the special education director. Referrals are made by parents/guardian, an advisor, general education teacher, medical personnel, mental health personnel, or other staff at East Palo Alto Academy. Speech-only assessments are conducted only upon receipt of written parent permission. Assessments are conducted by a licensed speech/language therapist contracted by East Palo Alto Academy. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting is held to determine eligibility for speech and language services within 60 days of receipt of the parent's written consent for a speech-only assessment.

Assessment Personnel

Assessments are conducted by staff members at East Palo Alto Academy that have knowledge of a student's suspected disability, and they are administered by trained and knowledgeable

personnel and in accordance with assessment instructions. Individually administered tests of intellectual or emotional functioning are administered by credentialed school psychologists. East Palo Alto Academy contracts with a non-public agency that contracts with the SELPA, and also conducts assessments through on-site school psychology interns. The interns and their assessments are closely supervised by a licensed school psychologist at Stanford University. Speech/language evaluations are conducted by a licensed speech/language therapist contracted by East Palo Alto Academy. Other types of assessments are conducted through non-public agencies that contract with the SELPA. Additionally, East Palo Alto Academy contracts with Behavioral Health and Recovery Services for a student in need of comprehensive mental health services, and their therapy staff conducted a mental health assessment.

IEP Development Process

Within 60 days of receiving a signed assessment plan, an IEP is held. Parents are provided with written notice of the IEP meeting at least 10 days in advance. Meetings are held at a mutually agreeable time and place to ensure parent participation.

During the IEP meeting, an IEP team meets to review the results of the assessment and determine the student's need for special education. The special education director at East Palo Alto Academy is responsible for scheduling, coordinating and facilitating initial IEP meetings. Personnel qualified to interpret test results present the assessment results at the IEP meeting. Each student who is assessed at East Palo Alto Academy has an IEP that documents assessment results and eligibility determination for special education services.

If a student is determined by the IEP team to be eligible for services, the IEP team determines student goals, necessary modifications and accommodations in the general education environment, and qualifying services based on the student's areas of need. Students with IEPs at East Palo Alto Academy are served in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), as determined by each student's IEP team. Each student with an IEP has an IEP team that oversees the IEP development, implementation and on-going progress of the student. All decisions concerning the special education placement and services to be provided to a student with a disability are made by the IEP team during IEP meetings.

IEP teams at East Palo Alto Academy include all of the following members:

- The parent or guardian of the student for whom the IEP was developed
- The student, if appropriate
- A school administrator
- A special education teacher
- A General Education teacher who is familiar with the curriculum appropriate to that student
- Any other service provider if the service is being considered or provided
- If the child was recently assessed, the individual who conducted the assessment or who is qualified to interpret the assessment results
- An interpreter, if needed

Others familiar with the student may be invited as needed. When a parent cannot attend the IEP meeting, East Palo Alto Academy ensures his/her participation using other methods, such as conferencing by telephone or meeting at the parent's home.

Copies of the IEP and all assessments are given to the parent in accordance with state and federal laws. Upon the parent or guardian's written consent, IEPs are implemented by East Palo Alto Academy.

Each IEP includes all required components and are written on San Mateo County SELPA forms through SEIS (Special Education Information System), an on-line system for IEP management. IEPs are stored on-line using SEIS, and in student special education files, stored in locked file cabinets following all laws for confidentiality.

Each annual IEP at East Palo Alto Academy include the following:

- The student's determined eligibility or eligibilities for special education
- A statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
- The rationale for placement decisions
- The services the student will receive and the means for delivering those services
- A description of when services will begin, how often the student will receive them, who will provide them, and where and when they will be delivered
- Measurable annual goals which focusing on the student's current level of performance

- A report of progress on previous year's goals, and reasons for lack of progress if a goal was not achieved
- A description of how the student's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and monitored and when reports will be provided
- Accommodations and modifications necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the pupil on state and district assessments
- Accommodations and modifications necessary to achieve academic progress
- Amount of time student will participate in general education
- For students 16 years of age and older, measurable postsecondary goals related to training, education, employment and independent living skills, along with transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals

IEP meetings at East Palo Alto Academy are held according to the following schedule, as required by state and federal law:

- Annually to review the student's progress and make any necessary changes
- Every three years to review the results of a mandatory comprehensive reevaluation of the student's progress
- After the student has received a formal assessment or reassessment
- When a parent or teacher feels that the student has demonstrated significant educational growth or a lack of anticipated progress
- Within 30 days of a parent's request
- When an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) is required (prior to a student's 16th birthday)
- When East Palo Alto Academy seeks to suspend or remove the student for a period of 10 days or more for the same behavior, in order to determine if the student's misconduct was a manifestation of his/her disability

Additionally, progress reports to document progress toward achieving annual goals, are distributed to parents along with student report cards at the end of each semester at East Palo Alto Academy.

III. SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The service model used at East Palo Alto Academy is Full Inclusion. The support for students with IEPs is provided in collaboration with general education teachers to ensure special education students access and benefit from the general education curriculum. Along with the small class size at East Palo Alto Academy, the teachers' abilities and willingness to scaffold student learning and differentiate instruction, and the emphasis on project-based learning which provides greater access to general education curriculum, a full inclusion model provides the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), as required by state and federal law, for the majority of special education students we serve.

Staffing

East Palo Alto Academy employs a fulltime (1.0 FTE) team member who serves as a special education director .5 FTE, and a special education teacher for the remaining .5 FTE. This employee holds both an Administrative Services credential as well as special education teaching credentials, and is highly qualified under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements.

As director, she is responsible for all aspects of the special education program, including planning, implementing, directing and maintaining the charter's Special Education programs and services as well as serving as a resource to school personnel. Essential duties include:

- Supervises the implementation of the Special Education Service Delivery plan
- Confers with teachers, staff, program specialists, administrators, parents, and relevant personnel in Special Education to assure that students receive full educational opportunity
- Coordinates and implements district-wide special projects assigned, such as program reviews
- Trains and evaluates the performance of assigned classified and certificated staff
- Serves as District Special Education representative in SELPA meetings
- Assists in the development of in-service programs and/or conducts in-service meetings and workshops for teachers, administrators, and parents and other support staff
- Maintains complete records of IEPs and SSTs held, recommendations made, follow-ups, and referrals
- Maintains responsibility for the confidentiality and the safety of all IEP files in LEA
- Verifies that all governmental requirements regarding IEPs are met
- Coordinates Special Education services provided to students in grades 9 to age 22 by other non-public schools or LEAs

- Represents District in due process/litigation issues
- Maintains up-to-date knowledge on Special Education, including assessment practices, instruments, issues, district procedures, and governmental regulations
- Supervises compilation and filing of reports pertinent to state and federal reporting

In the role of resource specialist teacher, our Special Education Director provides Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI) in a full-inclusion setting. Essential functions include:

- Develops strategies to meet the needs of each individual student
- Instructs students in academic subjects according to school curriculum
- Modifies and develops daily curriculum needed based on techniques required for individual learning styles and approved curriculum
- Works with parents, administrators, school psychologists and other professionals to develop Individual Education Plans for each student
- Completes report cards and progress reports on each student's progress
- Plans and supervises class projects, recreational activities, art activities and field trips
- Administers specialized testing as necessary

In addition, East Palo Alto Academy employs a full-time (1.0 FTE) para-educator who is highly qualified under NCLB. Two full-time Americorps volunteers also provide push in services for students with IEPs in general education classrooms.

Related Services/DIS at East Palo Alto Academy

Currently, six students receive speech and language services from a licensed speech and language pathologist contracted by East Palo Alto Academy at .2 FTE. Three students currently receive on-site counseling through our full time licensed social worker (1.0 FTE) and three Stanford school psychiatry interns who are supervised by the social worker and a Stanford psychiatrist. Additionally, a student with more comprehensive emotional needs receives counseling from a Stanford psychiatrist on-site, as well as family counseling, provided by a licensed therapist through Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) at a clinic site near the student's home. At this time, we do not have students on site who require additional related services such as adaptive physical education or occupational therapy.

The process for providing DIS additional services at East Palo Alto Academy includes hiring licensed providers on a part-time or full-time basis or on contractual agreements through our extensive connections with Stanford University. Additionally, East Palo Alto Academy provides

services such as psycho-educational testing through non-public agencies that are contracted with the San Mateo County SELPA on an as-needed basis.

Special Day Classes

For students enrolled at East Palo Alto Academy who are determined to require a special day class due to mild-to-moderate or moderate-to-severe needs, services are provided by Intra-District Agreements delineated in the San Mateo County SELPA Handbook with Sequoia Union High School District, our chartering district. We currently have one student placed in a special day class in the Sequoia district. The student also receives speech and language services and workability services through the Sequoia District. Throughout the school's history, other students requiring a special day class have attended programs through intra-district transfers to the Sequoia District.

Previous to the current school year, a student enrolled at East Palo Alto Academy was placed at Beacon School, a non-public school that is under contract with the San Mateo County SELPA. A referral was also made to the San Mateo County Office of Education Special Education K-12 program during the 2012-13 school year for a student in need of a special day class, although the county declined to serve the student. East Palo Alto Academy also acknowledges that for special education students eligible for post-secondary services, that we are obligated to provide appropriate post-secondary services for students through age 22. East Palo Alto Academy will seek an inter-district transfer to a neighboring district in the SELPA, such as the Sequoia Union High School District, in accordance with the SELPA student movement policy in meeting this obligation. In summary, East Palo Alto Academy has identified with several providers of special day classes and post-secondary service providers, and will continue to do so to serve students enrolled at East Palo Alto Academy who require a more restrictive environment than full inclusion services.

Inclusion Services

East Palo Alto Academy employs a part-time (.5 FTE) special education teacher, a full-time (1.0 FTE) para-educator and two full-time Americorp volunteers to provide push in services for students with IEPs in general education classrooms. With the current enrollment of 21 students with IEPs, the special education staff is able to provide inclusion support for students in the majority of core subject classes. During annual IEP meetings, IEP teams determine the amount of inclusion support provided to each student, based on individual student needs.

The special education staff collaborates with general education teachers to provide accommodations and modifications according to students' IEPs. This includes modifying or scaffolding assignments, such as the provision of sentence starters for a writing assignment, for example. Such scaffolding has supported special education students in programs such as the Early College program offered on campus at East Palo Alto Academy, allowing students with IEPs to gain college experience, receive college credit, and achieve confidence and success. General education teachers and special education teachers have received on-going professional development on modifying curriculum, assessments, and grading practices. Teachers collaborate with the special education staff in planning curriculum and learning events to ensure that specific accommodations and modifications for students with IEPs are embedded in their teaching practices, and delivered seamlessly in class, minimizing any stigma high school students may experience when provided with individualized services.

Several students with IEPs at East Palo Alto Academy require use of word processors with spelling and grammar correction capabilities. Laptops are readily available to students in classrooms, and a computer lab adjacent to the library is available to all students throughout the school day, as well as after school. At this time, no students at East Palo Alto Academy require additional adaptive equipment to access the general education curriculum.

All special education staff members are trained and supervised by the special education director in implementing individualized behavior support plans to support specific students with socialization or behavioral needs. Weekly meetings with the special education staff are held to review and discuss progress on behavior support plans., and parents are regularly contacted through phone calls or weekly progress reports.

Transportation

All students attending East Palo Alto Academy are provided with school bus transportation through a contract with the Ravenswood City School District. For the student attending a special day class in the Sequoia District, a school bus is made available. Transportation to schools such as Beacon is provided through the NPS for students requiring a non-public school placement. Parents can also seek reimbursement from East Palo Alto Academy for students placed in off-campus special day classes if they choose to transport their child by car.

IV. COMPLIANCE / CAPACITY

Due Process and State Complaints

East Palo Alto Academy will investigate and respond to all complaints regarding special education. East Palo Alto Academy will notify the SELPA within 24 hours of receiving any complaint, orally or written, regarding special education. East Palo Alto Academy will notify the SELPA director of any due process proceedings filed against East Palo Alto Academy under IDEA, and of any complaints to state or federal agencies relating to students with disabilities or special education practices within 24 hours of receiving such complaint. East Palo Alto Academy will bear sole financial responsibility, and procure and provide its own legal representation for all complaints and due process proceedings. East Palo Alto Academy understands its legal and fiscal responsibility to provide appropriate special education services for qualified students, and will not seek defense or indemnification from the SELPA or SELPA member districts.

At this date, there are no current due process or compliance complaints issued against East Palo Alto Academy. The staff at East Palo Alto Academy is aware of the responsibility to complete and document any state ordered corrective actions, and will do so according to timelines established by the state of California.

East Palo Alto Academy also participates, as required by state law, in the Special Education Self-Review (SESR) process, which is conducted every three years. The members of the San Mateo SELPA are participating in SESR during the current school year. The special education director at East Palo Alto Academy has met all deadlines as established by the state during the SESR.

ADA Compliant Facility

East Palo Alto Academy is solely responsible for compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All appropriate facilities at East Palo Alto Academy are accessible to parents, staff and students, complying with all aspects of the ADA.

East Palo Alto Academy recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no one is excluded from participation, denied benefits of, or otherwise discriminated against in any program or

capacity at East Palo Alto Academy. East Palo Alto Academy recognizes that any student with an identified disability that substantially limits a major life activity as designated in Section 504, is eligible for accommodations by East Palo Alto Academy.

Service of Students

Twenty-one students with IEPs are currently being served in the special education program at East Palo Alto Academy, which is the same number of students served at the end of the 2011-2012 school year. This represents about 9% of the total student population at East Palo Alto Academy (currently 240 students, with ADA at 225 or 93%). Five freshmen students with IEPs were enrolled for the 2012-2013 school year and are attending regularly. One student newly qualified for special education in September 2012. Additionally, a sophomore with an IEP transferred to EPAAHS during the second semester of the 2012-13 school year and began receiving services. The number of students served on 504 plans has increased from one to four students during the 2012-13 school year, due to two incoming freshmen with existing plans, and another freshman who qualified for a 504 plan during the fall semester at East Palo Alto Academy. The number of students served by an IEP or 504 plan is slightly over 10% of the total student population at the school.

Of the twenty-one students currently served at East Palo Alto Academy, twenty students qualify for special education services with a primary eligibility of Specific Learning Disability. One student is qualified with a primary eligibility of emotional disturbance. Currently, one student enrolled at East Palo Alto Academy is served in another school district, in accordance with the SELPA's student movement policies.

Capacity of Special Education Administration

East Palo Alto Academy employs a fulltime (1.0 FTE) employee, Dr. Deborah Mar, Ed.D, who serves as a special education director .5 FTE, and a special education teacher for the remaining .5 FTE. Dr. Mar holds both an Administrative Services credential as well as special education teaching credentials, and is highly qualified under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements.

As director, Dr. Mar is responsible for all aspects of the special education program, including planning, implementing, directing and maintaining the charter's Special Education programs and services as well as serving as a resource to school personnel.

Dr. Mar's qualifications include serving over 35 years as a credentialed school employee in education. She has taught in special education with both mild to moderate and moderate to severe students in special day class, resource specialist, and inclusion settings. She has been a credentialed administrator in San Francisco and San Mateo counties for the last ten years. Her administrative roles have included serving as an elementary school principal, a district special education director, and a director of special education for the San Mateo County Office of Education, in addition to her current role at East Palo Alto Academy.

Professional Development

The administrative personnel, general education and special education teaching staff, as well as special education para-professionals at East Palo Alto Academy attend professional development and trainings needed to comply with state and federal education laws. The special education director is an active participant in the San Mateo SELPA, and regularly attends the scheduled monthly meetings.

Additionally, the special education director provides on-going professional development for the entire staff on issues related to both general education and special education, including but not limited to accommodations/modifications, grading, inclusion, special education compliance, and post-traumatic stress disorder. During the 2012-13 school year, the focus has been on differentiation as well as pre-referral interventions and the Student Study Team (SST) process. A vital component of the professional development provided by the special education staff to the teachers at East Palo Alto Academy is on-going consulting and collaboration regarding all aspects of inclusion-based services.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Process

East Palo Alto Academy encourages guardians to raise any and all concerns regarding special education services, related services and rights to our staff. If our personnel are unable to resolve the concerns, the special education director and school principal will consult with the district's special education director or equivalent regarding such concerns, and may involve the county's personnel as well. These persons will respond to and address the concerns raised, with an emphasis on informing guardians of their rights under the Uniform Complaint Procedure (UCP) involving special education. The school annually posts and disseminates the UCP to its stakeholders.

The district will investigate all complaints received under the Uniform Complaint Procedure involving special education and respond appropriately.

The district may initiate a due process hearing on behalf of a student enrolled at EPAA as legally necessary to meet EPAA's responsibilities under federal and state law. The district will defend any due process hearing brought by the guardian of any student enrolled at EPAA.

Affirmation and Assurance of Compliance of Federal Law Related to Special Education

East Palo Alto Academy will adhere to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities including, but not limited to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. We agree and acknowledge to the following:

- a) To contribute to non-public schools and agencies at the same per pupil rate as set for all districts in the SELPA
- b) To secure the services of an attorney for special education as is required for all SELPA member districts
- c) To comply with the IDEA Act, Section 504, and the American Disabilities Act, and that the school facilities used by the charter would be ADA compliant
- d) To acknowledge and agree that the LEA has an obligation to search and serve students with disabilities
- e) To be responsible for all obligations, policies, and agreements as required by SELPA membership
- f) East Palo Alto Academy will assume all funding responsibility for students placed in alternative educational settings due to disciplinary issues
- g) To utilize resources from East Palo Alto Academy's general fund for the cost of special education and related services to the full extent necessary to meet its obligations to state and federal laws and the SELPA policies.
- h) That funds allocated to East Palo Alto Academy by the SELPA/San Mateo County Office of Education shall be expended only for special education and related services, as compliant with state and federal laws

V. ADDITIONAL ITEMS

School Data

Graduation Rates	2009	2010	2011	2012
% of Senior Class Graduated		91.1%	91.5%	94.6%
Cohort Rate Reported by the State	93.4%	82.1%	79.7%	TBD
County Graduation Rate Reported	86.1%	86.1%	83.7%	TBD
State Graduation Rate Reported	78.6%	80.5%	76.3%	TBD

The high school has sent more than 90% of its graduates on to postsecondary education each year since the first graduating class in 2005. Graduates are regularly admitted to all of the University of California and California State University campuses, as well as to a wide range of public and private colleges across the country, such as Santa Clara University, Smith College, University of Colorado, Syracuse University, Whittier College, Northeastern University, Florida A & M, Howard, Tuskegee, St. Mary's College, Notre Dame de Namur, and more.

Academic Performance Index Overall Scores					
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Base API	611	613	606	620	605
Growth Target	9	9	10	9	10
API Score (Growth)	613	605	622	603	638
Met API Target	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Point Gained	+2	-8	+16	-17	+33
Statewide Rank	2	1	1	1	unknown
Similar Schools Rank	3	4	6	4	unknown

Attendance / Pupil Count Data			
	TOTAL	ADA #	ADA %
2010-11	251	224.31 - An	89.4%
2011-12	238	214.22 - An	90.0%
2012-13	239	226.63 - P1	94.8%

Teacher Credential Status and Years in Teaching			
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Fully Credentialed	23	22	18
Emergency Credentials	0	0	0
Pre/Interns	0	0	0
Waivers	0	0	0
Total Teachers	23	22	18
Average Years Teaching	8	8	8.7

Education Level of Certificated Staff						
	Doctorate	Master's (+30)	Master's	Bachelor's (+30)	Baccalaureate	Total Staff
2010-11	1	6	12	5	3	27
2011-12	1	7	10	5	4	27
2012-13	2	6	10	3	2	23

Last	First	Position	Document #	Status	Acquired
Vilaubi	Larry	Principal	101266331	Clear	Program
Camarillo	Jeffrey	Vice Principal	101087343	Clear	Examination
Mar	Deborah	Special Education Director	TC289016 TC289017 120065420	Life Life Clear	Program
MacKenzie	Linda	Early College Director	110031179	Clear	Examination
Vazquez	Elvia	Guidance Counselor	120084234	Clear	Program
Ang	Derek	Teacher	110116970	Clear	Examination
Arle	Karyn	Teacher	110215693	Clear	Program
Barco	Misla	Teacher	90079963	Clear	Examination
Castillon	Irene	Teacher	130020488	Clear	Examination
Garcia	Ventura	Teacher	101272576	Clear	Examination
Halstead	Christine	Teacher	70212217	Clear	Examination
Hibbs	Sofia	Teacher	90171896	Clear	Examination
LaMay	Bronwyn	Teacher	101102126	Clear	Examination
Lee	Kathy	Teacher	120569377	Clear	Examination
Lok	Jeanette	Teacher	123175278	Preliminary	Examination
McDonald	Caren	Teacher	101242394	Clear	Examination
Montelongo	Rafael	Teacher	110133167	Clear	Program
Perkins	Makailah	Teacher	110085047	Preliminary	Program
Robinson	Andrew	Teacher	123174248	Preliminary	Examination
Ruiz	Pamela	Teacher	110123920	Preliminary	Examination
Wong	Amy	Teacher	120049683	Clear	Examination
Wong	Philip	Teacher	120551230	Clear	Program
Flockhart	Maria Jose	Social Worker	101230850	Clear	Program

APPENDICES:

- I. Charter Petition with appendices:**
 - A. Teacher Signatures**
 - B. ELL Master Plan**
 - C1. Bylaws**
 - C2. Articles of Incorporation (Stanford Schools Corp)**
 - D. Fiscal Control Policies**
 - E. Discipline and Expulsion Policy**
- II. Audit Reports (2 years)**
- III. Budget: Multi-Year Projections**
- IV. Proof of Liability Insurance**
- V. Student Application Materials**
- VI. SELPA Assurances**

EAST PALO ALTO ACADEMY



2011-2012

A Year of Progress

Hard work, exemplary support services, college-focused classes and counseling, and the dedication of professionals trained to address the needs of an economically challenged population -- all these combined to make School Year 2011-2012 a success at East Palo Alto Academy, a high school operated by Stanford New Schools.

East Palo Alto Academy
www.epaahs.org
475 Pope Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025
650.329.2828

OVERVIEW

Students in America's high-need communities, where more than half typically fail to graduate, are in desperate need of strong educational opportunities. This urgent nationwide imperative underlies the work of Stanford's School of Education. East Palo Alto Academy (EPAA), a local charter public high school operated by Stanford New Schools, anchors Stanford's efforts to stay grounded in the work that links education research to education practice.

Stanford New Schools began the year with seven primary goals:

- **Establish student benchmarks so that measured and individualized instruction can be fostered across all disciplines**
- **Craft flexible instruction that challenges all students to be personally and socially responsible and engaged**
- **Create a nurturing environment where students can feel inspired to discern and expand their gifts**
- **Offer targeted academic support through after-school, advisory and summer programming**
- **Incorporate technology in a nuanced and progressive way**
- **Instill in all students the vision that college is possible, and provide multi-level programming to make that true**
- **Provide robust social-emotional support for the at-risk population that we serve**

This report will outline the ways in which Stanford New Schools addressed each of these goals.

The effects of our programming are clear: 97% of seniors completed all of EPAA's graduation requirements this school year. Three of these students are working to complete the state exit exam (CAHSEE), with the support of the school, while they continue on to community college. Thus, the percentage of 2012 seniors who have thus far received a California diploma is 92%.

Demographics of East Palo Alto Academy 2011-2012

Ethnicity	
Latino	76.4%
African-American	12.7%
Pacific Islander	10.5%
Other	0.4%

Education of Parents	
Graduate Degree or Higher	0.4%
College Graduate	5.9%
Some College/Associate's	8.4%
HS Grad	28.3%
Not a HS Grad	57.0%

Primary Language	
English	14.8%
Spanish	76.4%
Punjabi	0.8%
Samoan	2.5%
Tongan	5.5%

By Grade Level	
9	26.6%
10	30.8%
11	16.5%
12	26.2%

Numbers in each grade	
9	63
10	73
11	40
12	62

Gender	
male	39.7%
female	60.3%

Admitted to post-secondary education in 2012
93% (overall CA rate in 2011 = 55%)

Lunch Status	
Pay	4.6%
Free & Reduced	95.4%

Graduation Rate for 2012 Seniors
92%
57 of 59 completed all EPAA requirements for graduation (including one 5th year senior). Three of these students are working to complete the state exit exam (CAHSEE), with the support of our school, while they continue on to community college.

English Language Learners	84.5%
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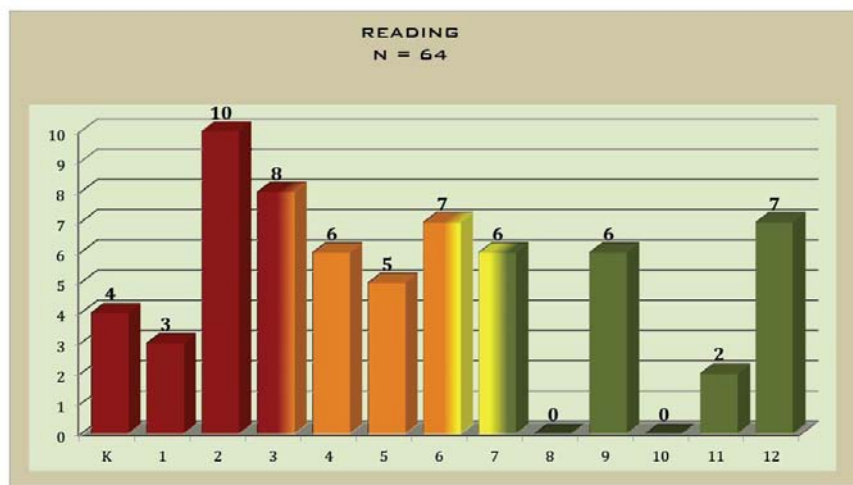
GOAL #1**Establish student benchmarks so that measured and individualized instruction can be fostered across all disciplines**

EPAA is located in a high-need community where the educational challenges are great. As the demographics show, 85% of our students primarily speak a language other than English and do not have parents with college-going experience, and 95% qualify for free or reduced price lunch based on low income. In the state of California, only two other schools have as many low income and English language learners as East Palo Alto Academy.

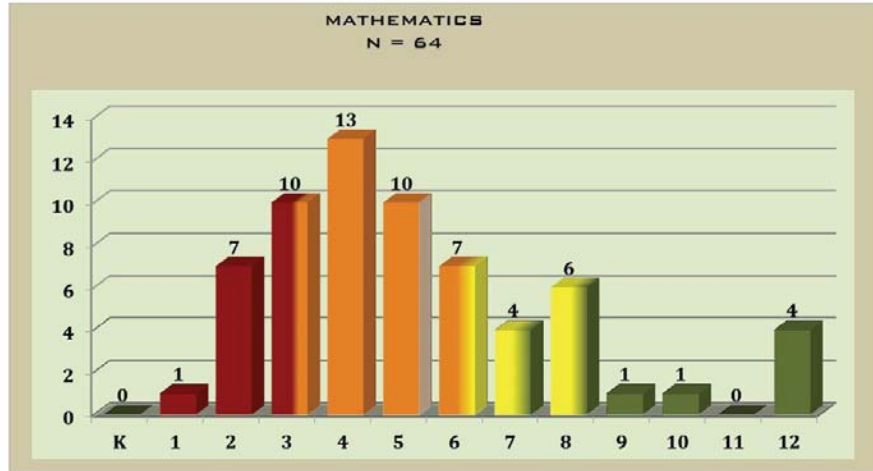
In this setting, accurate benchmarks of students' reading and math levels are essential in identifying each student's starting point for learning. To establish those, SNS administered the MAP test (Measures of Academic Progress) in September. These benchmarks then guided the curriculum and social-emotional framework for the year, a framework that produced remarkable achievement and graduation statistics at the conclusion of the academic year.

MAP data shows that our students bring with them an unusually diverse range of capabilities, many arriving well below grade level. For example, the majority of incoming freshmen in Fall 2011 came to us with a reading level of 5th grade or lower, and 17 of these 64 freshmen arrived with a reading level of second grade or lower. In math, the majority of freshmen arrived at a level of 5th grade or lower, with 18 students having a math level of third grade or lower.

MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS (MAP) TEST
GRADE 9, FALL 2011
GRADE LEVEL PERFORMANCE FREQUENCIES IN MATHEMATICS AND READING



**MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS (MAP) TEST
GRADE 9, FALL 2011
GRADE LEVEL PERFORMANCE FREQUENCIES IN MATHEMATICS AND READING**



By identifying these key starting points, East Palo Alto Academy was able to set the course for the year ahead, clear in the knowledge of the range of ways students would need to be challenged and inspired. The faculty created a new Math Foundations course for 9th graders who had weak preparation in mathematics, conducted alongside Algebra I, which all students take. Using technology supports, the Foundations course diagnosed and addressed students' basic skills gaps to support greater success in high school math. A 9th grade course in Academic Literacy was augmented with small group instruction in reading for students who had not yet mastered basic decoding. These interventions were extremely successful in raising achievement for many students, putting them on a firmer footing for the remainder of high school.



GOAL #2**Craft flexible instruction that challenges all students to be personally and socially responsible and engaged**

Differentiated instruction that honored the social-emotional needs of EPAA students drove the curriculum design in 2011-2012.

Teachers tailored their instruction to individual learners' needs in a number of ways. They successfully embraced computer adaptive software to differentiate instruction, a process described in detail in the technology section that follows. They also developed grade-appropriate materials created from the baseline analytics that were prepared in September. Teachers received ongoing professional development in strategies for making content instruction accessible to new English learners, modifying assignments as needed to support their understanding, while maintaining high standards for their work. When appropriate, teachers gave students choices as to assignments, offering them multiple ways to demonstrate their learning and understanding. In addition, certain literature assignments were structured so they required equally high levels of critical thinking, but permitted a range of responses in student's journaling, critical analysis essays and other writing. Students also were given choices regarding book options for different thematic units; some readings were more rigorous than others but the subject matter was the same and students were held to the same expectations for analysis, discussion and vocabulary.

EPAA also carried forward the highly successful model of promoting “Five Habits” when teaching and evaluating student performance. These distinguishing habits of mind and action support students in achieving not only academic success, but also self-regulated learning and collaborative problem-solving. They are: Personal Responsibility; Social Responsibility; Critical and Creative Thinking; Communication; and Application of Knowledge.

By crafting a curriculum around Five Habits, EPAA students developed a range of life skills. They mastered the ability to collect



information, think systematically and critically about that information, create new knowledge and effectively express and apply their thinking to real world problems. Whether engaging with a novel, a choreographed dance piece, a set of statistics, a newspaper report, an historical account or a scientific article, they were challenged to reflect upon these habits. Our goal by taking this approach is that students will graduate from EPAA with the ability to access, use and analyze information, produce new knowledge and respond critically and thoughtfully.

Complementing its emphasis on academic education, EPAA promoted students' social-emotional learning at the same time. In Advisory lessons on social responsibility and conflict resolution, as well as in the Peer Mediation and Restorative Justice program, EPAA fostered the self-management, communication, and responsible decision-making that underlie an effective learning community. A growing body of research links social-emotional learning to student success in school. As the program director noted, "We were really good . . . at offering an atmosphere where students felt safe to talk out their issue . . . [and] to actually focus on learning. . . This contributed a lot to the growth of the school and the growth of the students individually."



"[I thought that] maybe this [Peer Mediation and Restorative Justice] would help me learn how to be a better leader at the school. Once I started taking the courses and lectures I started to really enjoy it . . . It really has helped me become a leader. I feel like I'm more outspoken because of it."

--Marcus K., class of 2013

GOAL #3**Create a nurturing environment where students can feel inspired to discern and expand their gifts**

EPAA offered students enriching learning opportunities beyond the classroom, providing pathways for students to discover their strengths and reinforcing classroom academic work. Key opportunities to nurture students flowed from EPAA's partnership with Stanford University on physics lab projects and social studies Exhibitions research, as well as from EPAA's sports teams.

Physics

Stanford Professor Paulo Blikstein opened up his Digital Fabrication lab to EPAA's physics class on a regular basis this year. Once a week, the class traveled to the Stanford lab, where they enriched their theoretical class discussions with physics experiments. This experience had dramatic impact for these students, where comments like these were heard at year end: "I just can't get physics out of my head anymore" and "Everything is possible, now that I've learned physics." Among the class projects was an Egg Drop competition, for which students designed and built devices to keep an egg from breaking when dropped from the third story of a Stanford campus building while interested community members observed. One student expressed her enthusiasm this way:



"With physics, we have been going over to Stanford, and we go to the lab where we have 3-D printers and different materials that we can use and it's a good way to use the knowledge [from class] . . . we apply what we know in the lab . . . we're going to do an Egg Drop competition so we're using gravity and momentum . . . it's a good way to actually apply it."

--Edanet R, class of 2012

Another class project was the building of desktop-size, marble roller coasters. The students started with ball and ramp experiments in the lab, and learned how to add computer-activated sensors that would be triggered by a rolling marble. Each roller coaster was built by a team of three or four students, who learned robotics principles as well as the skill of laser-cutting tracks. At the end of the semester, each team had the opportunity to demonstrate its coaster and explain to an audience at Stanford why they had made various design decisions.

The concepts learned in roller coaster building were reinforced by the class's field trip to Six Flags amusement park in May. On this day packed with physics, students made connections about the real-world application of concepts like equilibrium, momentum and energy. One student was overheard saying, "The ride that I enjoyed the most was Medusa because it was one of the few rides that have a lot of potential and kinetic energy because of its structure and how big it is. Moreover, connecting roller coasters with physics makes me more interested in pursuing a physics career."

Exhibitions

This year we built a new component into the standard Exhibition program that has become the cornerstone of our project-based curriculum. We piloted a new Stanford University service-learning workshop and mentoring project, designed by History Professor Al Camarillo and EPAA Vice Principal Jeffrey Camarillo, which sought to introduce Stanford undergraduates and graduate students to a variety of issues at stake in the public education of at-risk high school youth in California. Workshop participants heard from leading faculty at Stanford, including Dr. Linda-Darling Hammond and Dr. Shashank Joshi, who shared perspectives on the problems and challenges of educating a diverse student body in the state's public school system. Stanford students participated in a five-month long mentoring project during which they helped juniors prepare for their Junior Exhibition capstone project. The Stanford students' individualized support gave these juniors a valuable boost to meet these higher level research and writing challenges.

I was so impressed with the caliber of research the [EPAA] students conducted on their projects and their ability to synthesize historical material into well written papers. I was equally impressed by the PowerPoint presentations of the exhibitions for which I served as a community judge. The material presented by one of the students was, in fact, on par of with that of my undergraduate students in history at Stanford."

-- Al Camarillo, Stanford History Professor and special assistant to the provost for faculty diversity



Scholar-Athlete Program

EPAA systematically works to connect discipline in sports with discipline in the classroom, netting remarkable achievements in both. Five sports comprise the Athletic Program at EPAA: Girls Volleyball, Girls and Boys Soccer, and Girls and Boys Basketball. Four of the five teams turned in winning seasons, with two teams reaching the play-offs, a first for EPAA. "Bull-Dog City" scholar-athletes became admired students on campus, reinforcing the notion that focus pays off on the court and the classroom.



I came here because I didn't do so great in my first year in [a large public] high school . . . And my GPA wasn't even over a 1.0. [At EPAA], having sports to be a reason to do well, . . . [I began to] do my work more in class and by the end of the year my GPA was like a 3.8, and I guess you could say sports helped me, or you could say the teachers helped me even more."

*--Fauugaa, Class of 2012,
who had never had the chance to play organized sports before coming to EPAA*

GOAL #4

Offer targeted academic support through after-school, advisory and summer programming

EPAA distinguishes itself from other high schools with the level of individual attention it provides to students. From our after school offerings to frequent Advisory class meetings to our summer programming, this year students received individualized, targeted support that helped them strive for and reach new levels of achievement.

After School Program

After school and on Saturdays, EPAA offered an Extended Learning Program (ELP) that served 93% of the student body throughout 2011-2012. Adult tutors provided one-on-one academic help, including bilingual assistance, and were in high demand throughout the school year. Peer tutors likewise provided consistent tutoring to their fellow students. The math teachers forged a strong partnership with the ELP teachers and an excellent relationship with students, and created two after-school math interventions, Algebra Recovery and Math Foundations, to target students at risk of falling behind in math.



EPAA's partnership with the Tutorpedia Foundation brought in personal tutors, who provided one-on-one tutoring to our underserved, low-income students at no charge. Many were able to make substantial academic progress, including passing the CAHSEE, passing Exhibitions, recovering class credits, and making up missing assignments.

Advisory

Advisory continued to be an important support for students this year. Each student was assigned a teacher who acted as advisor for approximately 15 students within a grade level. Advisory period focused on a variety of academic, skill building, and college planning activities four times per week. The relationship of advisors, their advisees and student families over the four years of high school helped students forge stronger connections to their educational progress. It also provided students with an adult who could notice those at risk of falling behind and who could recommend specific help, and to whom they could reach out when encountering an academic, social, or emotional challenge.

The ability to form and sustain a committed, caring, and supportive relationship with an adult is one of the most widely reported benefits of attending EPAA by students, former students, and parents/guardians. In Advisory, students begin to develop the self-awareness critical to making positive health and life choices, as well as the interpersonal and academic skills needed in society. There is no question that Advisory helps drive the mission of creating citizens who will be responsible to themselves as well as their community.

Summer Programming

Summer programming is a key foundational support for EPAA students. In summer 2011, EPAA held a five-week Summer School program followed by a one-week Summer Bridge program. Ninety-three students attended a lively Summer School to experience enrichment activities, to build their literacy and math skills, to recover credits or raise their grade from classes already taken, or to move ahead with advanced work in College courses. Unlike Summer School with its offering of credit-bearing classes, Summer Bridge was for incoming freshmen only, and was designed to orient the students to the Five Habits grading system, introduce students to EPAA's college-going culture, and prepare students for group work settings. Attendance could not be mandated but was strongly encouraged; of the 54 ninth graders enrolled at the time of Summer Bridge, 37 participated in Summer Bridge and 24 of those students also attended the preceding Summer School session.

I learned that EPAA is big on team work and group work. We learned roles, norms and how to be group workers at EPAA. I LOVE group work!

--Katy B., freshman and Summer Bridge participant

The most dramatic success of the Summer Bridge program can be seen by comparing GPAs from the attending cohort with the cohort that did not attend the program. The average first semester GPA for Summer Bridge students was 3.03, nearly a full grade point higher than for those who did not attend, 2.05. Moreover, the three highest achieving students (earning a 4.10 or higher) in the Class of 2015 were all Summer Bridge participants.



Goal # 5

Incorporate technology in a nuanced and progressive way

Teachers have embraced technology to differentiate instruction effectively among students. Lessons based on computer adaptive assessments can be tailored to meet each student's individual needs, challenging each student with what they are ready to learn, rather than frustrating them with a lesson that is too difficult or slowing their progress with one that is too easy.

EPAA found great value this year in the computerized assessment and learning software ALEKS (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces). ALEKS promotes math and science success by first conducting an assessment of a student's initial knowledge; unlike typical diagnostic tests, each student's initial assessment is unique, and thus more useful, because the software selects each assessment question based on the student's answers to all previous questions. Based on the assessment, ALEKS provides lessons targeted to the gaps in each student's knowledge.

ALEKS is an especially useful tool for teaching math to English Language Learners because it is English/Spanish bilingual. Students who choose the Spanish translation remove the language barrier to math instruction entirely, and students who switch between Spanish and English for the same math problem can increase their English math fluency.

It is so important that every student feel successful at school. Our teachers use technology to tailor their instruction and pedagogy to the needs of their individual students, so they have the best experience possible.

--Kia Darling-Hammond, Director of Special Programs

Teachers also incorporated ActivProgress smart board technology as a way to encourage English language learners to engage in classroom activities without feeling self-conscious about their developing language capacities. Hand-held voter devices facilitated participation and analysis in multiple classrooms.

The interactive whiteboards have been an invaluable tool in my teaching of English Language Learners. They allow students to see visual representations of curricular content, allow for multiple access points to the curriculum and encourage participation on various levels. During class votes, for example, the anonymous data that is then displayed encourages discussion around the answers that students gave and why, promoting in-depth meta-cognition.

--Sofia Hibbs, ELD Coach

Goal # 6

Instill in all students the vision that college is possible, and provide multi-level programming to make that true

Instilling a college-going culture among EPAA students involved a number of approaches. Our Early College classes, which allowed many students to take college-level classes for high school and college credit on campus, inspired students and helped demystify the college experience. Programs such as College Summit tracked multi-level progress towards college investigation, preparation, and application requirements. Through Advisory, students were given one-on-one ongoing support in planning and carrying out the steps needed to apply to college, from standardized testing to personal essays. Campus field trips helped students picture themselves on a bustling campus, and workshops for parents and other family members helped link all key stakeholders in the process.



Early College

In the Early College program, Cañada College instructors teach college classes to our high school students on the EPAA campus. This partnership with Cañada goes back to 2005. This year our program included courses such as Introduction to Behavioral Health Careers, a Health Science class, Public Speaking, Introduction to Acting, and Latin American Theatre. Eighty-eight students participated in the fall semester, and 65 participated in spring. In the words of one senior, “I started taking college classes as a freshman. It was really scary at first because it was all upperclassmen, and I didn’t really know anybody, but I was able to talk with my classmates, talk about the work and get to know my professor, and it was a really good experience. I felt that I was more prepared [for college] . . . the fact that they just give you a syllabus and you know what’s due next and they don’t remind you . . . helped me be more independent . . . And it also helped me in my other classes.”

“I really liked these classes because I’ve learned a lot of note-taking strategies, and the atmosphere, the environment is different from a regular high school class. . . . [In the Latin American Theater class] I’m learning all about my heritage and ancestry, which I’ve never really heard about before . . . I really enjoy these classes . . . I hope to take even more.”

--Blanca, class of 2014

Advisory Program's Role in Promoting the College-Going Culture

Advisory has several goals. In addition to guiding students in developing their academic and social-emotional skills, Advisory presents students with information related to college and career choices and supports students in applying to postsecondary education.

Each grade level of Advisory focuses on particular activities that prepare students to apply to college during their senior year. The freshman curriculum focuses on self-awareness and character-building, academic skill building, high school graduation and college eligibility requirements (e.g., "A-G") coursework. Sophomores explore career assessment and planning, practice interpersonal skills such as negotiation, learn test taking strategies, and discover how to prepare resumes and work applications. During junior year, Advisory focuses on college and career exploration and financial aid planning, test-taking (PSAT, SAT, ACT), personal skills such as time management, and continues the emphasis on graduation and college eligibility requirements. For seniors, the College Summit program and on-line activities grounded the activities related to postsecondary planning, college and financial aid applications, and development of resumes.

College Results

Ninety-three percent of our graduating seniors plan to attend 4- or 2-year college. These seniors were accepted to a range of nationally recognized and challenging institutions such as UCLA, Smith, University of North Carolina, Santa Clara University, DePaul and Tuskegee University. This year we saw an increased number of students who were accepted to a four-year college but who elected to attend two-year institutions instead, most citing the overwhelming burden of multi-year tuition and the diminishing resources available through scholarship funding. SNS attempts to counter-balance this in part by raising scholarship funding. Through the SNS Scholarship Fund, generous donors provided \$241,200 for graduating seniors and for EPAA graduates continuing to pursue four-year degrees. Two former SNS Scholars proudly received their masters' degrees in public health this year, both from San Francisco State University. Stanford University conferred its first graduate degree to an EPAA alumna this year as well, when Sonia Jimenez (EPAA Class of 2005) graduated from the Stanford Teacher Education Program (STEP).



GOAL #7**Provide robust social-emotional support for the at-risk population that we serve**

Providing social-emotional support for students in the demographic we serve has become an essential piece of effective schooling at EPAA. In 2011-12, one hundred twenty-seven students -- nearly half of our student population -- were referred for such support. The interventions of our social worker and an array of other mental health professionals resulted in more students who could concentrate and learn, and fewer students whose personal traumas interfered with their focus and achievement. Like other Bay Area school administrators, EPAA leaders see a correlation between mental health support services and improved academic achievement and school climate.

Maria [Maria Jose Flockhart, full-time social worker at EPAA] has given emotional stability to a large percentage of our student body. She has taught students the tools to manage frustration, anger, depression, and even suicidal thoughts. I can't imagine EPAA without MJ.

--Misla Barco, Spanish instructor and Community Outreach Coordinator

The chart below shows the number of students seen during the 2011-12 school year as well as a disaggregation of types of students seen.

Total student population: **238**

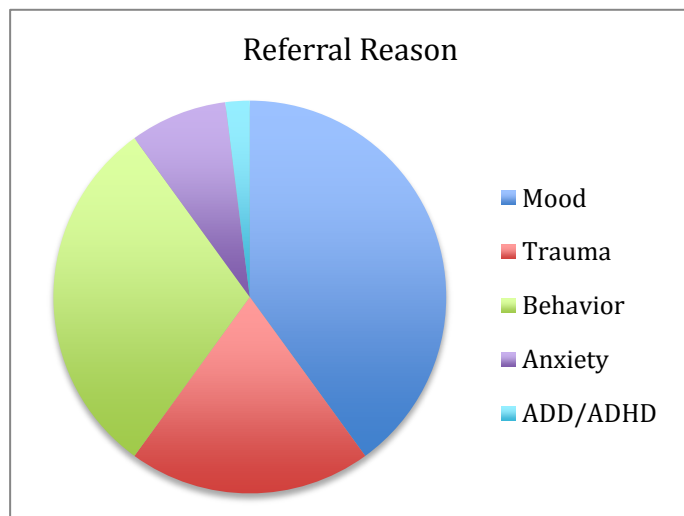
Total No. of referrals seen by SNS social worker: **127**

Cases assigned to Stanford Mental Health Team: **37**

Cases seen by Lucile Packard: **43**

Cases that required CPS report: **25**

Crisis Interventions: **26**



Our full-time on-site social worker saved the lives of several students this year, as documented in case reports. In less extreme cases, she helped students and families handle the many stresses that can affect urban and immigrant youth. By promoting students' emotional stability, she cleared away significant obstacles to learning. Ms. Flockhart was an indispensable link between students, parents, the school and the community's social services agencies. Her ability to provide bilingual services enabled her to forge a stronger educational bridge between the school and the Latino community.

Ms. Flockhart created a confidential on-line referral process through which teachers and staff requested services for students in need. She coordinated a mental health triage system, as well as a variety of support groups offered to students with similar needs, such as a Grief and Loss group, "New-comers group" (for recently immigrated students), a Teen Parent group (for teen moms and/or students that are pregnant), and an Impulse Control group. Assessments of group participants showed an increase in self-esteem and a reduction of stress and anxiety.

Additionally, Ms. Flockhart provided individual consultation and professional development on a regular basis to EPAA staff to help them understand the stresses affecting students. She advised staff on such issues as confidentiality, race, ethnicity, attendance, mental health, behavior management, crisis intervention, and child abuse and neglect. In her role as consultant, she participated in Student Study Team meetings, Individual Educational Planning meetings for special education students, monthly parent meetings, and meetings between community agencies and the school. In response to rising pregnancy rates and the threat of sexually transmitted illnesses, she coordinated a series of workshops, delivered by a community health agency, targeted towards students and families on teen sexuality.

Life without Maria? Completely impossible. I cannot express how instrumental she has been in developing our school culture and supporting so many students.

--Rachel Decker, English instructor



CLOSING

The common thread uniting our goals this year was our commitment to meeting each student's needs. We began the year with a thorough assessment of individual baseline performance thresholds, and then we crafted a curriculum that honored our students' varied backgrounds, aptitudes, apprehensions and exposure to academic thinking. We built a program grounded in strong expectations, bolstered with a support system of robust social-emotional guidance, college preparatory advising, and technology-assisted individualized assessments. Thanks to the dedication of our professional staff, EPAA students thrived during 2011-12.



You have received this report because you are a supporter of East Palo Alto Academy and we are enormously grateful for your generosity. Donations make up one-third of our operating budget and gifts to East Palo Alto Academy make it possible for us to offer the comprehensive student programs you have just read about. As a supporter at any level, either as a donor or volunteer, you are part of an initiative that is literally changing the future for the underserved students of East Palo Alto. Please accept our heart-felt appreciation for your partnership in this work.

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