

South Gate High School Plan (PSC 3.0) Informational Summary

VISION/MISSION

All students will graduate South Gate High School, college and career-ready, empowered and motivated to successfully meet life's challenges and make positive contributions to society. Our mission is to prepare all students to become effective communicators, critical thinkers and self-directed adults. We will strive to ensure that *all* South Gate High School students:

1. **R**ead, write, speak, listen reflectively and critically and be technologically literate;
2. **A**nalyze, apply, synthesize and evaluate to solve problems;
3. **M**otivate oneself to be a self-directed adult who sets and attains goals.

CORE BELIEFS

- We believe in high expectations for all students.
- We believe that *all* students can learn and must be given appropriate support and intervention when they do not meet grade level standards.
- We believe that *all* students have the right to learn in a nurturing, positive and safe environment.
- We believe in the commitment and mutual accountability of all stakeholders to ensure student academic success;
- We believe that all stakeholders must be treated with fairness and respect.
- We believe in the delivery of a guaranteed, viable and rigorous curriculum aligned to the state standards.
- We believe in the use of evidence-based strategies that engage *all* students and makes learning meaningful and relevant.
- We believe in the work of collaborative content teams that engage in a cycle of continuous improvement.
- We believe in data-driven decision-making.

South Gate HS is committed to providing meaningful, engaging and high quality learning experiences for all students. Our core values include helping students to reach their maximum potential, building capacity and developing teacher effectiveness, establishing collaborative relationships and fostering a climate of acceptance and respect.

DESIGNING DATA DRIVEN & STUDENT CENTERED INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

South Gate HS is a learning organization that is focused on continuous improvement. We will use multiple data sources and technological tools to monitor and track student progress. These tools will be utilized to establish school-wide benchmarks and performance metrics. We will continue to use the SMART goal framework to establish goals that are strategic, measurable, attainable, results-driven and time-bound. This framework will help us to focus our priorities, reflect on past and current practices, promote collaboration among stakeholders and build our collective capacity to improve teaching and learning.

In the last four years, South Gate HS has experienced consistent growth in our Academic Performance Index (API) (from 565 to 678). During the same period, our graduation rate has

grown by 17 percentage points (from 53% to 70%). We have also witnessed a steady increase in the percentage of students scoring at Proficient and Advanced levels on the California Standards Test and a significant drop in the percentage of students scoring Below Basic and Far Below Basic.

Despite these improvements, South Gate High still has an opportunity for growth in areas such as numerical reasoning, algebraic thinking, critical-thinking, problem-solving, reading comprehension and writing applications. We need to further develop our capacity to provide instructional support for our English learners and students with special needs. In addition, we need to increase the number of students scoring Proficient and Advanced on the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) and increase our four-year cohort graduation rates.

INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK/PROGRAM- Professional Learning Communities and the Cycle of Continuous Improvement

The instructional framework that will guide our work to improve student achievement is the engagement of all teachers in content-specific professional learning communities (PLCs). This is based on the assumption validated by research (*DuFour, 2006*) that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators.

The professional learning community (PLC) process, in its essence, helps us maintain an unwavering focus on student academic achievement as it focuses squarely on classroom instruction and assessment of student learning, supported by timely and appropriate intervention. In this process, teachers collaborate to define the essential standards that students must learn, align them to state assessments, and develop a curricular map to ensure that all students have access to a “guaranteed and viable curriculum” (*Marzano, 2003*). Teachers then engage in an ongoing cycle of continuous improvement of student learning by creating formative assessments (“for” learning) and summative assessments (“of” learning), setting SMART goals for student performance, and planning and delivering rigorous lessons. Finally, they collaboratively analyze the student learning results, determining the intervention needed and sharing successful instructional practices.

Questions that will guide our work as a Professional Learning Community (PLC):

The overarching goals of our PLC teamwork are two-fold: (1) Increased academic achievement for ALL students, i.e. mastery of State Content Standards and (2) Attainment of the Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLRs) or RAM Goals. The teachers at South Gate will collaborate on a regular basis with their peers in professional learning communities to engage in a cycle of continuous improvement of student learning. Accordingly, teachers will use the following questions to guide/form/serve as the framework for their instructional program, professional development, and student intervention programs:

1. What exactly do we expect ALL students to learn?
2. How do we guarantee that ALL students have access to a rigorous and challenging curriculum?
3. How will we know if they learned it?
4. How will we respond if they do not learn?
5. How will we respond when some students have already learned it?

Instructional Program/Strategies

Within our instructional framework, built around the concept of professional learning communities, teachers at South Gate HS will address the needs of our diverse student population through the PLC

process of continuous improvement, which is based on an ongoing analysis of student data. As described in the instructional framework, teachers will provide ALL students access to a rigorous and challenging curriculum through the implementation of differentiated instructional strategies and teaching approaches. In accordance with our school's identified needs, in particular, authentic literacy and mathematical reasoning, the instructional strategies identified to best meet the needs of our diverse students include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. ***Focus on the Essential Elements of Effective Instruction***, designed to promote good first instruction that will engage all students in learning rigorous content, such as: Formulating Instructional Objectives, Teaching to the Objectives, Using Evidence-Based Principles of Learning (e.g. Active Participation, Set and Closure, Motivation and Reinforcement), and Monitoring the Progress of Learning and Adjusting our Teaching
2. ***Implementation of Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE)***, which allows teachers to employ specific instructional strategies to increase English learners' access to the core curriculum, while developing their academic language proficiency (e.g. cooperative learning, advanced graphic organizers, instructional conversations, and academic language development)
3. ***Development of Authentic Literacy Techniques***, which promote the academic literacy development of all students, with a focus on purposeful reading, discussion/dialogue, and writing in all curricular areas, whether they be English learners, students with special needs, under-achieving gifted or low socio-economic students
4. ***Use of Selected Marzano Strategies*** to increase our students' access to rigorous lessons and to improve their problem solving, mathematical reasoning and literacy skills
5. ***Incorporation of Project-Based Learning*** to provide students with the opportunity to engage in culturally relevant projects that require such 21st century skills as collaborative teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, and effective communication
6. ***Ongoing Curriculum Calibration***, through the analysis of student work, to ensure that all students have access to curriculum that reflects grade level content standards

SCHOOL CULTURE

SGHS envisions a culture rich with pride and personalization. The implementation of our six small learning communities will help us to establish and nurture relationships between all stakeholders and provide students with a sense of safety and belonging.

A typical day in the life of a South Gate HS student will include a rigorous curriculum comprised of A-G classes that are aligned to state content standards. Students will be taught in a caring and personalized learning environment. Students will interact with a core group of teachers who share a unifying vision and distinctive, thematic instructional program. Students will have opportunities to engage in accountable talk, critical thinking, explorations, inquiry-based activities and project-based learning.

Intervention and academic support will be embedded throughout the school day. Students will receive additional guidance and mentoring from administrators, counselors and support staff. All students will take elective courses that match their academy theme. They will be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities such as athletics, cheer, choir, color guard, dance, drill, and a variety of student interest clubs. Participation in extracurricular activities will provide students with an opportunity to develop social skills, build self-esteem, practice effective communication, solve complex problems and work collaboratively with others.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

South Gate HS parents play a vital role in student academic success. South Gate believes in the establishment of a collaborative culture that promotes parental involvement and active participation. Parents will be engaged through the creation of a welcoming school environment, maintenance of effective home-school communication networks, parent education and parental involvement in all aspects of school governance.

Currently, one of our greatest assets is our parent center. In addition, we are proud of our parent volunteer corps that consists of more than 80 parents who volunteer on a consistent basis. The parent center will continue to provide a variety of classes and workshops such as English-as-a-Second Language, mathematics, computer literacy, positive discipline, parenting and arts/crafts.

SGHS will provide multiple opportunities for parents to meet with teachers, counselors and administrators to discuss student progress. We will offer quarterly parent events such as Back-to-School Night, Parent Conference Night and Open House. Parents will meet bi-annually with counseling staff to participate in the development of student individualized graduation plans. Academy teachers will regularly communicate with parents and will be available throughout the year to meet with students and parents to discuss academic concerns.

STAFFING

South Gate HS will follow the guidelines and procedures established by the California Education Code and the Los Angeles Unified School District. The personnel selection committee will seek candidates who demonstrate a commitment to our shared vision, mission and core beliefs. All candidates must display a willingness to establish high expectations for all students, provide differentiated instruction, design appropriate and timely intervention, implement project-based learning, support technology integration, maintain personalized and caring learning environments, and work with collaborative content teams to ensure high quality and effective instruction.

The selection process will consist of an oral interview to help gauge a candidate's knowledge, skills and practices as they relate to the following teacher practices:

- Engaging and supporting all students in learning;
- Creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning;
- Understanding and organizing subject matter for student learning;
- Planning instruction and designing learning experiences for all students;
- Assessing student learning;
- Developing as a professional educator.

During the interview process, candidates will be asked to articulate how they plan to support the school's mission and vision towards meeting the academic, social and cultural needs of all students. Through this process we will be able hire highly qualified and highly motivated teachers that will help our school continue to succeed.