

Conversation with the Superintendent  
Follow Up Questions  
Alianza Charter School

***Note: Several questions were grouped together for one response when they were similar in nature.***

**1. Are students at all of the high schools in the district able to work towards receiving the Seal of Biliteracy upon graduation?**

Yes, all PVUSD students are able to pursue the Seal of Biliteracy. Below you will see the number of recipients per high school last year:

AHS 23

PVHS 62

WHS 40

The EL Department recently held a meeting with representatives from the three comprehensive HS to begin streamlining and standardizing the process to communicate, recruit and support students to meet the criteria and apply for the Seal. Once established, this standardization will include all the high schools, including alternative and charter schools.

**2. Seal of biliteracy at high school? Watsonville? What's the process?**

Currently, students interested in pursuing the Seal of Biliteracy work with their academic counselor. One of the items that is being standardized is getting the appropriate information to students earlier so they are aware of the criteria and who to talk to if interested. The EL Department is also working with Research and Evaluation to create a simplified report in Illuminate that would identify students that meet certain assessment criteria so counselors would know who to approach individually.

**3. How will the other dual language programs be designed—similarities/differences to Alianza?**

The Master Plan for English Learner Success identifies a variety of Dual Language Models including Two-Way and One-Way (at ratios of either 50-50 or 90-10). Though the Plan does not explicitly favor any individual model it does state that the Early Exit Model is not supported by research. Additionally, the Plan calls for a Dual Language Leadership Team to be the entity charged with researching, developing and assisting schools in the implementation/refinement of their DL models. Concurrently five PVUSD schools, including Alianza, are working with a county network of schools that are developing and refining their models and the principals of four schools, also including Alianza, are involved with CABE BEST--a group of administrators learning how to support DL Models at their sites. At this time Alianza is the only Two-Way Model, but that does not mean they will remain alone in that pursuit. Most of the other schools involved in the network adhere to the 90-10 model, but there are 50-50s in our district and county.

**4. What do you attribute the long term E.L. phenomenon to? How do you plan to tackle this problem?**

There are many reasons for the LTEL phenomenon and PVUSD's Master Plan for EL Success establishes clear expectations and action steps to address most of these reasons. There are two key parts of the Plan that respond specifically to the work ahead.

The Plan begins with a Theory of Action that outlines the actionable steps that will be taken in order to lead to the change we desire--improving outcomes for all students who are learning English and ensuring that all students reach their full potential, graduating from PVUSD schools ready to enter college and/or careers that will allow them to contribute fully to a global society. The Theory of Action identifies six Strategic Goals and the High-Leverage Strategies that support each Strategic Goal so that the plan for strengthening teaching and learning for ELs is clear, coherent, and powerful. High-Leverage Strategies provide specific steps that focus district efforts to achieve lasting improvements quickly and efficiently.

Strategic Goal 1: Improve the systemic coherence of instructional, curricular, and assessment practices for English learners

Strategic Goal 2: Build the capacity of all educators and leaders to provide high-quality learning experiences for all English learners

Strategic Goal 3: Build on English learners' assets and respond to their diverse needs

Strategic Goal 4: Invest in PVUSD's human capacity to effectively serve English learners

Strategic Goal 5: Engage families and community

The second key piece is the Language Development Approach (LDA). The Plan it states that PVUSD believes educators who share an understanding of how language development occurs, along with research-based best instructional practices for English learners, will be able to have a greater impact on student learning. We strive to create this shared understanding through the LDA. This approach will allow us to reach our vision and create a coherent system in which all educators implement common elements of instruction to benefit EL students. The Plan states that we believe any Instructional Model for effective language development needs to include the following eight components that ensure all ELs receive high-quality instruction in all classrooms throughout our district. The essential components include:

- empowered and reflective teachers and site administrators;
- key principles for EL instruction;
- rigorous, grade-level instruction aligned to the CA CCSS and CA ELD Standards;
- scaffolding for access;

- frequent opportunities to engage in academic discourse (oral and written);
- intentional use of designated and integrated ELD opportunities;
- an instructional framework;
- and culturally and linguistically responsive teaching

There is a tremendous amount of work to be done to truly make the changes called for in the Plan. Fortunately, the work has already begun. We are halfway through year one and have already met many of the expectations called for in the first year according to our Five-Year Action Plan.

**5. What is your plan for addressing the many shortages/issues with our SELPA?**

Through the early recruitment efforts of Human Resources, we were almost fully staffed at the beginning of this year for certificated SELPA positions. We had classified openings mostly due to medical and family leaves. We recently reached an agreement with CSEA to use an outside agency to fill classified absences and leave positions as they cannot be filled with another permanent employee. Specifically for Alizana, the site has been fully staffed. However, the Resource Specialist Teacher is over her case load. A solution to that situation is a long-term substitute that will be supporting the overages.

**6. Math programs at high schools?**

All of the comprehensive high schools use College Preparatory Mathematics (CPM). The program is a student-centered, problem-based curriculum with the CCSS Mathematical Practices deeply and interwoven into the fabric of the daily lessons. The course balances procedural fluency (algorithms and basic skills), deep conceptual understanding, strategic competence (problem solving), and adaptive reasoning (application and extension). More information on the program can be found at <https://cpm.org/>.

**7. How long do you plan to be here at PVUSD?**

For me, the most important factor is that I feel that I have made a positive impact on the system, students and the community and that those changes will be maintained past my tenure. Therefore, I do not have a specific timeline as it depends on how quickly the system evolves. My past experience is that process takes significant time and, therefore, I will be here for years to come. It took eight years in San Diego and seven years in Santa Ana for the changes to become the new way of educating and improving the lives of our students and families.

**8. Is there anything the district can do to help our campus be safer? i.e. install a fence/gate around our school, like other schools have gotten installed.**

**This school does not have a security fence around it. Suspicious people come and go, especially during ASP. Can one be put up?**

**Why don't we have a fence? We need this type of security for our students. We've had: students run across the street for balls, strangers coming on campus, students trying to walk home, strangers asking students for "assistance", parents driving onto our playground.**

**What can be done to ensure safety on campus with our site in regards to our open campus?**

For overall safety, each site is updating their Safety Plan by March with a District-wide Operations Plan being developed by the end of the school year.

For safety concerns linked to facilities issues, Alianza Charter School has \$407,000 of remaining Measure L funding. On February 11, 2016, the School Site Council established eleven priority areas. The first four priorities have been completed including four new portables, replacing of roofs, adding additional restrooms and modernizations of existing restrooms. In addition, the site was included in the re-keying project, and a fire suppression water tank was installed. In terms of installing a fence/gate, the Facilities Team has been working with the site on plans to install two 20 feet swing gates and a man gate with panic bar to help with the safety of students and the flow of traffic. This change would cost approximately \$45,000-\$60,000. In order to put a fence up to secure the entire site, it would cost approximately \$75,000-\$90,000. Either of the changes would require a change to the current Measure L site priority list through the School Site Council. Currently, a security fence around entire school is #9 on the priority list.

9. **How/when will the district address our ongoing serious facilities issues at Alianza. Overcrowding, inoperable windows, no hot water, lack of parking, eroded playground etc.**

Overcrowding would be addressed through yearly enrollment. If there is overcrowding, it would require the site to reduce new student enrollees to reduce overcrowding over the next few years. All of our Facilities projects must be approved through the Department of State Architects (DSA). All new facilities must adhere to new State and Federal regulations. Therefore, all windows in all new buildings must meet the CBC 11B-309 requirements. Section 11B-309 specifies the operational requirement in terms of the mechanism of operation, mounting height, reach range, operational method and the force of operation. Most notable, 11B-309 requires a "maximum of 5 pounds of operational force" to open a window. This requirement extends to all facilities that are to be accessible rooms or spaces with the exception of residential dwelling units. Therefore, although the new portables have windows, they cannot be opened as they could not be opened with only 5 pounds of force. There is hot water in the kitchen prep area. As with most public schools, we do not have hot water in bathrooms for risk of scalding.

**10. Can you help us get more parking?**

There is the possibility of placing additional parking in the area where there was the removal of the old portables on the side of the school site. We received a quote from a grading contractor who will install 4 inches of base rock throughout the proposed new parking lot area for \$30,000. This could be funded by a change in Measure L priorities.

**11. Can we get financial support to improve our parking situation and to build a fence for student's safety?**

**Where does the district stand on supporting the much-needed upgrading of Alianza's facilities?**

Along with the remaining Measure L funding, we have already applied for Alianza Modernization Eligibility Funding for 18-19 for \$4.1 Million with the District required match of \$2.7 Million for a total of \$6.9 Million extra dollars going to Alianza facilities projects. This money is dependent on the passage of the newly proposed Prop 13 State Facilities Bond which would replace the already depleted Prop 51 Facilities Bond.

In addition to Measure L funds and possible Prop 13 funds, the District has used bond endowment funds, general funds and developer fees on Alianza Projects. For example, the bond endowment was used for floor replacement of 6 rooms. General funds were used last year to replace the septic system. Facilities Department recently completed the community garden project, installed new bark in the play structures and completed Prop 39 HVAC and lighting upgrades.

**12. How much would it cost the district to fix the field area (80% of the playground area of this school) so it's not useless from November to April? We need that space.**

We had architects out to the site the winter break to review the condition of the field. Due to the type of soil and poor existing drainage lines, the upgrades would cost over \$500,000. This upgrade will be included in the site's Master Plan within the District's new Facility Master Plan. However, most likely, this project would have to happen after the receipt of the Prop 13 monies noted previously.

**13. My two cents Alianza has lost, due to the work of the District, the possibility to maximize the Measure L money. Portables with no windows and the design of a new playground area right outside the door. Look at the bark that means: a) a lot of noise (as we need to have our doors opened for air, b) flies (a lot of flies) in the classroom. That take us to an environment not conducive to learning.**

The use of the Measure L funds was determined by the School Site Council at each site. The site has the ability to change their priorities as their needs change. In the previous

response, I addressed the reason for the non-operable windows in the portables. The site might consider purchasing the netting that WCSA uses to address the fly issue.

**14. What would be the possibility of starting public transportation bus service to the rural areas such as WCSA and Alianza?**

Currently, Alianza is utilizing 9 stops throughout the district using District transportation at a cost of approximately \$400 a day. Below are the costs associated with using public transportation using the two different transit systems. This would have to be a cost that the site would have to be willing to absorb to purchase passes for the students that would benefit from the service.

**Monterey / Salinas Transit**

From the Las Lomas Area \$1.75 discounted fare w/proof (age 18 and under), one way. This would drop off at the Watsonville Transit at W. Lake & Rodriguez. They do offer discounted passes. 7 Day Super \$25.31 Day

**Santa Cruz Transit**

From the Aptos area (age 17 and under) Day Pass - \$6, 3 Day Pass \$15, 7 Day Pass \$15, 31 Day Pass \$48, 15 Ride Pass \$27 and will drop at the Watsonville Transit same as above.

**15. I have been to quite a few schools in the district. Why are other sites allowed microwaves, refrigerators etc. in their classrooms? Can we please have our personal appliances back in our rooms?**

As you are aware, there was a call placed to Cal OSHA which resulted in a formal visit to the site. Their inspection resulted in findings which we are mandated to implement at the site. The findings included improper use of the boiler room as an office space, tripping hazards, and fire hazards (personal appliances and requirement to reduce paper on all walls to 20% of wall space), and flooring issues (room 2 and Staff Room). Due to these findings, Alianza had to immediately comply with the required modifications. We will have a gradual removal of personal appliances throughout the District in the upcoming years beginning with the appliances that cause the highest fire hazard risk.

**16. Why is Maintenance not doing the up keep on weeds that they used to do around our campus?**

The District banned the use of Round Up several years ago. Although we subsequently increased the number of Ground Crew by three people, it is not enough to be able to effectively manually pull the weeds. The roving ground crew does visit Alianza weekly for mowing and weekly for grounds work.

**17. We continue to have problems with traffic during the beginning and end of the day. Is it possible to have someone from the district to come and see the situation to help with the problem?**

Richard Reid, our new Director of Maintenance and Operations and Ryan Block from Facilities will be meeting on site Thursday, January 16, 2020 from 3:00 -4:00 p.m. to see the flow of traffic and identify solutions to the traffic issue. Katie Powell, Director of Transportation will also be observing bus movement and how it affects pedestrian and car traffic.

**18. I am concerned with what I believe to be a shift in childhood/parenting due to the amount of screen time and the focus on social media. Has there been conversation about how to best teach in this new context?**

One of our Site Techs, Jen Salinas Holz, has been working with Ruby Vasquez and her Parent Education team and have done Parent Education nights talking about screen time. Here is a link for a presentation they did in November geared to parents of the younger spectrum. They also have a presentation geared for parents of teens.

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1tYcj9hA3N4eH31nflv4Y7A75yYehvrXqv7jWGUTwH3Q/edit?usp=sharing>

The Parent Educators have also presented this year a technology series at HA Hyde. It will be offered at the February parent conference. If Alianza would like to have the support of Ruby Vasquez, she has offered to present to a parent group. Independently, staff can access Common Sense Media which has a lot of good resources for parents regarding screen

time <https://www.common sense media.org/screen-time>

**19. Will teachers get a raise?**

The entire county, including our staff and students, encounter the challenges of the high cost of living in Santa Cruz County. As with our staff, we had a significant decline in enrollment this year with many families moving out of state to find affordable living.

There was a recent article on the cost of living for educators which you can find at this link: <https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/06/20/santa-cruz-ranks-as-nations-least-affordable-city-for-teachers/>

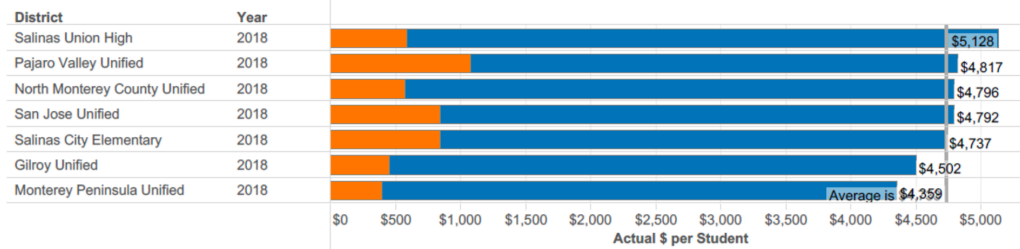
Over the past year, PVUSD has had a better retention rate and lower amount of vacancies in part because of being the second highest take home pay in the Tri-County. Although many Districts salary schedule shows a higher pay, because our staff does not have to pay for their benefits or a percentage of the yearly increases to benefits, our take home pay is higher. Below is a chart that shows that data. The orange portion of the line is the amount dedicated to health and welfare costs.

### Line Item Spending Comparison

District(s): Gilroy Unified, Monterey Peninsula Unified, North Monterey County Unified and 4 more

Source: California Department of Education Financial and Enrollment Data

Note: "Current Expense of Education" is defined by CA DOE



Recently, we received positive news as both the Federal Budget released on December 18<sup>th</sup> and the California Governor's Budget released on January 10<sup>th</sup> show increased funding for schools. This new funding will help with both our declining enrollment and increased costs. As you know, wages and benefits are negotiated items, however, we will make every effort to provide the best compensation package to our employees.