

Re: Conversation with The Superintendent Follow Up Questions for Ann Soldo Elementary School

In an effort to remain connected to the sites and have frequent interaction, I have begun my Conversations with the Superintendent each Wednesday with different staffs during modified day. Below you will see the questions and responses of questions from staff that were not able to be addressed within the allocated meeting time.

1. What do you and other PVUSD administrators think the low math scores are attributed to? Bridges?

Our students need opportunities to be mathematically proficient. The Math Framework provides us with key information to help us implement robust instruction. The Common Core State Standards call for three main shifts in instruction. Rigor is one them, which means that students pursue conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application with equal intensity. We need to ensure students develop conceptual understanding and Bridges does a great job of supporting this with the activities in the sessions. However, that requires us to focus not just on Number Corners but also the Work Stations as well. At this time, Bridges implementation is not consistent at school sites.

Students are being assessed differently by CAASPP. The question types have changed, expectations are higher and students are asked to explain their mathematics thinking; this is why it is important that they have conceptual understanding. Students need to be involved in the learning process and we need to empower them to take ownership of their learning.

Students need to be presenting mathematical thinking and defending their answers. These discussions must take place rather than a focus on finishing the worksheets. Student feedback must take place regularly via formative assessments and often we wait too long to let students know what math concept(s) they are struggling with.

Lastly, we need to access our best allies, parents and instructional coaches. Communication with parents and how they can support their child at home with math can improve.

Instructional coaches are available to support teachers to plan math instruction, review data to determine how to best meet students' needs so students can access grade-level standards, and introduce and/or support with instructional strategies to create the shifts necessary to provide opportunities for all students to be mathematically proficient.

2. What counseling services are available per pupil at all levels? Will this be increasing?

Elementary Schools have 1 day/week Socio-Emotional Counselor. Each Middle School has 1 Academic Counselor and between 3-5 days/week of a Socio-Emotional Counselor.

AHS has 3.5 Academic Counselors and 1 Socio-Emotional Counselor. PVHS has 4 Academic Counselors and 1 Socio-Emotional Counselor and WHS has 5 Academic Counselors, 1 Intervention Counselor and 1 Socio-Emotional Counselor. All Sites have PVPSA interns. We have found that many of our students need more intensive services than can be provided by our socio-emotional counselors with a PPS credential. Therefore, we have been supporting PVPSA as they expand their level of services. This past year, PVPSA increased services and served more than 7,000 of our students.

3. Counseling is great but we need much more. How can we relieve social/emotional demands that teachers deal with constantly (and that does not allow teaching)? One day a week is not adequate for our need.

It is true that a one day/week counselor cannot meet the social / emotional and mental health concerns of an entire student body. However, we do know that school-wide practices in PBIS and our SEL curriculum, Sanford Harmony, has been shown to reduce the number of students needing counseling. Also, as we add in more Tier II practices such as Check In, Check Out and Zones of Regulation that we will see improvement in both mental health and behavior of our students. The Socio-Emotional Counselor will work to help families access services through a variety of community agencies or private insurance. However, it is more effective when schools develop Multi-Disciplinary Teams or Wellness Teams (Consisting of admin, teacher, nurse, psychologist, PVPSA counselor, Socio-Emotional Counselor, etc.) to discuss students in need and plan interventions and referrals.

4. Our KK counselor serves 7 students, medical (1/2 day a week), 5 students socio- emotional counselor is on early retirement so...we need more counseling/socio- emotional support.

KK Counselors and Medi-Cal Counselors are placed by PVPSA. Due to HIPPA, we often do not know the number of students being seen. We do collect data on all of our counselor contacts. So far this year, Ann Soldo's Socio-Emotional Counselor has made a large impact with 57 contacts (i.e. individual student meeting, family contact, outside referrals, consultation with teachers and outside providers, attendance interventions). We will continue to support PVPSA in expanding services for our students.

5. It would be great if there were Spanish classes available at the DO for teachers who would like to become bilingual.

This was a wonderful idea. The EL Department will look into offering this support to teachers. In the meantime, people can access applications such as Duo lingo for free and begin to pick up some Spanish.

6. My ELL students get frustrated that they have to take ELD when the EO students get to do science fair and enrichment activities.

The ELA/ELD Framework allows for designated ELD to take place during the ELA time.

The suggested time would be during the Connect Across Discipline Unit projects (Inquiry Based Learning that connects to the essential questions) and/or Readers' Theater. Another suggestion is while students are in designated ELD, EO/RFEP students are strengthening their Language Standards and not in outside enrichment activities such as science fair as everyone should have access to the Science Fair.

7. You said every single student gets electives in PVUSD. At middle school, RSP students do not get electives...Why?

This is not a consistent practice throughout the District. Some sites are pulling their special education students for the IEP specific goals during their elective period. As we are beginning the implementation of SIPPS Plus at the middle school level, site teams are identifying the best times to pull special education students from core instruction. There is an urgency to provide literacy instruction as the current middle school special education student on average reads between a first and third grade level.

8. I think we need a poster that encourages us to be critical of the status quo. Sustained Excellence cannot be a goal unless our underlying structures are questioned, dynamic and reflect a group's changing needs. What do you think?

I completely agree that we cannot be content with the status quo. Currently, the majority of our students are not successful regardless of the assessment point you look at. Although we have improved over the last two years, we are still not successful enough in key areas that are indicators for future success including literacy proficiency in 3rd grade, math scores in 8th grade and successful completion of credits in 9th grade. The purpose of the pilot to scale initiatives that we have been implementing is to allow the system to test out new ways to support our students in an environment that allows us to question and flex as needed.