



## Palisades Charter High School Root Cause Analysis

### *Introduction*

In the 2017- 18 school year Palisades Charter High School earned a six-year **clear** Western Association Schools and College's accreditation. In this successful self-study, diverse data sets were analyzed to form a picture of the strengths and needs of the school. Some of the following school's strengths identified are:

- *Professional Learning Communities (PLC)*

Vibrant PLC ecosystem

PLC coordinator

Pull-out training days for PLC

PLC goals for student learning and student skill acquisition

Common formative and summative assessments

Performance tasks

Writing prompts and common rubrics created by PLCs

Curricular and school culture that reflects work of PLCs (Freshmen Pods, MathLab, Social Science and English honors)

- *Career Technology Education*

Eleven career pathways across 4 career sectors; student-empowering classroom environments that exhibit real-world application through student projects

Director of Development Position to support CTE development

Career Center

Career workshops offered by The Village Nation and Fuerza Unida

- *Technology*

In-House Professional Development for faculty in tech plan

Adoption of tech standards (ISTE) and revised AUP

Tech-embedded skills in career pathways

Expansion of STEAM courses

Use of technology by teachers and/or students in classrooms

Commitment to access for all students at school and at home

EdTech Coordinator position

- *Expansion of course offerings*

CTE pathways

Freshmen pods such as social justice, entrepreneurship, and STEAM

African American literature

African American US History

Chicano Literature courses



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ERWC courses

ELA support classes

- *Accessibility*

Freshman pods

Math paraprofessionals

MathLab

Study Center

Honors courses in Social Sciences, English, and World Languages

Pali Academy

Pali Online Program

Secondly, PCHS has adopted an assessment model utilizing multiple measures to assess the effectiveness of the instructional program and its impact on student learning. As presented in the school's self-study and discussed during the accreditation visit, the assessment model includes measures of student outcomes listed below:

### Essential Assessment Measures

- English language acquisition of English learners
  - achievement on the ELPAC assessments
  - rates of reclassification of English language learners (ELLs) from Limited-English proficient (LEP) to Fluent-English proficient (FEP)
- Indicators of college preparation
- PSAT results
- SAT scores
- Advanced Placement scores
- Enrollments and ethnicity reports in AP coursework
- Number of AP tests taken
- Students' pass rates on AP tests
- Grade 11 students' English and Math achievement levels on the Smarter Balanced Assessment, which measures progress toward proficiency on the Common Core English and math standards
- Assessment of students' school attendance
- ADA rates
- Student tardiness
- Full-period trancies
- Numbers of chronic absentees
- Student dropout rate
- Student in-class performance on formative assessments
- Student GPA data
- Students with "D" or "F" grades at the regular grading periods



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Student performance on the California Physical Fitness Tests

- Student graduation rates

### Additional Measures of Student Achievement

- Student discipline data
- Student enrollment and completion of dual-enrollment coursework
- Students' participation in the school's sports program
- State Seal of Bi-literacy data
- Responses to "school satisfaction" surveys of students, parents, and staff
- Formative assessments that measure students' skill and knowledge levels in English, Math, Science, and Social Science core standards (Mastery Manager, Scholastic Reading Inventory, Albert Io, iXL, Achieve 3000, Accelus, etc.)

Finally, PCHS prides itself in the school's last annual charter oversight review conducted by LAUSD in 2017, which cited data-based decision making as a strength.

(G5) DATA-BASED DECISION-MAKING The Governing Board of Palisades Charter High School regularly monitors school performance providing updated internal and standardized academic data which informs decision-making as evidenced from direct observation and from binder review during oversight with examples of discussion from agendas/minutes dated 5/11/17, 4/6/17, 3/9/17, and 2/16/17. (LAUSD Charter Annual Review 2017)

### **Root Cause Analysis:** Skewed Metrics

This year, the LAUSD Office of Data and Accountability designed a metric in which CAASPP data from three schools were selected by the office and compared to Palisades Charter High School CAASPP scores. This metric was called a "Similar Schools Median." The schools selected by the Office of Data and Accountability for the LAUSD Charter Office Criteria Renewal deemed "similar" to Palisades Charter High School (PCHS) are:

1. CHAMPS-- Charter High School of Arts, Multimedia, and Performing
2. Harbor Teacher Preparation Academy
3. High Tech High Los Angeles.

CHAMPS is a 9-12 high school that serves a predominantly Latino population with a total enrollment of 750 students of which 179 are juniors and were tested through CAASPP.

Harbor Teacher Preparation Academy is a 9-12 high school with a total enrollment of 453, of which 125 are juniors who would have taken the CAASPP. Additionally, its population is 54% Latinx and 20% Filipino. The final school identified as similar to PCHS is High Tech LA. This high school of 9-12 grades has a total enrollment of 394, of which 93 were juniors that took the CAASPP.



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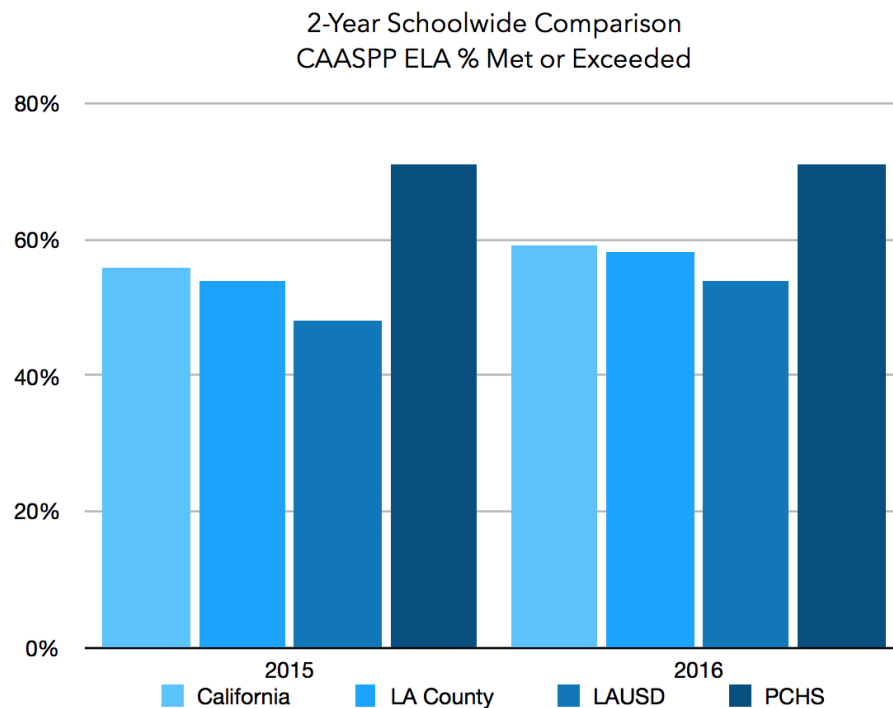
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In contrast, PCHS has a total enrollment 3,056 students, including 725 juniors who take the CAASPP test. The average of these three schools' enrollments is approximately 532. Compared to this average, PCHS has an enrollment over six times the average enrollment of these schools. In fact, CHAMP's total population is approximately 25% of our school population.

A PCHS study of each of these schools revealed that the enrollment, demographic, and socioeconomic status of these populations are not comparable to the student population at Palisades Charter High School.

CAASPP comparison data would be more accurate and meaningful if data were analyzed both from a wide and narrow comparison. However, the narrow comparison should include schools that are similar to PCHS in size and population.

The first analysis is a wide comparison of CAASPP results with the state, county, and district results.

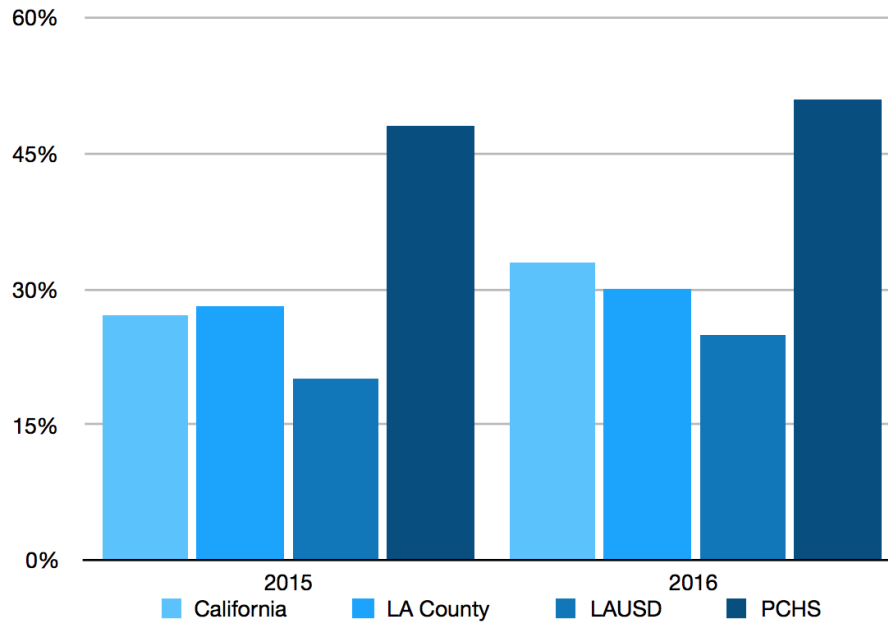




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Schoolwide Comparison  
CAASPP Math % Met or Exceeded

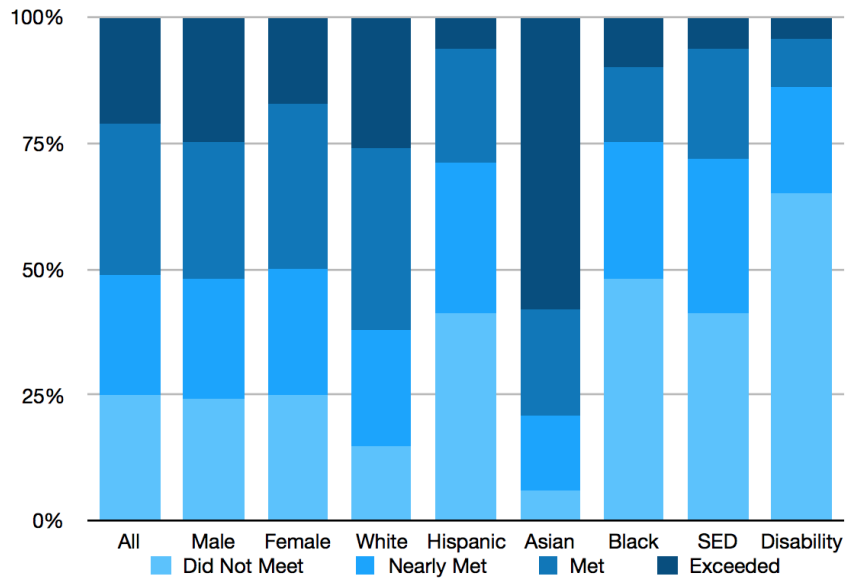




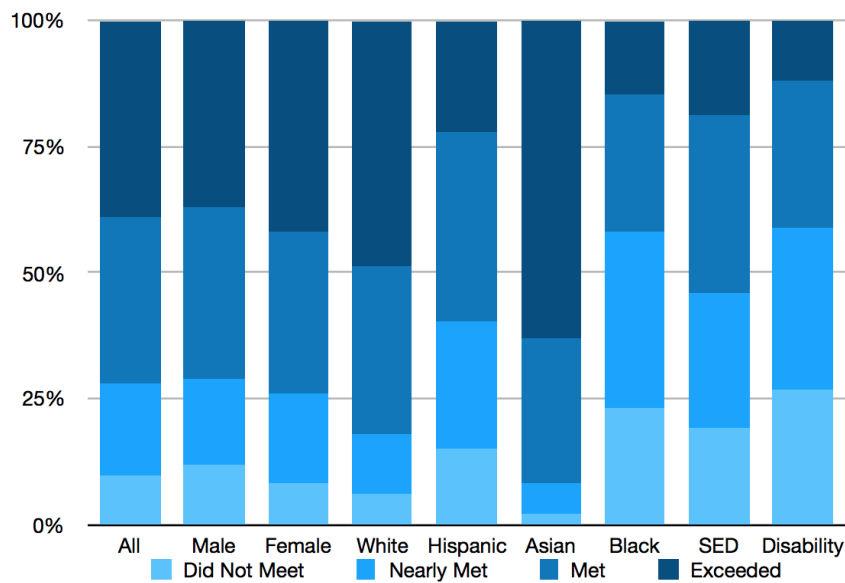
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PCHS Disaggregated 2016  
CAASPP Math % Met or Exceeded



PCHS Disaggregated 2016  
CAASPP ELA % Met or Exceeded





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External student achievement data from 2015-2017 CAASPP scores reveal several dynamics at PCHS. When viewed through the narrow lens of CAASPP achievement, PCHS still remains a high-performing school with gradual improvement in overall student learning outcomes.

However, there remain persistent gaps between white and Asian students, and Black/African

American and Latinx students, most of whom travel a significant distance to Pali from areas east of La Cienega Boulevard with significantly lower median income and parental education levels. Significant and persistent gaps also exist between other SED and disability students.

When looking at how PCHS compares to similar schools, PCHS analyzed schools that were from the given LAUSD data set that had similar enrollment, junior class cohort size, educational programs, and student populations. The following data sets show a realistic comparison to similar schools. This is represented by our calculated “Similar” Schools Median.

### *Multi-year Graduation Rates Similar School, Resident School, LAUSD*

| LD | BD | School                        | Subgroup     | Number of 2015-16 cohort students | 2013-14 Graduation Rate | 2014-15 Graduation Rate | 2015-16 Graduation Rate | Change from 2015-16 |
|----|----|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| XR | 4  | Palisades Charter High        | All Students | 738                               | 95.7                    | 95.1                    | 96.1                    | 0.9                 |
|    |    | "Similar" Schools Median      | All Students | 513                               | 87                      | 87.8                    | 89.7                    | 2.6                 |
| W  | 4  | University High               | All Students | 379                               | 87                      | 87.8                    | 90.8                    | 3                   |
| WJ | 4  | Venice High                   | All Students | 445                               | 79.6                    | 78.8                    | 79.8                    | 1                   |
| W  | 1  | Hamilton High                 | All Students | 653                               | 83.9                    | 83.2                    | 89.3                    | 6.1                 |
| NW | 4  | Taft Charter High             | All Students | 513                               | 89.5                    | 91.9                    | 89.7                    | -2.2                |
| XR | 3  | Birmingham Comm. Charter High | All Students | 712                               | 89                      | 91.2                    | 93.8                    | 2.6                 |
|    |    | Resident Schools Median       | All Students | 199                               | 76.7                    | 77.4                    | 78.6                    | 1.2                 |
|    |    | LAUSD                         | All Students | 34563                             | 70.2                    | 72.2                    | 77.3                    | 5.1                 |

The following schools were analyzed for comparison:

1. University High
2. Venice High
3. Hamilton High
4. Taft Charter High
5. Birmingham Community Charter High

In composing appropriate comparisons within the data set, see the attached data sets for graduation trends, suspension rates, and CAASPP scores. PCHS is out-scoring the Resident School Median, LAUSD, and our own adjusted Similar School Median. (See attachment 1)

### **Root cause analysis:** CAASPP test limitations

Using the CAASPP test as a primary way to measure student achievements has its limitations. The primary limitation is that it is a test of English and Math only, it is not a measure of school quality although it is commonly misinterpreted that way. CAASPP provides data that is not fully disaggregated. For example, the test scores can tell us how Socio-economically disadvantaged Latinx students are doing, however it cannot differentiate how many of the same students may or may not also be English learners, have learning disabilities, are migrant, or have parents with



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various education levels to inform precision targeting of actions and supports services. “Apples to Apples” comparisons are rare on the state’s data site.

CAASPP test bias is an ongoing debate. Computer adaptive tests by nature remove students from the same set of experiences/test items which may affect the comparability of test results.

Language skills related to fully understanding the question being asked may introduce a language fluency bias and a wrong answer where a student may actually know the content. Life experience perspective in responding to the constructed response, performance task, or interpreting question meaning creates inherent socioeconomic, ethnic, parent education level, and language fluency biases.

PCHS concluded that, overall, comparing school test scores are not representative of differences in the strength of educational programs so much as reflections of the demographic challenges in the neighborhoods that the school serves.

Given the CAASPP limitations, PCHS is continually exploring the best use of its CAASPP testing data, while keeping in mind that the state testing system is still in the process of refinement.

### **Root cause analysis:**

*The root cause analysis on the decline in performance in ELA for Asian, Latinx, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and White students determined that there are multifaceted reasons that the performance scores have not jumped.*

In a continuous effort to improve all PCHS student learning outcomes, including but not limited to the following groups, Asian, Latinx, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and White students; the school’s executive team, Governing Board and school-site leadership have developed and executed numerous plans. Additionally, PCHS has an active Long Term Strategic Planning (LTSP) committee that is comprised of several sub-committees, one of which is the Academic Achievement Committee.

PCHS executive team continuously analyzes and reviews data amongst the team and with various stakeholder groups that include teachers, parents, faculty, and staff. An extensive school-wide survey, known as the Columbia survey, is utilized each year to collect pertinent detailed input from various stakeholder groups. The annual survey results help inform school-wide goals and establish benchmarks.

To address PCHS decline in ELA SBAC scores in the aforementioned subgroups, PCHS is increasing in-class supports through SDAIE strategies, cross-curricular writing, and have





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opened sheltered classes, and reading courses for students who are tested with the English department diagnostic.

With a focus on improving the achievement outcome for PCHS students with disabilities, the following actions are occurring:

- Collaborative classes, co-taught by General and Special Education teachers in:
  - English 11
  - Plans for a collaborative Social Science class(es) with a focus on strengthening written language
- Special education teachers are active members of PLC's to ensure students in core content Special Day Classes have access to the General Education curriculum
- SDP 12th grade English course design to meet the ECRW standards for admissions to Cal State
- Reteaching responses to Interim Assessment Block results in grades 9-11
- Focused staff development to ensure appropriate accommodations are provided to students taking state assessments

### **Root Cause Analysis: Math CAASPP**

*Root cause analysis and detailed plans that outline the actions of the school's executive team, Governing Board, and school-site leadership to improve the decline in performance in Math for Asian, Latinx, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and White students*

In a continuous effort to improve all PCHS student learning outcomes, including but not limited to the following groups: Asian, Latinx, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and White students the school's executive team, Governing Board and school-site leadership have developed and executed numerous plans. Additionally, PCHS has an active Long Term Strategic Plan (LTSP) committee that is comprised of several sub-committees, one of which is the Academic Achievement Committee.

The PCHS executive team continuously analyzes and reviews statewide, similar school, school wide, and departmental internal data, both with the team and with various stakeholder groups that include teachers, parents, faculty, and staff. An extensive school-wide survey, known as the Columbia survey, is utilized each year to collect pertinent detailed input from various stakeholder groups. The annual survey results help inform school-wide goals and establish benchmarks. Additionally, the math department collects its own survey data to assess its effectiveness with students.



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### *Root Cause Analysis*

Statistically, consistent performance is shown in Math CAASPP assessments, and a performance plateau has been stubbornly present.

In its root cause analysis, PCHS concluded that there is no one root cause for the underperformance of the identified subgroups. Therefore, PCHS is taking a multi-pronged approach to increase achievement. The following are elements of a school wide plan that aims to create a positive trend in math student achievement in all subgroups:

Math Task Force and Action Plan (see attached)  
Math Paraprofessional Program (initiated in 2017)  
Math Lab expansion (initiated in 2017)  
Math Peer Tutors placement in targeted math courses (initiated in 2018)  
Middle School Articulation with Paul Revere (initiated in 2017)  
Testing Coordinator and Counselor Position filled  
Continued Teacher training in Interim Assessment Block data and state testing  
Addition of collaborative classes (Special Education and Math departments)  
Interim Assessment Block formative data used to create PLC work plans  
Jo Boaler (Stanford University) Growth Mindset Training to all Math Department Staff  
Math curriculum and course review  
Math Campaign/Focus Groups with Fuerza Unida and Black Student Union  
AP Information Week and Fuerza Unida and Black Student Union pull out meetings  
Articulation and visits with schools with high-level math performance (DaVinci and High Tech High)  
Special Education Department training on state testing platforms and analysis of embedded and non-embedded student test accommodation

With a focus on improving the achievement outcome for PCHS students with disabilities, the following actions are occurring:

- Collaborative classes, co-taught by General and Special Education teachers in:
  - Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II
- Special education teachers are active members of PLC's to ensure students in core content Special Day Classes have access to the General Education curriculum
- Reteaching responses to Interim Assessment Block results in grades 9-11
- Focused staff development to ensure appropriate accommodations are provided to students taking state assessments



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### Reply to Outreach

*How does the school conduct outreach for Students who qualify for Free/Reduced Priced Meals, African Americans, English Learners, Latinos, and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students?*

Each PCHS family is sent the Free and Reduced Lunch Application at the start of every school year. The students must turn the Free and Reduced lunch application before their schedules are released to them. In fact, this application is available to families in different languages throughout the entire school year. This ensures we receive all applications from all of our students; even the families that do not qualify nor want assistance must submit an application with their students' name at the top and the financial information left blank.

PCHS has parent-funded school buses available that serve a broad range of geographic areas around Los Angeles. For socioeconomically disadvantaged students, PCHS finances school bus scholarship assistance to families who demonstrate financial need, and solicits additional school bus donations to further assist students of financial need. Traveling families can appeal to receive additional financial assistance for school bus transportation throughout the school year should their financial situations change.

PCHS also works with Metro LA and the Big Blue Bus (BBB) public transportation services to assist students that utilize public transportation to attend PCHS. PCHS has increased the number of buses servicing the local bus stops at campus, as well as jointly creating a BBB Pali Express bus that runs without stops to/from the Santa Monica Metro train station and PCHS. Additionally, we have arranged with Metro's Customer Center (MCC) to be at PCHS on a monthly basis for students (and faculty/staff) to apply for or reload TAP Cards.

To maintain diversity, PCHS attends a variety of middle school recruitment fairs throughout Los Angeles. These middle schools are diverse and represent a large population of African American, English Learners, Latinx, and Socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Such schools include:

- Animo Westside Charter Middle (60% Latinx, 32% African American, 92% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, 13% English Learners)
- KIPP Charter Schools (80% Latinx, 18% African American, 90% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, 22% English Learners)
- New LA Middle School (82.5% Latinx, 92% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, 15% English Learners)
- Emerson Charter Middle School (40% Latinx, 20% African American, 56% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged)



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- Palms Middle School (45% Latinx, 25% African American, 64% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged)
- Libertas College Prep (72% Latinx, 26% African American, 94.5% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, 24.5% English Learners)
- Paul Revere Middle School (Similar Demographics to PCHS)

The PCHS Board of Trustees, through the Charter Committee, is exploring changes to the school's admissions process in order to specifically increase student diversity.

PCHS has a variety of programs and institutions that serve to support our African-American, Latinx, English Learners, and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students. Support for college and career readiness is provided through programs such as The Village Nation and Fuerza Unida, programs that support African-American and Latinx students respectively. The Career Center and the College Center are designed with the intent of supporting PCHS students in their postsecondary plans. The Study Center provides free tutoring for all students. The centers provide counseling, workshops, financial aid workshops information, and direct support to all students. Student unions, such as Black Student Union and Latinx Student Union, encourage, support, and develop students' postsecondary plans. ELA and Math specific data is discussed through a math Campaign and focus groups with Fuerza Unida and Black Student Union, as well as through an AP Information Week and with Fuerza Unida and Black Student Union pull out meetings. Through these unions, African American/Black students have shown significant gains in A-G course attainment.

Data about student performance is communicated through student and parent participation programs including Families Acting Towards Results (FACTOR), The Village Nation, Fuerza Unida, Parent Booster Club, Palisades Parent Special Education Committee (PPSEC), Bilingual Advisory Committee, weekly email blasts, the PCHS Website, town hall meetings, Back to School Nights, Parent Orientation meetings and English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC). Additionally, PCHS participates in multiple parent programs to increase communication between parents and school staff through presentations, town halls, evening/weekend parent classes, dialogues, and committee work. These parent programs include:

- FACTOR (Families Acting Towards Results)
- The Village Nation (TVN)
- Fuerza Unida
- English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)

PCHS complies with all federal and state laws to ensure the needs of students with disabilities are met. Outreach begins prior to the school year for students with Individualized Education Plans or Section 504 Plans to ensure services and supports are in place on the first day of school.



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Finally, PCHS counselors meet with all 9th-grade students to develop their four-year plans to promote positive post-secondary outcomes. Parents are informed of the plans. Counselors meet with all interested juniors and their families concerning postsecondary options. Counselors communicate with all seniors and their families concerning graduation status. Counselors are available to students and their families for any needs. The College Center offers workshops to assist students and their families in preparing for college, including financial aid. The FACTOR program is designed to assist the parents of first-generation college-bound students. Workshops and information are provided to assist parents to navigate the process of choosing and applying to a college.

### **Attachments**

1. PCHS Similar Schools Data Set
2. Math Task Force Action Plan
3. PCHS LCAP
4. PCHS WASC six-year action plan