EDUCATIONAL EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE AUDIT REPORT

CORONADO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

NATIONAL CENTER FOR URBAN SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION

NCUST

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SDSU

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BACKGROUND

In 2005, San Diego State University founded the National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST) to help school districts and their partners transform schools into places where all students achieve academic proficiency, evidence a love of learning, and graduate well-prepared to succeed in post-secondary education, the workplace, and their communities. To this end, NCUST identifies, celebrates, and studies schools where all demographic groups achieve outstanding educational successes. Our annual America's Best Schools Award Program provides us the opportunity to learn from schools that exemplify both equitable and excellent learning results. We strive to disseminate all we learn from these schools as we endeavor to support other schools and districts that are eager to pursue similar outstanding results.

Our research has resulted in a substantial knowledge base regarding the beliefs, characteristics, structures, systems, and practices that lead all groups of students to excellent learning outcomes. Key findings are documented in these books: *Teaching Practices from America's Best Urban Schools* (2012), *Leadership in America's Best Urban Schools* (2017); *Five Practices for Improving the Success of Latino Students: A Guide for Secondary School Leaders* (2018); *Teaching Practices from America's Best Urban Schools, 2nd edition* (2019); and When *Black Students Excel: How Schools Can Engage and Empower Black Students* (2022). This knowledge base is the benchmark we utilize when conducting our equity audit process and is the focus of our work aimed at building the capacity of other educators. We have found impressive similarities across the high-performing schools we have studied despite differences in location, size, enrollment characteristics, grade-level configurations, expenditures, and other factors. In short, the educators in these schools improved curricula by teaching more rigorous content to a greater depth of understanding than other urban schools. They planned and delivered instruction in ways that were more likely to lead their students to mastery of the concepts and skills they were teaching. They fostered school cultures in which all students, teachers, parents, and support staff felt safe, cared for, valued, and respected. They built and implemented a coherent educational improvement system – a set of interdependent structures designed to support the ongoing improvement of student outcomes across a variety of indicators (e.g., achievement, extracurricular engagement, graduation, etc.). And, perhaps most importantly, these actions were guided by their shared belief in the capacity of all of their students to succeed.

Between March 1, 2023, and March 23, 2023, NCUST conducted equity and excellence visits at the four Coronado Unified School District schools, consisting of Silver Strand Elementary, Village Elementary, Coronado Middle School, and Coronado High School. These audits were designed to explore the similarities and differences between the practices and structures in place throughout the Coronado Unified School District and those that NCUST has identified in schools that have been very successful in educating all demographic groups of students. During the audit process, NCUST examined critical school characteristics, such as school culture, student access to rigorous curricula, and the quality of teaching and learning. In each of these areas, NCUST considered how processes, structures, and systems influenced what we found and how they could influence powerful, sustained improvement efforts. What follows is a description of our audit process, key findings emerging from the data, and recommendations intended to help the Coronado Unified School District develop, refine, and prioritize their improvement plans in ways that will lead to higher levels of success for the diverse populations of students they serve.

METHODOLOGY

Prior to each school visit, an NCUST representative contacted the principals to arrange opportunities to observe classrooms and interview teachers, parents, students, and support staff. Also, NCUST representatives compiled data regarding school demographics, achievement, attendance, student behavior, and school success.

NCUST staff conducted informal observations of common areas, offices, cafeteria, library, playgrounds, and the general school environment at each of the four schools. Additionally, the equity audit team members visited most classrooms at each school. An NCUST classroom observation protocol was utilized to document the part of the lesson observed, the number and demographics of students, and the cognitive demand of the activity in which students were engaged during the observation. In addition, evidence was collected regarding the climate and culture of the classroom, a variety of teaching practices utilized, teacher clarity and focus on mastery, student engagement, and levels of understanding exhibited by various groups of students.

In addition to the observations, at each school, a member of the NCUST team interviewed the school principal and a sample of teachers, other certified/credentialed school staff members, students, and parents. Also, NCUST representatives interviewed the CUSD Superintendent and district office staff. Standard protocols were used and included open-ended questions relevant to the expertise of participants. As well, a few questions were common across groups to gather perspectives about core practices from multiple perspectives. Generally, participants were asked about their roles and responsibilities, experiences at school, and their opinions about strengths and needs at each school. All stakeholders were thoughtful and reflective and contributed significantly to our understanding of the Coronado Unified School District. Artifacts, such as master schedules, bell schedules, curriculum documents, school profiles, and data reports, also informed our study and understanding.

Upon completion of the interviews and observations, the NCUST team examined the data collected, identified themes, and compared the school's practices with the practices found in the high-performing schools NCUST has awarded and studied. The findings in this report reflect a triangulation of the multiple data sources cited above; however, it is important to note that the findings are based upon a snapshot of each school. Teaching and learning observed on the days of the visit may or may not be representative of typical teaching and learning occurring throughout the district. Similarly, the interviews conducted may or may not be representative of the sentiments and opinions of all teachers and administrators. That said, we were able to hear from many stakeholders, and clear themes emerged from the data across multiple stakeholder groups. As well, this aligned with our observations and patterns in the quantitative data.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Students in the Coronado Unified School District

According to the California Department of Education's California School Dashboard, the Coronado Unified School District served approximately 2,747 students in preschool through twelfth grade in the 2021-2022 academic year. Of all students, 7.6% met the eligibility criteria for the free or reduced-price lunch program in the 2021-2022 academic year. The largest racial/ethnic group served was White/Caucasian, comprising 57.1% of the student population. The second-largest racial/ethnic group was Latino/Hispanic, comprising 25.4% of the student population. Additionally, 7.2% of the students were multiracial, 1.5% of the students were Filipino, 1.3% of the students were Asian, 1.1% of the students were African American, 0.4% of the students were Pacific Islander, and 0.1% of the students are American Indian during the 2021-2022 academic year. Approximately 5.4% of the students were designated as English learners, and 12.2% received special education services as of the 2021-2022 academic year.

Table 1.1 Coronado Unified Demographics 2021-2022 Source: CA School Dashboard		
Race/Ethnicity	**Total**	**Percentage**
African American	29	1.1%
American Indian	4	0.1%
Asian	35	1.3%
Filipino	40	1.5%
Latino/Hispanic	698	25.4%
Multiracial	198	7.2%
Pacific Islander	11	0.4%
White	1,569	57.1%
Student Group	**Total**	**Percentage**
English Learners	149	5.4%
Foster Youth	1	0%
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	209	7.6%
Students with Disabilities	334	12.2%

Staff in the Coronado Unified School District

Throughout the Coronado Unified School District, students benefit from a team of appropriately certificated and well-experienced educators. In high-performing schools, professional development is focused on a few critical improvement issues. As well, professional development influences real improvements in practice when the same few topics are pursued until changes in practice and/or changes in outcomes are achieved. Also, the likelihood of a positive impact on student learning is enhanced by professional development that is tightly aligned to the focus of teacher collaboration efforts and the focus of the principal's classroom observations and feedback.

Recommendation 1

Professional Development

We recommend that district leaders set aside time for principals to specify the changes they expect to see resulting from professional development efforts. Wherever appropriate, principals should specify how professional development efforts will result in beneficial outcomes for the diverse groups of students they serve. Additionally, district leaders should support principals in understanding that the likelihood of generating changes in classrooms and changes in learning results is greatly enhanced when traditional professional development efforts are aligned with A) changes in schedules, routines, and procedures; B) protocols and routines that shape teacher collaboration meetings; C) issues that are the focus of classroom observations and feedback; and D) issues that are the focus of regular oral and written communication from school leaders.

Recommendation 2

Highlighting CUSD's Professional Development/Instructional Focus of "Student Talk"

Barron and Darling-Hammond (2008) described how "collaborative approaches to learning are beneficial for individual and collective knowledge growth" (p.35). In the award-winning schools we studied, we found that students were learning to love learning as they engaged with each other through student-to-student interactions and discourse. In elementary, middle, and high schools, we saw numerous examples of teachers structuring conversations that required students to discuss, explain, teach, and debate. We studied schools in which students worked in teams to help each other teach a deeper understanding of lesson objectives. Typically, in our award-winning schools, we heard student voices more than we heard teacher voices. However, classroom environments were not chaotic. Students engaged each other to fulfill a specific purpose. Teachers gave students a reason to collaborate, share their thinking, and learn from each other.

In Coronado Unified School District, principals and some teachers at all school sites discussed a CUSD focus on "structured student talk." Principals noted that this has been a focus for the last two years since returning to in-person learning. When students are engaged in talking with their peers about lesson concepts and ideas, they are more likely to enjoy lessons and learn to love learning. Equity audit team members rated the extent to which students talked with their peers or with the teacher about the lesson concepts and ideas. A score of "one" meant the observer did not observe any students speaking with their peers or with the teacher about the lesson concepts and ideas. A score of "five" meant the observer saw all students in the classroom frequently speaking with their peers or with the teacher about the lesson concepts and ideas. The average rating for all schools in Coronado Unified was 3.1. In classrooms where observers perceived that there was considerable evidence or exemplary evidence of this practice, it was evident teachers had a clear and coherent focus on student talk.

Observers noted that teachers who showed considerable or exemplary evidence of this practice at Silver Strand Elementary utilized sentence frames for accountable talk within academic discussions that students could access from their desks. Language highlighted on these sentence frame tools included topics such as providing a comment, sharing an opinion, making a prediction, clarifying a thought, asking a question, soliciting a response, making connections, paraphrasing ideas, or acknowledging others' ideas. Additionally, students starting even in early primary grades had detailed turn-and-talk structures for sharing their ideas with partners. At Village Elementary School, observers heard administrators discuss the innovative ways they have promoted structured talk, such as utilizing talking chips to help students tangibly represent their participation in the discussion. Furthermore, the NCUST team observed students discussing mathematics objectives in strategic partnerships or through group work in many classrooms throughout Village Elementary School.

At Coronado Middle School, observers saw opportunities for students to engage in table discussions in mathematics. Teams of students discussed their method to solve problems before sharing their solutions with the whole group as teachers circulated to listen in and check for understanding by listening to student discussions. Evidence of student talk practices at Coronado Middle School also included group presentations where each student had clearly defined speaking roles, and teachers used rubrics with defined success criteria to measure academic discourse. At Coronado High School, observers saw students engage in elevated "think and write, pair, and share" protocols where students were expected to quick-write about content on their own, discuss content with their neighboring table peers, and then share ideas with the whole class in "fishbowl" like structures where students supported their ideas with evidence in front of their peers.

There were many examples throughout each school modeling productive student talk. We recommend finding ways to celebrate this work throughout the district through methods such as peer observations, videotaping classroom practices, interviewing teachers, and disseminating best practices through newsletters or professional development. CUSD might consider ways to codify best practices through providing structured talk playbooks, create learning walk rubrics that incorporate specific quality indicators, or through supporting school leaders in providing resources that support structured talk systems in classrooms, like talking chips, accountable talk bookmarks, mathematics sentence frames posters, or other strategies observed and celebrated throughout CUSD.

While we acknowledge that there may be shifts in focus with district-wide professional development efforts going forward, we suggest continuing to highlight best practices for student talk and building upon the current efforts when redirecting the instructional focus to other areas. For example, a shift to a project-based learning focus might ensure that teachers see clear connections where student talk can be used throughout the different components of a project-based unit. Additionally, we suggest that the district support principals in preserving an emphasis on student talk in classroom observations with a goal of continuing to lift the level of this practice throughout the campuses.

School Leadership in the Coronado Unified School District

In high-performing schools, instructional leaders regularly spend abundant time in classrooms observing teaching and learning and providing formative feedback to help teachers improve their craft. In many high-performing schools, principals spent 40% of the time during school days engaged in visiting classrooms and/or in engaged in teacher collaboration meetings. Due to the pandemic, leaders across the Coronado Unified School District and across the nation are reporting greater difficulties dedicating time to classroom observations and feedback. Nonetheless, equity audit team members noted variation in the extent to which school leaders spent time observing classrooms and providing teachers feedback. Outside of state-required formal observation protocols, district leaders might consider supporting principals in agreeing upon easy-to-use tools to track the time they spend in classrooms, while providing the teacher quality affirmative feedback. This way, principals can know with certainty that they are investing adequate time in classrooms and track trends throughout the school. The regular, active, constructive engagement of school leaders in classrooms is essential to the district's success in providing high-quality educational services that result in excellent learning outcomes for all demographic groups of students.

At all four schools, we found that professional development efforts were focused on important topics. Stakeholders noted that these topics have included MTSS (multi-tiered systems of supports), learning the Canvas educational technology platform, studying assessments such as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and professional learning that has reinforced CUSD instructional focus of structured student talk. However, at some school sites, there was little evidence suggesting that the issues of focus in professional development were reinforced in either teacher collaboration meetings or in classroom observations and feedback. As a result, professional development is less likely to yield desired changes in practices.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Recommendation 3

We recommend that district leaders work with principals to identify strategies to maximize the amount of time school leaders spend observing classrooms and providing feedback. Leaders should work together to identify simple ways to track and report the amount of time they spend in classrooms and the amount of time they spend providing feedback. Additionally, district leaders should support principals in using their classroom observations and feedback to reinforce progress in implementing strategies that have been the primary focus of professional development.

Leaders in high-performing schools communicate with constituents in ways that reinforce a strong focus on improvement efforts. Written and oral communication emphasizes improvement initiatives by celebrating progress and highlighting opportunities to build upon recent efforts. Throughout the district, parents reported receiving clear and appropriate communication from school leaders. Parents demonstrated awareness of important improvement initiatives. Parents perceived that the district schools were of high quality and continually striving to be better. Teachers and staff at each site reported similarly, noting extensive weekly newsletters provided by principals and open-door policies where staff can easily share ideas or concerns with leadership.

Student Attendance in the Coronado Unified School District

According to the California Department of Education's School Dashboard, during the 2021-2022 academic year, 10.2% of Coronado Unified students were chronically absent, which was significantly lower than the California state average of 30%. This means that 10.2% of Coronado Unified students were absent from school on at least 10% of school days. However, some subgroups of students in Coronado Unified had higher percentages of chronic absenteeism. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students (157 enrolled) had a chronic absenteeism rate of 17.8%. Students with disabilities (279 enrolled) had a chronic absenteeism rate of 16.1%. English learners (144 enrolled) had a chronic absenteeism rate of 13.9%. Students of two or more races (233 enrolled) had a chronic absenteeism rate of 13.3%. Hispanic/Latino students (450 enrolled) had a chronic absenteeism rate of 11.1%.

At Coronado Middle School, during the 2021-2022 academic year, the chronic absenteeism rate was 6.7%. Two subgroups of students had chronic absenteeism rates qualifying as "high" and "very high." Those subgroups included socioeconomically disadvantaged students (65 enrolled at CMS) who had a chronic absenteeism rate of 21.5% and students with disabilities (85 enrolled at CMS) who had a chronic absenteeism rate of 14.1%.

At Coronado Village Elementary School, during the 2021-2022 academic year, the chronic absenteeism rate was 10.6%, qualifying as "high," according to the California School Dashboard. Five subgroups of students had a chronic absenteeism rate that qualified as "high." Those subgroups included socioeconomically disadvantaged students (81 enrolled at VES) with a chronic absenteeism rate of 17.3%. Additionally, students with disabilities (123 enrolled at VES) had a chronic absenteeism rate of 16.3%. Students of two or more races (117 enrolled at VES) had a chronic absenteeism rate of 13.7%. Latino/Hispanic students (172 enrolled at VES) had a chronic absenteeism rate of 11.6%, and English learners (89 enrolled at VES) had a chronic absenteeism rate of 10.1%.

At Silver Strand Elementary School, during the 2021-2022 academic year, the chronic absenteeism rate was 15.7%, qualifying as "high," according to the California School Dashboard. Students of two or more races (48 enrolled) had a chronic absenteeism rate of 20.8%. Students with disabilities (60 enrolled) had a chronic absenteeism rate of 17.1%. Latino/Hispanic students (88 enrolled) had a chronic absenteeism rate of 19.3%, and English learners (24 enrolled) had a chronic absenteeism rate of 33.3%. White students had a chronic absenteeism rate of 12.7%.

Chronic Absenteeism Rates 2021-2022	CUSD*	Coronado Middle School	Village Elementary	Silver Strand Elementary
Table 1.2 Chronic Absenteeism				
Overall	10.2% N= 1,801	6.7% N=660	10.6% N=777	15.7% N=363
White	9% N=1,045	6.5% N=368	9.3% N=471	12.7% N=205
English Learners	13.9% N=144	9.7% N=31	10.1% N=89	33.3% N=24
Latino/Hispanic	11.1% N=450	6.8% N=191	11.6% N=172	19.3% N=88
Two or More Races	13.3% N=233	6% N=67	13.7% N=117	20.8% N=48
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	17.8% N=157	21.5% N=65	17.3% N=81	0% N=11
Students with Disabilities	16.1% N=279	14.1% N=85	16.3% N=123	17.1% N=60

* Without CHS data. CHS not available   ■ Very High = 20% and above   ■ High = 10.1 - 19.9%   ■ Medium = 5 - 9.9%   ■ Low = 0 - 4.9%

At one of the schools visited, chronic absenteeism is lower than the district average, one is slightly above, while one school is about 5% higher than the CUSD overall percentage of chronic absenteeism. Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and students with disabilities had the highest rates of chronic absenteeism in CUSD. Generally, students who attend school regularly are more likely to learn important academic concepts and are more likely to succeed in school.

Recommendation 4

While the low rate of chronic absenteeism is a strength at one of the schools, and at three of the schools is far below the state average, the district should work with school leaders to ensure that this strength is maintained or improved upon for all schools and for all student subgroups. It is important that each school leader know which students are chronically absent (or at risk of becoming chronically absent). School leaders should be sensitive to attendance issues that might be impacting various demographic groups of students. Where appropriate, school leaders should identify specific strategies to encourage regular daily attendance. District leaders should consider how to support principals in identifying, implementing, monitoring, and refining strategies that decrease chronic absenteeism for all subgroups of students.

Student Discipline in the Coronado Unified School District

According to the California School Dashboard, during the 2021-2022 school year, 1.2% of students in the Coronado Unified School District were suspended at least once. This was a lower suspension rate than the state average suspension rate of 3.1%. This means that 1.2% of the district's students missed one or more days of school because of a disciplinary incident. However, according to the California School Dashboard, 6.3% of African American students (32 students) were suspended at least once during the 2021-2022 academic year, which qualified as a "high" rate of suspension. Additionally, 3.5% of socioeconomically disadvantaged students (255 students) were suspended at least once. African American students and socioeconomically disadvantaged students were suspended at disproportionate rates in CUSD during the 2021-2022 academic year.

Student Achievement in the Coronado Unified School District

In 2021-2022, Coronado Unified School District students took the California Assessment for Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11 in both English language arts and mathematics. Additionally, students in grades 5, 8, and 12 took the California Science Test (CST). At every grade level and in every subject area, the percentage of Coronado students who met or exceeded standards was higher than the state-wide percentage of students who met or exceeded standards, as indicated in Table 1.3 below. This is a strength that should continue to be celebrated.

Table 1.3 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) 2021-2022 Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding Standards Source: https://caaspp-elpac.cde.ca.gov/					
	State of CA	**Silver Strand Elementary**	**Village Elementary**	**Coronado Middle School**	**Coronado High School**
3rd Grade ELA	42.17%	85.71%	72.79%		
3rd Grade Math	43.51%	85.49%	73.73%		
4th Grade ELA	44.22%	77.78%	68.57%		
4th Grade Math	38.26%	76.08%	76.14%		
5th Grade ELA	47.09%	78.34%	83.97%		
5th Grade Math	31.56%	68.85%	71.73%		
6th Grade ELA	45.11%			76.63%	
6th Grade Math	32.46%			54.60%	
7th Grade ELA	49.22%			74.24%	
7th Grade Math	32.04%			75.50%	
8th Grade ELA	46.64%			68.72%	
8th Grade Math	29.24%			51.22%	
11th Grade ELA	54.80%				82.90%
11th Grade Math	26.97%				55.41%

Table 1.4 California Science Test (CST) 2021-2022 Data of Students Meeting or Exceeding Standard Source: https://caaspp-elpac.cde.ca.gov/					
	State of CA	**Silver Strand Elementary**	**Village Elementary**	**Coronado Middle School**	**Coronado High School**
5th Grade Science	31.19%	78.69%	65.41%		
8th Grade Science	29.20%			58.37%	
11th Grade Science	30.79%				53.88%

Additionally, the state assessment data for Coronado Unified School District students reveal variations in the performances of students from different demographic groups as indicated in Table 1.4 below. For example, the overall percentage for percent of CUSD students meeting or exceeding grade level in English language arts was 76.10%. However, only 47.95% of students meeting low-income criteria performed at the proficient or advanced level on the same assessment. Similarly, the overall percentage of CUSD students meeting or exceeding standards in mathematics was 64.84%. However, only 51.60% of Latino/Hispanic students and only 32.88% of students meeting low-income criteria performed at the proficient or advanced level on the same assessment.

Table 1.5
CUSD 21-22 CAASPP Data (Overall and Student Groups)

Overall CUSD (CAASPP)* 2021-2022	STATE % PROF. OR ADV. ELA	CUSD % PROF. OR ADV. ELA	STATE % PROF. OR ADV. Math	CUSD % PROF. OR ADV. MATH
OVERALL	47.06%	76.10%	33.38%	64.84%
ASIAN N=13 14 Enrolled	75.27%	92.31%	69.46%	84.62%
FILIPINO N=22 24 Enrolled	70.02%	86.36%	54.16%	72.73%
BLACK/ AFRICAN AMERICAN N=13 14 Enrolled	30.33%	47.38%	15.93%	57.89%
HISPANIC/LATINO N=357 ELA N= 376 Math 382 Enrolled	36.40%	66.11%	21.24%	51.60%
MULTI-RACIAL N=166 177 Enrolled	59.88%	88.73%	47.05%	69.88%
WHITE/ CAUCASIAN N=807 math 844 Enrolled math N=808 ELA 843 Enrolled ELA	61.36%	79.46%	48.18%	70.02%
MILITARY ARMED FORCES FAMILY MEMBER N=448 Enrolled=467	50.99%	80.36%	37.25%	70.32%
STUDENTS MEETING LOW-INCOME CRITERIA N=73 14 Enrolled	35.24%	47.95%	21.23%	32.88%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS N=67	12.47%	40.00%	9.71%	41.79%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS *EVER-EL N=152	36.48%	59.23%	23.39%	48.02%
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES N=179 ELA N= 187 Math	15.61%	37.99%	11.41%	36.52%

*N= students with scores

🟩 at or above overall school's percentage/far above state percentage
🟧 below school overall percentage, above state overall percentage
🟥 below state overall percentage, far below school's overall percentage

Similar variations amongst student groups were found at Coronado High School on the 11th-grade CAASPP scores. For example, 88.62% of White students at Coronado High School performed at the proficient or advanced level in English language arts during the 2021-2022 academic year. However, only 69.70% of Latino/Hispanic students and only 64.28% of students meeting low-income criteria performed at the proficient or advanced level on the same assessment. Similarly, 63.33% of White students scored at the proficient or advanced level on the mathematics assessment. However, only 31.82% of Latino/Hispanic students and only 21.43% of students meeting low-income criteria performed at the proficient or advanced level on the same assessment. In mathematics, students meeting low-income criteria, Ever English learners, and students with disabilities did not meet the state's average for proficiency in mathematics.

Strengths to point out from subgroup data include that military-affiliated students outperformed the state and school's overall percentages in both mathematics and English language arts. Additionally, multiracial students were the highest performing in English language arts and mathematics. Furthermore, all subgroups of students, minus students with disabilities, outperformed state standards in English language arts. Students with disabilities outperformed the state average for their individual subgroup by over 15%.

Table 1.6
Coronado High School CAASPP Scores 21-22 (11th grade)

Coronado High School CAASPP Scores 2021-2022	STATE % PROF. OR ADV. ON ELA	CHS % PROF. OR ADV. ELA	STATE % PROF. OR ADV. Math	CHS % PROF. OR ADV. Math
OVERALL GRADE 11	54.80%	82.90%	26.97%	55.41%
ASIAN	80.02%	<10	65.58%	<10
FILIPINO	75.53%	<10	45.52%	<10
BLACK /AFRICAN AMERICAN	36.75%	<10	11.34%	<10
HISPANIC/LATINO N=66	45.49%	69.70%	15.16%	31.82%
MULTIRACIAL N=31	66.19%	93.55%	38.54%	70.97%
WHITE/ CAUCASIAN N=123	66.92%	88.62%	39.23%	63.33%
MILITARY ARMED FORCES FAMILY MEMBER N=51	58.11%	88.23%	30.63%	58.82%
STUDENTS MEETING LOW-INCOME CRITERIA N=15	45.06%	64.28%	16.45%	21.43%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS	7.74%	<10	2.64%	<10
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS *RFEP N=20	58.36%	80%	24.65%	30%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS *EVER-EL N=23	46.07%	69.57%	19.22%	26.09%
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES N=19	15.41%	31.58%	3.90%	5.26%

*N= students with scores

- at or above overall school's percentage/far above state percentage
- below school overall percentage, above state overall percentage
- below state overall percentage, far below school's overall percentage

Similarly, at Coronado Middle School, 75.71%% of White students at Coronado High School performed at the proficient or advanced level in English language arts during the 2021-2022 academic year. However, only 64.97% of Latino/Hispanic students and only 36.36% of students meeting low-income criteria performed at the proficient or advanced level on the same assessment. Similarly, 64.52% of White students scored at the proficient or advanced level on the mathematics assessment. However, only 46.70% of Latino/Hispanic students and only 27.27% of students meeting low-income criteria performed at the proficient or advanced level on the same assessment. In mathematics and English language arts, students meeting low-income criteria, English learners, and students with disabilities did not meet the state's average for proficiency in mathematics. Additionally, Hispanic/Latino students and Ever English learners performed below the overall school-wide average percentages in both mathematics and English language arts.

Strengths to point out from subgroup data include that military-affiliated students outperformed the state and school's overall percentages in mathematics and English language arts. Additionally, Filipino students were the highest performing in English language arts, and military-affiliated students performed the highest in mathematics.

Table 1.7
Coronado Middle School CAASPP Scores 2021-2022

Coronado Middle School CAASPP Scores 2021-2022	STATE % PROF. OR ADV. ELA	CMS % PROF. OR ADV. ELA	STATE % PROF. OR ADV. Math	CMS % PROF. OR ADV. MATH
ALL STUDENTS	47.06%	72.80%	33.38%	59.90%
ASIAN N=4	75.27%	<10	69.46%	<10
FILIPINO N=10	70.02%	81.81%	54.16%	63.63%
BLACK/ AFRICAN AMERICAN N=8	30.33%	<10	15.93%	<10
HISPANIC/LATINO N=182	36.40%	64.97%	21.24%	46.70%
MULTI-RACIAL N=62	59.88%	79.04%	47.05%	64.52%
WHITE/ CAUCASIAN N=354	61.36%	75.71%	48.18%	65.35%
MILITARY ARMED FORCES FAMILY MEMBER N=158	50.99%	79.75%	37.25%	66.46%
STUDENTS MEETING LOW-INCOME CRITERIA N=33	35.24%	36.36%	21.23%	27.27%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS N=67	12.47%	41.67%	9.71%	33.33%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS *EVER-EL N=152	36.48%	58.62%	23.39%	46.88%
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES N=179 ELA N= 187 Math	15.61%	29.48%	11.41	32.05%

*N= students with scores

■ at or above overall school's percentage/far above state percentage
■ below school overall percentage, above state overall percentage
■ below state overall percentage, far below school's overall percentage

Moreover, at Silver Strand Elementary, 78.26% of White students at Silver Strand Elementary performed at the proficient or advanced level in English language arts during the 2021-2022 academic year. However, only 70.97% of Hispanic/Latino students performed at the proficient or advanced level on the same assessment. Similarly, 78.57% of White students scored at the proficient or advanced level on the mathematics assessment. However, only 69.23% of Hispanic/Latino students performed at the proficient or advanced level on the same assessment. Additionally, Hispanic/Latino students performed lower than the school's overall average in mathematics and English language arts. Moreover, military-affiliated students performed lower than the school average in mathematics. English learners performed lower than the school-wide average in mathematics. Students with disabilities were the only subgroup of students who performed lower than the state average, and this was only in English language arts. However, they performed much higher than the state subgroup percentage for students with disabilities in English language arts.

Table 1.8
Silver Strand Elementary School CAASPP Scores 2021-2022

Silver Strand Elementary CAASPP Scores 2021-2022	STATE % PROF. OR ADV. ELA	SSE % PROF. OR ADV. ELA	STATE % PROF. OR ADV. Math	SSE % PROF. OR ADV. MATH
ALL STUDENTS	47.06%	80.74%	33.38%	76.93%
ASIAN	75.27%	<10	69.46%	<10
FILIPINO	70.02%	<10	54.16%	<10
BLACK/ AFRICAN AMERICAN	30.33%	<10	15.93%	<10
HISPANIC/LATINO N=31	36.40%	70.97%	21.24%	69.23%
MULTI-RACIAL N=23	59.88%	86.96%	47.05%	82.60%
WHITE/ CAUCASIAN N=98	61.36%	82.65%	48.18%	78.57%
MILITARY ARMED FORCES FAMILY MEMBER N=115	50.99%	78.26%	37.25%	77.40%
STUDENTS MEETING LOW-INCOME CRITERIA	35.24%	<10	21.23%	<10
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS N=8	12.47%	<10	9.71%	57.14%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS *EVER-EL N=18	36.48%	<10	23.39%	66.66%
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES N=25	15.61%	40.00%	11.41%	48.00%

*N= students with scores

■ at or above overall school's percentage/far above state percentage
■ below school overall percentage, above state overall percentage
■ below state overall percentage, far below school's overall percentage

Lastly, at Village Elementary, 79.31% of White students performed at the proficient or advanced level in English language arts during the 2021-2022 academic year. However, only 63.86% of Hispanic/Latino students performed at the proficient or advanced level on the same assessment. Similarly, 77.25% of White students scored at the proficient or advanced level on the mathematics assessment. However, only 68.54% of Latino/Hispanic students performed at the proficient or advanced level on the same assessment. Additionally, Hispanic/Latino students, students meeting low-income criteria, English learners, Ever English learners, and students with disabilities performed lower than the school's overall average in mathematics and English language arts. All subgroups of students performed higher than the state average except for English learners in English language arts.

Table 1.9 Village Elementary School CAASPP Scores 2021-2022				
Coronado Village Elementary CAASPP Scores 2021-2022	**STATE % PROF. OR ADV. ELA**	**CVE % PROF. OR ADV. ELA**	**STATE % PROF. OR ADV. Math**	**CVE % PROF. OR ADV. MATH**
ALL STUDENTS	47.06%	75.54%	33.38%	73.62%
ASIAN	75.27%	<10	69.46%	<10
FILIPINO	70.02%	<10	54.16%	<10
BLACK/ AFRICAN AMERICAN	30.33%	<10	15.93%	<10
HISPANIC/LATINO N=83	36.40%	63.86%	21.24%	68.54%
MULTI-RACIAL N=50	59.88%	82%	47.05%	70%
WHITE/ CAUCASIAN N=232	61.36%	79.31%	48.18%	77.25%
MILITARY ARMED FORCES FAMILY MEMBER N=123	50.99%	80.49%	37.25%	73.98%
STUDENTS MEETING LOW-INCOME CRITERIA N=24	35.24%	50.00%	21.23%	41.67%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS N=24	12.47%	37.50%	9.71%	43.75%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS *EVER-EL N=39	36.48%	51.28%	23.39%	53.19%
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES N=56	15.61%	51.79%	11.41%	49.09%

*N= students with scores

- at or above overall school's percentage/far above state percentage
- below school overall percentage, above state overall percentage
- below state overall percentage, far below school's overall percentage

Each Coronado Unified School District school should strive to generate outstanding learning outcomes for every racial, ethnic, income, and language group served. Regardless of the size of the demographic group, school leaders should work to help their staff members develop a sense of collective efficacy for improving learning results for all students. District and school leaders can promote this sense of collective efficacy by 1) ensuring that all students experience a positive transformational culture where they feel valued, respected, and capable while also ensuring that all school personnel work in an environment that nurtures trust, collaboration, and mutual respect; 2) ensuring that all students access rich and rigorous curricula; and 3) ensuring that all students benefit from engaging and effective instruction. As well, district leaders should support school leaders by providing them with strategies, structures, and processes that help monitor progress in a formative way.

Positive Transformational Culture

The NCUST teams found many indicators of positive, transformational cultures at all four schools. Students reported feeling welcome, supported, and part of a community. Students and parents believed that teachers and other school personnel cared sincerely about all students. Principals should be commended for creating and sustaining school environments in which teachers feel respected and valued. Similarly, teachers should be commended for creating and sustaining classroom environments in which students feel respected and valued. Evidence suggests, however, that positive classroom environments weaken and may even become negative when students struggle academically. In many classrooms, struggling students disengage or misbehave in response to their academic concerns. Some teachers might have difficulties finding ways to help struggling students progress and succeed. This challenge has important equity implications because often (but not always) the struggling students are students of color or meet low-income criteria.

Recommendation 6

In the category of positive transformational culture, the NCUST team recommends that educators in CUSD agree upon and implement a strategy for leading students to perceive themselves as young scholars who are capable of learning challenging academic content.

A. **Professional Development:** Educators should consider engaging in professional development that helps them learn about strategies that have worked well to help diverse groups of students think of themselves as capable scholars. For example, some approaches can be found here and here. CUSD does not necessarily need to replicate one of these programs. Instead, the professional development should lead educators to consider the following questions:

- What are the habits of young scholars that all CUSD students should develop? Specific scholarly habits should be specified, displayed prominently in classrooms and hallways, and discussed regularly.

- How can educators and support staff acknowledge and celebrate the progress of students in demonstrating the habits of young scholars? Educators should agree upon specific strategies for recognizing students who exhibit scholarly behavior. There should be frequent opportunities to celebrate students as they exhibit scholarly behavior. Educators should be thoughtful about ways to engage parents in the celebration of students' scholarly behavior.

- How can educators structure tasks and questions in ways that challenge students to grow as young scholars? Educators should commit to offering students challenging tasks and questions that push them to apply the concepts they are learning to real-life situations. Each day, in every class session, there should be at least one task that encourages students to feel like they are being empowered to use what they are learning to address real and important issues.

B. **Schedules, Routines, Procedures:** Based upon insights acquired through the professional development described above, district officials could consider supporting principals in agreeing upon and committing to specific schedules, routines, and procedures that might help ensure that all CUSD students perceive themselves as capable scholars. All school personnel should develop a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in contributing to a powerful, school-wide effort to influence how students perceive themselves.

C. **Teacher Collaboration:** Based on the school-wide commitments made (regarding the changes to schedules, routines, and procedures described above), teacher collaboration teams should support each other in developing and implementing lesson strategies that are likely to lead students to perceive themselves as capable scholars and leaders.

D. **Classroom Observation and Feedback:** Classroom observations and feedback should be structured to acknowledge and celebrate teachers' progress in implementing agreed-upon strategies and promoting students' sense of academic efficacy. As well, observations and feedback should offer teachers practical, useful suggestions for improving their implementation of agreed-upon strategies. Additionally, more frequent classroom observations and feedback should be given to teachers serving students in credit-recovery courses, intervention classes, or academic labs that serve students who are working toward meeting grade-level standards.

E. **Communication from Leaders:** Written and oral communication from school leaders should emphasize progress observed throughout CUSD schools in establishing environments in which students are more likely to perceive themselves as young scholars and leaders.

Each Coronado Unified School District school should strive to generate outstanding learning outcomes for every racial, ethnic, income, and language group served. Regardless of the size of the demographic group, school leaders should work to help their staff members develop a sense of collective efficacy for improving learning results for all students. District and school leaders can promote this sense of collective efficacy by 1) ensuring that all students experience a positive transformational culture where they feel valued, respected, and capable while also ensuring that all school personnel work in an environment that nurtures trust, collaboration, and mutual respect; 2) ensuring that all students access rich and rigorous curricula; and 3) ensuring that all students benefit from engaging and effective instruction. As well, district leaders should support school leaders by providing them with strategies, structures, and processes that help monitor progress in a formative way.

Access to Challenging Curricula for All Students

Equity audit teams found substantial evidence that students were being taught state standards at all four schools. On the other hand, the teams found evidence that in many classrooms, the rigor observed was not sufficiently at the level to lead all students to master the state standards with a deep level of understanding and engagement. Sometimes, in such situations, students who have benefitted from rich exposure to concepts and skills (perhaps through family experiences, extensive exposure to books at home, or other activities) manage to demonstrate academic proficiency on state standards, even when classroom instruction does not lead students to demonstrate the more complex cognitive skills required by the standards. In contrast, students who have not benefited from such exposure outside of the classroom are likely to perform at basic or below basic levels if classroom instruction is not deliberately focused on helping students exhibit the cognitive skills required.

As the chart below indicates, at all four schools, many of the lessons observed showed room for growth in leading students to master grade-level standards. As well, in many of the lessons, the cognitive demand of lesson activities and the cognitive demand of teachers' questions were not likely to prepare students for the rigor of today's state assessments. It is important to note that the equity audit teams observed some impressive lessons that helped students think deeply about and apply challenging concepts; however, there is an opportunity to improve curricular rigor throughout the four schools.

	Coronado High School	Coronado Middle School	Village Elementary	Silver Strand Elementary
Table 2.0 **Equity Audit Team Classroom Observation Ratings** **% of Considerable or Exemplary Evidence** (% scoring 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale)				
Activities were likely to lead students to grade-level mastery	41%	26.9%	27.3%	51.7%
Cognitive demand of lesson activities	29%	39%	30%	48.3%
Cognitive demand of teachers' questions	30%	28%	26%	48.3%

The lack of rigor in some classrooms may have a negative effect on educational equity throughout the Coronado District. In the absence of deliberately designed efforts to ensure that all students develop deep understandings of challenging concepts, the instruction may be sufficient to ensure that students with abundant prior knowledge and experience (related to the concepts presented) will develop proficiency. In contrast, students who have not benefited from such prior knowledge and experience may need more structured opportunities to engage with concepts, talk about issues, and build connections between the concepts presented and the students' everyday experiences.

Recommendation 7

In the area of curricula, Coronado Unified School District leaders should support principals in helping teams of teachers 1) prioritize critical state standards and 2) develop strategies for teaching those standards to a high level of mastery. While the wording of the individual school equity audit team feedback varied, all four schools would benefit from focused attention and support related to this issue. Beyond identifying critical standards, teachers need to arrive at a deeper understanding of the level of understanding required by the standards. District leaders should consider how they could help teams of teachers construct common formative assessments that are valid indicators of the extent to which students have reached the depth of understanding required by the highest priority standards. Also, district leaders should consider how they can help principals work with teachers who need help understanding how some of their traditional teaching approaches may not be sufficient to lead students to the level of rigor required. Considering the large number of lessons observed where the focus was on worksheets or lessons that only required students to memorize and recall facts or follow a specified procedure without any application to real-world situations, district leaders may need to consider how they can support principals in working with teachers to identify teaching resources (and support teachers in using those resources) that are more likely to lead students to deeper levels of understanding. District leaders should support principals in considering the implications of this recommendation for both horizontal collaboration (within grade levels) and vertical collaboration (across grade levels) so that students enter high school well-prepared to matriculate through rigorous curricula.

Effective Instruction that Leads to Engagement and Mastery

At all four schools, equity audit team members found strong instructional practices that contribute to educational equity and excellence. Consistent with our findings related to the positive, transformational culture of each campus, we found many classrooms where there was considerable or exemplary evidence that teachers were leading students to feel both valued and capable. As well, we found considerable evidence that classrooms were oriented in ways that were leading Coronado Unified students to love learning. These are important strengths that should be celebrated and sustained. Additionally, it should be noted that particularly at CMS and Village Elementary, our data revealed impressive percentages of classrooms in which teachers focused on understanding and mastery.

On the other hand, at each school, there are opportunities for improving instructional practices. For example, at some schools, teachers were less likely to give students opportunities to discuss their understanding of concepts and build fluency with critical lesson vocabulary. At some schools, teachers were less likely to check students' level of understanding before releasing students to practice concepts and skills independently. The following chart shows the percentages of classrooms at each school where observers found considerable or exemplary evidence of each of the eight practices that were the focus of our observations.

Table 2.1 **Teaching Practices that Influence Engaging/ Effective Instruction** (% scoring 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale)				
	Silver Strand Elementary N=23	**Village Elementary N=29**	**Coronado Middle School N=26**	**Coronado High School N=54**
Making Students Feel Valued and Capable	39%	55%	39%	49%
	35%	21%	46%	18%
	26%	24%	15%	33%
Focusing on Understanding and Mastery	35%	48%	42.3%	37%
	26%	35%	42.3%	28%
	39%	17%	15.4%	35%
Promoting Clarity	35%	46.4%	28%	33%
	30%	32.1%	56%	24%
	35%	21.4%	16%	43%
Checking Understanding, Providing Feedback, and Adapting	26%	48%	38.5%	36%
	44%	35%	38.5%	9%
	30%	17%	23.1%	55%

Percentage of Classrooms in which Observers Found:

N = Number of Observations Conducted

■ Considerable or Exemplary Evidence of the practice

Some classrooms were observed more than once

■ Slight Evidence of the practice

■ Not observed or counter-evidence of the practice

Table 2.1 (Continued) Teaching Practices that Influence Engaging/ Effective Instruction (% scoring 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale)				
	Silver Strand Elementary N=23	Village Elementary N=29	Coronado Middle School N=26	Coronado High School N=54
Ensuring Culturally, Socially, and Personally Responsive Teaching	9%	14%	27%	27%
	27%	41%	46%	11%
	64%	45%	27%	62%
Building Fluency with Gatekeeper Vocabulary	18%	28%	24%	28%
	27%	48%	40%	25%
	55%	24%	36%	47%
Promoting Successful Practice	23%	37.8%	35%	35%
	27%	34.5%	23%	15%
	50%	27.6%	42%	50%
Leading Students to Love Learning	43%	52%	46%	30%
	24%	31%	31%	23%
	33%	17%	23%	47%

Percentage of Classrooms in which Observers Found:

- Considerable or Exemplary Evidence of the practice
- Slight Evidence of the practice
- Not observed or counter-evidence of the practice

N = Number of Observations Conducted

Some classrooms were observed more than once

Recommendation 8

In the area of curricula, Coronado Unified School District leaders should support principals in helping teams of teachers 1) prioritize critical state standards and 2) develop strategies for teaching those standards to a high level of mastery. While the wording of the individual school equity audit team feedback varied, all four schools would benefit from focused attention and support related to this issue. Beyond identifying critical stanconsidering the implications of this recommendation for both horizontal collaboration (within grade levels) and vertical collaboration (across grade levels) so that students enter high school well-prepared to matriculate through rigorous curricula.

A. **Professional Development:** The CUSD district staff should consider supporting principals and i-Lab educators to lead their teachers in professional development targeting project-based learning and incorporating topics that are based on student recommendations. The professional development should result in CUSD educators reaching agreements about the attributes of excellent project-based learning lessons that are likely to deepen students' understanding of critical academic standards, connect with students' interests and backgrounds, and lead students to love learning. Teachers should agree upon rubrics they can use to determine if a lesson represents the most important qualities of project-based learning. Professional development should also highlight the factors that may make it difficult to implement high-quality project-based lessons. Teachers should have clear strategies for addressing those difficulties. As well, care should be taken to ensure that teachers perceive that they can take risks in implementing project-based learning.

B. **Schedules, Routines, Procedures:** The principals and district leaders might consider encouraging CUSD teachers to implement at least one project-based lesson within the school year so that students have access to projects in their core classes each year. The i-Lab provides a tremendous opportunity for this work. Teachers should have abundant support for planning, refining, and implementing the projects and units.

C. **Teacher Collaboration:** Collaborative planning meetings should be focused on helping teachers plan and implement their project-based learning units well. Planning should help teachers utilize the rubric they helped create (See Part A above). As well, planning should help teachers anticipate and proactively address the challenges often associated with implementing project-based lessons well.

D. **Classroom Observation and Feedback:** School leaders should observe teachers as they implement their project-based lessons. Feedback should primarily emphasize support and encouragement for teachers who are implementing project-based learning for the first or second time. Leaders should pay particular attention to acknowledging and celebrating implementation that addresses elements of the rubric created by the school's educators. Leaders should also offer supportive assistance in helping teachers overcome some of the challenges associated with implementing project-based learning well.

E. **Communication from Leaders:** Leaders should send communication to teachers that celebrate classrooms for their efforts to implement project-based learning lessons. Leaders should make special efforts to commend teachers when their project-based lessons adhere to elements of the rubric they created.

NEXT STEPS

While this district report specifies opportunities for improvement, it is critically important for Coronado Unified School District leaders to acknowledge and celebrate the many strengths underscored throughout these reports. School leaders, teachers, and other school personnel should know their efforts to create equitable and excellent learning environments are bearing fruit.

As well, it is important to keep in mind that the report compares the Coronado Unified school with schools that NCUST has awarded, where every demographic group outperforms state averages. This high bar is likely to suggest areas of improvement that would not be specified in more typical audit reviews. If there are questions regarding any of the findings or recommendations, we encourage district leaders and school leaders to contact NCUST to discuss any questions or concerns.

Finally, we acknowledge this report includes many recommendations. It is important for the Coronado Unified School District leaders to review and prioritize these recommendations in collaboration with teachers. Additionally, it is important for district leaders to consider how they can support school leaders in addressing the recommendations in their school reports. The recommendations specified in this report necessitate system change. If the district leaves the responsibility for the implementation of these recommendations to principals, the district is likely to achieve uneven improvements or no improvement at all. To achieve system change, we encourage the Coronado Unified School District leaders to consider how you might build the capacity of your district team in a way that supports principals with these important challenges.

The Coronado Unified School District is providing wonderful learning opportunities for the students you serve. We see outstanding potential for the district to become a model for educational equity and excellence in California and the nation. We are honored to have this opportunity to support your efforts to grow and improve.