

EQUITABLE ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION OF DIVERSE LEARNERS IN COLORADO CHARTER SCHOOLS

Promising practices from the field:
A Case study of two suburban
charters



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Overview

The Colorado Department of Education’s (CDE) Schools of Choice Unit (SOC) hosts regular equity convenings under the Federal Charter Schools Program Grant for State Departments of Education. The vision for the convenings is to mine the local and national landscape for promising practices and unite school stakeholders for a purposeful conversation on essential topics related to equity in Colorado charter schools. The first SOC equity convenings were hosted in the fall of 2019 and spring of 2020 and focused on high-quality and accessible special education services in charter schools. The objectives of these convenings were to acknowledge the complex challenges that can limit students’ access to schools of choice and to highlight promising practices for removing barriers, creating welcoming and inclusive environments, and ensuring effective services.

SOC commissioned The Center for Learner Equity (CLE) to study special education enrollment and policy in Colorado charter schools leading up to the spring 2020 convening. The study found that in 2015-2016, the difference in enrollment of students with disabilities between traditional public schools and charter schools in Colorado (4.8 percentage points) was more prominent than the national difference in enrollment of students with disabilities between traditional public schools and charter schools (2.1 percentage points) (CLE, 2020, pg.5). The 2019-2020 average enrollment rate of students with disabilities in Colorado charter schools (7.4%) was lower than the average enrollment rate of students with disabilities in Colorado traditional public schools in districts with charter schools (11.4%) (pg.5). There is great diversity within geographic and authorizer entities; when examined this way, the average enrollment of students with disabilities varies across the state, with enrollment rates ranging from 0% to 16.2%. For example, Denver Public Schools (DPS) charters serve a special education population comparable to DPS traditional schools (pg.6).

The 2020 CLE study also found that 63% of Colorado charter schools’ websites lacked pages about or descriptions of how they educate students with disabilities and 18% of charter schools used application forms that ask whether a student has a disability with no anti-discrimination clause or statement of purpose (pg.7). Furthermore, CLE reported that there might be a prevailing perception that charter schools inadvertently lead parents to reconsider their choice while recruiting, admitting, and enrolling new students. The study contended a need for the State Board of Education (SBE) to clarify how charter schools communicate and promote their programming and how they enroll students.

**2015-2016
SPED Enrollment
Gap: Charter &
Non-Charter Schools
Colorado 4.8%
National 2.1%**

**2019-2020
Colorado SPED
Enrollment Rates
Charter 7.4 %
Non-Charter 11.4%**

**2019-2020
SPED Enrollment Rates
across Colorado
Authorizing Entities
0%-16.2%**

The discourse from these convenings and the 2020 CLE study produced quick and significant changes to the Colorado charter school sector. First, the Colorado Authorizers Charter Schools Association (CACSA) and the Charter School Institute (CSI) developed clear guidelines and standards for describing special education programming and services on charter school websites. Second, policy advocacy from agencies such as CACSA and the Collaborative for Exceptional Education (CEE) resulted in the SBE amending the language for 1 CCR 301-88, Rule 2.02 (G) (2021). In January 2022, they unanimously voted to align Colorado with federal regulations by requiring that charter schools remove all questions about special education and Individualized Educational Programs (IEP) from applications and enrollment processes.

The Fall 2022 CDE SOC Equity Convening will cycle back to this critical topic by emphasizing the promising practices for the equitable recruitment, enrollment, and retention of diverse learners. The convening will focalize how Colorado charter schools are creating equitable and inclusive enrollment systems and environments that serve all students.



[CACSA. \(2021\). Website language regarding students with disabilities. CACSA Website.](#)



[CSI. \(2021\). Address Enrollment of Students with Disabilities on School Websites. CSI Website.](#)



[CEE/CDE. \(2022\). Communicating Inclusivity to the Community. Webinar on CEE Website.](#)

Introduction

The Collaborative for Exceptional Education (CEE) developed an equity tool for charter schools to audit enrollment and retention practices. In collaboration with the Colorado League of Charter Schools (CLCS), CEE offered free audits to charter schools in the 2021-2022 school year. Seven Colorado charter schools participated in the pilot; SOC selected two of these schools for case studies leading up to the Fall 2022 CDE SOC Equity Convening. The Academy of Charter Schools (The Academy) and Ascent Classical Academy Douglas County (ACA DougCO) have developed noteworthy practices committed to the equitable enrollment and retention of diverse learners. These practices are beginning to unfurl promising results at both schools.

The Academy is a K-12 school of choice that serves approximately 1900 students in Westminster, Colorado. Community members established the school in 1994. The school's mission is “to help all students grow into college-ready, exemplary citizens by combining academic mastery with personal empowerment to drive lifelong success. In addition, we serve our full community by intentionally developing a school culture that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion.” (The Academy of Charter Schools website). The Academy focuses on three core tenants for education: prepare, explore, and empower. The school’s student population and, thus, its mission have evolved following the evolution of its geographical area. Figure 1 displays demographic data for The Academy and its surrounding district, Adams 12 Five Star Schools.

Approximately 8% of The Academy students have Individual Educational Programs (IEPs) compared to 12% of Adams 12 Five Star Schools. Since 2017, The Academy has increased its overall percentage of students in special education by 2% and Section 504 programming by 1.5%, narrowing the gap between it and Adams 5 Star Schools. Also, 43% of The Academy students identify as Black, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, or mixed race. In comparison, 65% of Adams 12 Five Star students identify with these sub-groups. The Academy is working towards narrowing the special education and racial/ethnic gap between its student population and the surrounding district.



2021-2022 Demographics		
White Students	43%	57%
Hispanic/LatinX Students	44%	30%
Black, Asian, Indigenous, Two or More Races	13%	13%
Students with Disabilities	12%	8%
Students with Limited English Proficiency	15%	6%

Figure 1. [CDE School View Data Center](#)

Ascent Classical Academy Douglas County (ACA DougCO) is a newer K-12 school of choice that serves approximately 1000 students in Lone Tree, Colorado. The school is a part of the Ascent Classical Academies charter management organization and opened in the fall of 2018. The vision of Ascent Classical Academies is to “develop within its students the intellectual and personal habits and skills upon which responsible, independent and productive lives are built, in the firm belief that such lives are the basis of a free and just society” (Ascent Classical Academy Douglas Country website). ACA DougCO accomplishes its vision through the mission of a classical education that includes a core knowledge curriculum, Socratic Seminar, Latin language training, and musical programming. Figure 4 displays the demographics of Ascent DougCo and its surrounding district Douglas County School District (DCSD). While a 4% gap remains between the percentage of students with disabilities at ACA DougCO and DCSD, they increased their special education enrollment by almost two percentage points. The racial/ethnic difference between ACA DougCO’s and DCSD’ student demographics is wider.

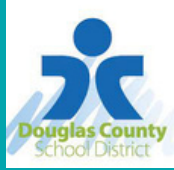

2021-2022 Demographics		
White Students	70%	87%
Hispanic/ LatinX Students	16%	8%
Black, Asian, Indigenous, Two or More Races	14%	5%
Students with Disabilities	12%	8%
Students with Limited English Proficiency	5%	1%

Figure 2. CDE School View Data Center

The CDE and CLCS commend The Academy and ACA DougCO for participating in this case study. The case study research approach produces a comprehensive and extensive understanding of a complex issue in its authentic context. The qualitative methodology takes an epistemological standpoint to understand individual and shared experiences and perspectives. This case study aims to understand the conditions that promote equitable enrollment and retention of diverse learners at two suburban Colorado charter schools. The researcher collected several data sources for analysis, including environmental observations, structured interviews with 15 leaders, teachers, and support staff, and a review of pertinent school documents across The Academy and ACA DougCo. The researcher carefully triangulated and synthesized the data using thematic analysis, categorical aggregation, and direct interpretation.

Findings

The researcher identified four critical conditions that promote equitable enrollment and retention of diverse learners at The Academy and ACA DougCO. These trends focus on students with disabilities (SWDs) and Multi-Language Learners (MLLs).



Condition 1

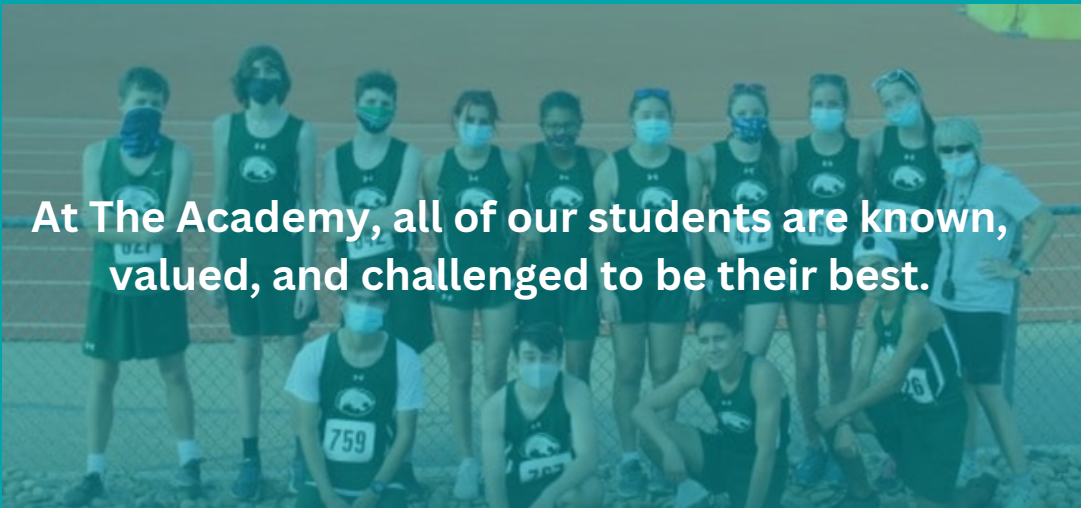
Promote equitable access, enrollment, and retention through the vision, mission, and values.

Inclusive and equitable educational spaces are exceptionally intentional. The Century Foundation's 2019 report, *Advancing Intentional Equity in Charter Schools*, stresses that schools are considerably more successful when they make equity a defining characteristic of the mission and values as opposed to solely focusing on transactional check-boxes for non-discriminatory practice. Essentially, transformative change lives in the collective identity and beliefs of the community. At The Academy and ACA DougCo, the desire to serve diverse learners and the schools' values and virtues are inextricably linked. For an organization's core values to have real meaning, "the words must permeate everyone and everything; the values must become the common thread, the standard applied to all, the common language for addressing issues, solving issues and exploring opportunities" (Forbes Coaches Council, 2021, para.3). School observations, document review, and stakeholder interviews demonstrated strong commitments to living the school values and virtues at The Academy and ACA DougCO.

Data collection at The Academy revealed a strong alignment between the school's value of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), community messaging, and schoolwide practices. School leadership drives the purpose and alignment of DEI work. For example, the governing board, school leadership, and community stakeholders revised the mission to indicate that the school intends to serve its community "by intentionally developing a school culture that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion." Stakeholder interviews displayed a shared understanding that DEI encompasses racial and ethnic, economic, ability and learning, linguistic, and gender diversity.

"The Academy believes that to effectively teach the student we must also reach the person. People cannot be separated from their cultural context, making it essential for educators to recognize the identities and experiences of all students. Culturally responsive education includes students' cultural references in all aspects of learning, enriching classroom experiences, and keeping students engaged. We all live in this world and cannot completely leave that world behind when we walk through the classroom door. With that in mind, we strive to provide a thoughtful and respectful educational experience that provides a safe space for everyone to address real-world issues in a way that acknowledges diverse viewpoints without pushing a single set of ideas."

The Academy, DEI Page.



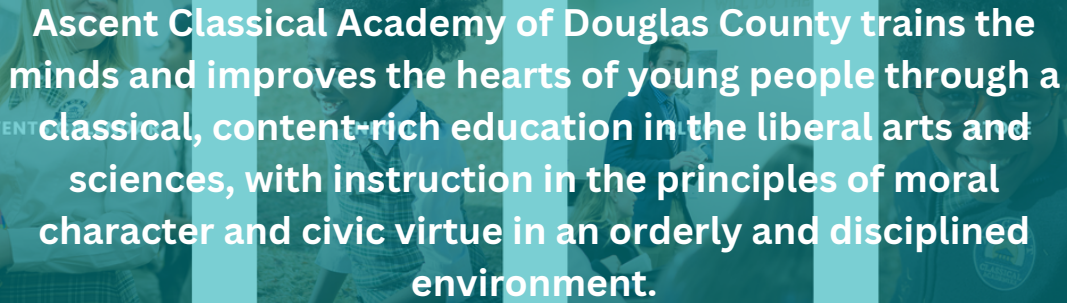
At The Academy, all of our students are known, valued, and challenged to be their best.

School leadership communicates the school’s DEI value to the community through multiple mediums. For example, The Academy includes a page dedicated to its DEI messaging; it acknowledges the community's diversity and commitment to building an inclusive environment that promotes belonging and achievement for all students. The page also notes that The Academy intends to provide a Culturally Responsive Education (CRE). The commitment to representation and inclusion was highly-visible during environmental observations. For example, there were multiple hallway billboards celebrating Hispanic Heritage month, bathrooms with “all gender” signs, and artifacts of teachers expressing their identities. The school also has several spaces dedicated to student collaboration and support. There is a solid effort to create an environment of belonging within the physical environment itself at The Academy.

The Academy school’s website also includes a page dedicated to learning support. The page explains that the school has special education services and uses a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) approach to meet the needs of all learners. The messaging creates an image of inclusion for the prospective family; the top of the page reads, “picture students working in groups and having intriguing intellectual discussions about relevant and interesting topics. Although the classroom population includes a great diversity of backgrounds, experiences, languages, and cognitive abilities, each child contributes meaningfully to the conversation. You can see their authentic engagement through their animated faces.” Inclusion and equity at The Academy begin with shared values and clear messaging. When probed on what creates an inclusive environment at the Academy, stakeholders routinely attributed practices to the community’s collective DEI values and commitments.

“Picture students working in groups and having intriguing intellectual discussions about relevant and interesting topics. Although the classroom population includes a great diversity of backgrounds, experiences, languages, and cognitive abilities, each child contributes meaningfully to the conversation. You can see their authentic engagement through their animated faces.”

[The Academy, Learning Support Page](#)



Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County trains the minds and improves the hearts of young people through a classical, content-rich education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue in an orderly and disciplined environment.

Perception data collected at ACA DougCO revealed that efforts to serve students with diverse learning needs are rooted in the school's model and virtues, including courage, responsibility, justice, and friendship. There is an omniscient devotion to educating the whole child at ACA DougCO and a duty to know each student as an individual human being. Essentially, the pursuit of understanding each student and respecting them as individuals is the implicit driver of inclusive practices at the school. Additionally, ACA DougCO's high levels of respect and trust among stakeholders promote inclusive practices, for which interviewees credit the model and its virtues. Special education and general education staff work together to design services and innovative approaches. There is a high regard for shared ownership of problem-solving and meeting the needs of individual students. Furthermore, leaders and teachers extend trust and respect to students and families; they give families an impressive level of responsibility and sanction in designing their student services.

Successful learning organizations live their values through aligned norms, action planning, and decision-making. The bottom line is that core values guide beliefs, behaviors, and school culture. Value-driven change is considerably more effective than change efforts not rooted in core values (Stegmeier, 2008). Efforts to improve the equitable enrollment and retention of diverse students are most, and perhaps only, effective when tethered to core values and virtues. These values and virtues should drive explicit messaging that permeates staff communication, the website, and promotional materials to ensure a proactive attempt to serve all students.

“Inclusion [at ACA DougCO] is about getting to know students as individuals and understanding their needs; the desire to meet their needs comes from empathy and deep respect for them as people. We understand that we are a service organization ”

**-ACA DougCO Staff
Member**



Condition 2

Center equitable enrollment and retention of diverse learners in the school's strategic and unified improvement planning processes.

At The Academy, school leadership infused the explicit value and messaging on diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the school's five-year strategic plan, unified improvement plan (UIP), and grade-level work plans. Executive leadership works diligently to ensure necessary alignment. The five-year strategic plan begins with a detailed statement on the school's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. It also includes a strategic goal for increasing diversity rates among student groups to more closely resemble the demographics of the school's geographical surroundings. Foremost, the strategic plan contains rigorous achievement goals for all students. It also includes key performance indicators (KPIs) that set forth inclusive practices. For example, the KPIs for high school include individualized post-secondary planning for all students that provides focused preparation on college readiness and opportunities for career and workforce experience.

Ideally, a school's UIP serves as a mission for its strategic plan and articulates how the school will meet its goals in academic performance, school culture, and family engagement. For example, the Academy's current UIP focuses on ensuring a well-developed Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), including a rigorous and research-based English Language Arts curriculum that meets the needs of diverse learners of diverse middle school students. The UIP also includes a major improvement strategy for implementing READ Plans with fidelity to support students with reading deficiencies in grades K-3. Additionally, school-level principals at The Academy create, communicate, and implement annual work plans aligned with the school's UIP/strategic plan. For example, this year's primary school work plan operationalizes the actions for improving early literacy, including implementing an updated and more inclusive Wonders curriculum and normed reading interventions across all classrooms. All interviewed stakeholders spoke about their perspective work plan and its connections to the schoolwide DEI value.

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

To inform our community and celebrate our success, The Academy develops an Annual Impact Report each summer that details our yearly progress toward realizing the vision outlined in our Strategic Plan.

The Academy's 5-Year Strategic Plan was developed in collaboration with the Board of Directors, senior administration, committee members, and staff leaders. Learn more about our Strategic Plan by clicking the button to the right. Continue reading below to hear about the progress we made over the past year.

Strategic Plan

At the start of the 2021-22 school year, we released our new 5-Year Strategic Plan. Click the link below to read more.

[DOWNLOAD THE PLAN](#)



Our approach to vertically aligning the full educational experience for our students from youngest to oldest centers around three notions – *Prepare, Explore, and Empower* – that keep us grounded in The Academy's mission and vision as we set priorities and make decisions that impact instruction and school culture.

Our Progress

The Academy's Board of Directors and Senior Admin Team track the school's progress toward key strategic goals using a scorecard for each of our Strategic Plan categories: Instruction, Culture, Finance, and Operations. Learn more about our accomplishments in these areas by opening the accordion menu below.

+ Instruction & Culture Scorecard

+ Finance & Operations Scorecard



Preparing the Class of 2022 for College

- 92 students took classes at Front Range Community College while in high school
- 1 student earned an Associates Degree in Science along with a high school diploma
- 88% of seniors were accepted to a 4-year or a 2-year institution
- 2% of seniors were accepted into military service
- The Class of 2022 was collectively awarded \$3 million in college scholarships
- 12 seniors were awarded full scholarships
- 6 students will compete in collegiate athletics

Wildcat Alumni Will Attend The Following Schools Next Year

- + In-State Universities
- + Out-Of-State Universities

Furthermore, The Academy publishes annual impact reports and shares them with the community via its website. These reports provide a scorecard for strategic goals and KPIs and highlight achievements aligned with the school’s mission and values. For example, the 2021 Academy of Charter School’s Annual Impact Report highlights the school’s goal for all students to traverse their strengths and passions through real-world learning and career exploration. The report reads, “meaningful learning happens beyond the school’s physical boundaries. Students are better prepared for the working world when they engage in meaningful experiences that include direct interaction with professionals from industry and the community. Our internships, work-study options, and entrepreneurship sequence promote learning about work, learning through work, and learning at work.” In addition to communicating the school’s values and celebrations, annual impact reporting serves as another level of accountability for inclusion and equitable opportunities for all students through the scorecard.

Great leaders start all strategic planning and change efforts with “the why” that inspires others to take action (Sinek, 2009). The Academy has made tremendous efforts to root its strategic and improvement plans in its mission and values. School leadership at The Academy has operationalized its values through strategic goals and improvement planning. School leadership also embeds structures for the ongoing monitoring and adjustment of strategic goals and aligned work plans. Stakeholder interviews demonstrated that leadership’s actions generated collective teacher efficacy and accountability for the school’s priority to provide an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

Highlight on Explore: Work-Based Learning

All students explore their strengths and passions through real-world learning

Meaningful learning happens beyond the physical boundaries of school. Students are better prepared for the working world when they engage in meaningful experiences that include direct interaction with professionals from industry and the community. Our internships, work-study options, and entrepreneurship sequence promote learning about work, learning through work, and learning at work.



Internships



Work Study



AgCademy



Condition 3

Leverage the school's autonomy and develop creative staffing models to promote equitable enrollment and retention of diverse learners.

Ed Trust's 2020 *Resource Allocation Reviews: A Critical Step to School Improvement* guides schools to align resources to DEI efforts; they compel schools to consider what is "equitable" and not "equal." Equity means that each student gets what they need. The Academy and ACA DougCo have allocated a considerable amount of student services staff to meet students' needs and support retention. The Academy has approximately 144 SWDs and six special education teachers; ACA DougCO has about 80 SWDs and four special education teachers. Special education caseloads are below 25 and supported by paraprofessionals at both schools. Special education teacher allocation is built on student needs instead of the number of students only. The same is true when staffing for MLL staffing appointments; leaders consider the level of need and the number of learners. Stakeholders across both schools reported the continual adjustment of staffing to meet the needs of diverse learners. In addition to the amount of staff, The Academy and ACA DougCo retain highly-qualified student services professionals with impressive credentials and high levels of commitment.

Perhaps most impactful in the schools' staffing models are the direct hiring and management of related service providers (i.e., speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, and physical therapists). Instead of utilizing district itinerants, direct hiring ensures that providers are mission-aligned, integrated into school culture, and get to know students and families well. Additionally, it grants the school full autonomy over related services, which stakeholders reported resulted in improved fidelity and effectiveness. Furthermore, The Academy and ACA DougCO allocate reading and math intervention teachers in their staffing model. The bottom line is that inclusive values and priorities must be backed-up with a sufficient staffing model that meets students' academic, cultural and linguistic, social/emotional, and post-secondary planning needs.



Condition 4

Establish an inclusive environment that prioritizes high expectations, layers of support, and self-determination for all learners.

In addition to rooting inclusive practices in organizational values, priorities, and improvement planning and allocating sustainable staffing resources to those priorities, the case study discovered several strategies for creating an inclusive learning environment at The Academy and ACA DougCO. Both The Academy and ACA DougCO make admirable efforts to adapt the learning environment and their programming to include best practices for the students they enroll.

The Academy and ACA DougCO provide continuums of support within their special education programs that honor the least restrictive environment. These continuums include direct services inside and outside the general education setting, specialized instruction aligned to students' IEP goals and grade level standards, and related services, including mental health support, speech services, and occupational therapy. At The Academy, a schoolwide priority is to improve integrated special education services through a co-teaching model. The vision for co-teaching is to move from the “one teach, one support” model to a dynamic and innovative team teaching structure that supports all students' needs, including SWDs and MLLs. Additionally, both schools provide 1:1 instructional/behavior aides for students with severe needs. They work with students inside and outside the general education setting.

Furthermore, the continuums of support across both schools include researched-based instructional methods. For example, special education teachers and interventionists at ACA DougCo utilize highly-specialized science of reading instructional strategies through Access Literacy and Orton-Gillingham. Stakeholders reported they monitor early literacy closely and engage in an ongoing loop of professional learning with the school's Northern Colorado sister school to improve instruction and outcomes continuously. For example, ACA DougCo is monitoring data to respond to the question, “will prioritizing decoding over encoding on the pathway to reading result in improved outcomes by 3rd grade?” Data inquiry keeps teachers focused on what works for diverse learners and what needs improvement.

Creating an Inclusive Environment

- ✓ Layered Continuum of Support
- ✓ Inclusion in the Least Restrictive Environment
- ✓ Co-Teaching
- ✓ 1:1 Instructional Aides for SWDs Severe Needs
- ✓ Post-Secondary Planning: College/Career/Workforce
- ✓ English Language Development, Sheltered English Instruction, & Newcomer-Specific Programming
- ✓ Routine Student Services & General education Collaboration
- ✓ Aligned Professional Development Structures

The case study also uncovered layered supports for Multi-Language Learners (MLLs) at The Academy and ACA DougCo. Both schools provide dedicated English Language Development to students with no-to-limited English language proficiency. They also focus on improving sheltered English instruction in tier I; for example, The Academy implements an MLL component of their tier I ELA curriculum with primary students (i.e., Wonders). Furthermore, there is strong evidence that The Academy and DougCO adapt and augment their MLL programming in response to patterns in student enrollment. For example, the Academy has created newcomer-specific programming this year to respond to the needs of a group of newly migrated Venezuelan and Ukraine students. This program includes a dedicated ELD class for these specific students and a resource class that serves as a study hall for support with general education work. Likewise, ACA DougCo has created newcomer-specific programming to support the needs of an increasing Indian migrant population.

The Council for Exceptional Children (2021) compels schools to provide multiple pathways to post-secondary transition into college, career, and the workforce, including opportunities for concurrent college enrollment, work-study, internships, and partnering with community agencies such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (CEC, 2021). The continuum of support at The Academy includes individualized post-secondary planning for each high school student. The goal is for all students to be college-ready and to pursue their interests and passions. The school understands the duty of providing multiple pathways while ensuring students have the knowledge and skills to pursue their post-secondary goals. In addition to traditional and robust college counseling, The Academy offers structured opportunities for high-school students to engage in work-study placements and internships in the community aligned with their college and career goals. The Academy also has an Agriculture Academy for students interested in agricultural and growing sciences; students maintain several growth areas inside and around the school building and participate in ongoing and aligned learning opportunities. Participation in these types of programs has grown exponentially at The Academy.

Last, the inclusive practices identified at The Academy and ACA DougCO are supported and reinforced by leadership, strong collaboration practices, and structures for professional learning. The elementary principals at The Academy and ACA DougCo were special education teachers, bringing an excellent level of awareness of teachers' and students' needs. Shared ownership and positive collaboration were redundant through interviews at both schools, as were the levers of trust and respect between general and special education instructional staff. Both schools stressed the importance of allocating professional learning time to school priorities such as co-teaching (i.e., The Academy) and implementing instructional accommodations (i.e., ACA DougCO). Furthermore, The Academy is hosting and participating in the 2022=2023 CEE Inclusive Practices Cohort.



Conclusion

The findings of this case study tell a story about how charter schools can promote equitable access, enrollment, and retention practices at the behest of diverse learners. The Academy and ACA DougCO have not yet produced the equitable outcomes in enrollment and retention they are hoping for; nevertheless, their stories impart a promising narrative for change. The story's elements are based on values, virtues, and commitments. The schools communicate these values and duties to staff, students, families, and community members through multiple structures, including school websites, promotional materials, strategic plans, and annual reporting structures. After establishing mission and value-driven priorities, school leadership centers them on strategic and improvement planning processes. They also back them up with a sufficient allocation of resources, including instructional materials, adequate staffing, and embedded time for educator collaboration. Last, the schools provide layered continuums of support to foster an inclusive environment and meet the needs of diverse learners. The conditions identified in this case study have revealed multiple promising implications for inclusive and equitable practices in Colorado charter schools.

Implications for Practice

Mission and Values

- Make diversity, equity, and inclusion defining characteristics of the school's mission
- Center the mission and values on the whole child
- Connect serving diverse learners to the heart of the school- the values and virtues
- Routinely communicate the school's values and commitments to serving diverse learners (e.g., board meetings, staff meetings, school website, and school promotional materials)

Strategic Planning

- Center diversity, equity, and inclusion in the strategic planning process
- Create and communicate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for enrolling and retaining diverse learners
- Align the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) to the KPIs and identify major improvement strategies for meeting the needs of diverse learners
- Engage multiple stakeholders in the strategic and unified improvement processes
- Continuously monitor and adjust improvement plans

Staffing

- Allocate sufficient special education/MLL teachers at a ratio below 1:25
- Allocate special education/MLL teachers based on students' needs, not numbers
- Allocate intervention teachers for the schoolwide MTSS structure
- Directly hire mission-fit related service providers and integrate them into the school culture
- Provide leadership pathways for special education teachers

Creating an Inclusive Environment

- Provide a broad continuum of support, including direct services inside and outside the classroom
- Design programming based on students' needs and continuously adjust as necessary
- Develop an effective co-teaching model for moving beyond "1 teach: 1 support" to dynamic team teaching
- Include students with more significant needs with 1:1 instructional aides
- Cohort newcomers and provide explicit English language development and sheltered English instruction throughout the day
- Utilize evidence-based resources for specially designed instruction
- Include multiple pathways (college, career, and workforce) in student transition planning
- Embed time for general education teachers and student services staff to collaborate
- Provide ongoing professional development aligned with the school's major improvement strategies for creating inclusive classrooms
- Say yes! Participate in collaborative structures offered by the SOC unit, CEE, CSI, and CLCS.

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