



PALO ALTO

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PROMISE ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

*Early
Literacy*



*Equity and
Excellence*



*Healthy
Attendance*



*Mental
Health*



*Service to
Others*



CHAMPIONS OF EXCELLENCE

PAUSD AT A GLANCE



10,509

Students TK-12



2,200

High Quality Staff



17 to 1

Student to Teacher
Ratio



\$28,207

Per-Pupil Spending

#1

Ranked Unified School
District in California
by Niche



81%

Students who met or
exceeded standard for
English Language Arts & Math



100%

Access to arts, music,
and library instructional
programs

#1

Ranked Best Places
to Teach in Bay Area
by Niche



56

National Board
Certified Teachers



45,714

Volunteer Hours
Reported by PTA Council



\$5 million

Raised by PiE to
support PAUSD
students



AAA

Moody's and S&P
General Obligation
Bonding Ratings

A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



“Building upon a foundation of excellence.”

Palo Alto Unified is recognized as one of the premiere school districts in the entire nation. Currently ranked as the top K-12 school district in California and the #1 district of over 10,000 students in the nation, Palo Alto is truly a destination location for families with children.

In 2019-2020, the **PAUSD Promise** replaced typical strategic plans to balance organizational goals, student outcomes, and innovative practices. Priority areas were established for the 2021-2022 school year (listed below alphabetically):

- **Early Literacy**
- **Equity and Excellence**
- **Healthy Attendance**
- **Mental Health**
- **Service to Others**

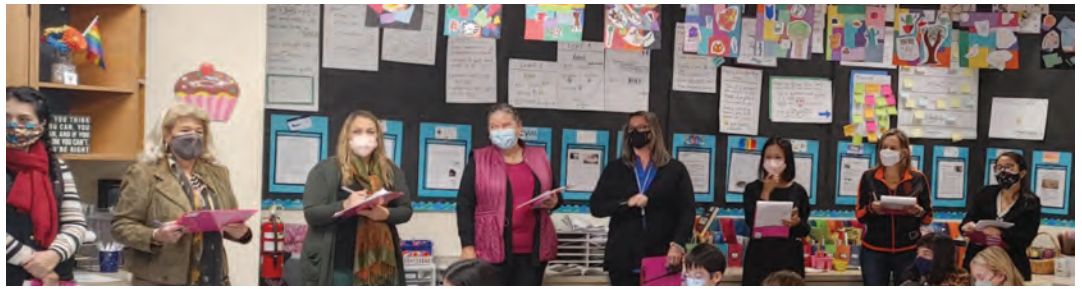
Our students are challenged to reach high standards and are provided an experience capable of accelerating learning through pedagogical academic supports, unobstructed access to rigorous courses, and an unwavering belief that our schools can positively impact the trajectory of each child.

While competitive in every aspect, PAUSD also values the importance of inclusion and success for all students. We strive to create an environment characterized by acceptance, respect, and support to invest in the pursuit of learning and excellence without fear of threat, humiliation, danger, or disregard.

We are able to do special things in PAUSD due to the people who make it possible. Our staff is professional and dedicated. They are supported by an amazing community, including our partners from PTA and Partners in Education (PiE). Together, our parent organizations contribute yearly 50,000 volunteer hours and \$5 million to our operational budget to support high-priority areas.

PAUSD respects the journey as much as the destination. Please enjoy the summary of our progress this year and our plans to embrace a culture of continuous improvement together!

Donald B. Austin, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Every Student Reads Initiative (ESRI) strives to reach the goal of ALL students reading at grade level by the end of third grade



Implemented Orton-Gillingham (OG) methodology for phonics and Shaywitz DyslexiaScreen for all K-3 students

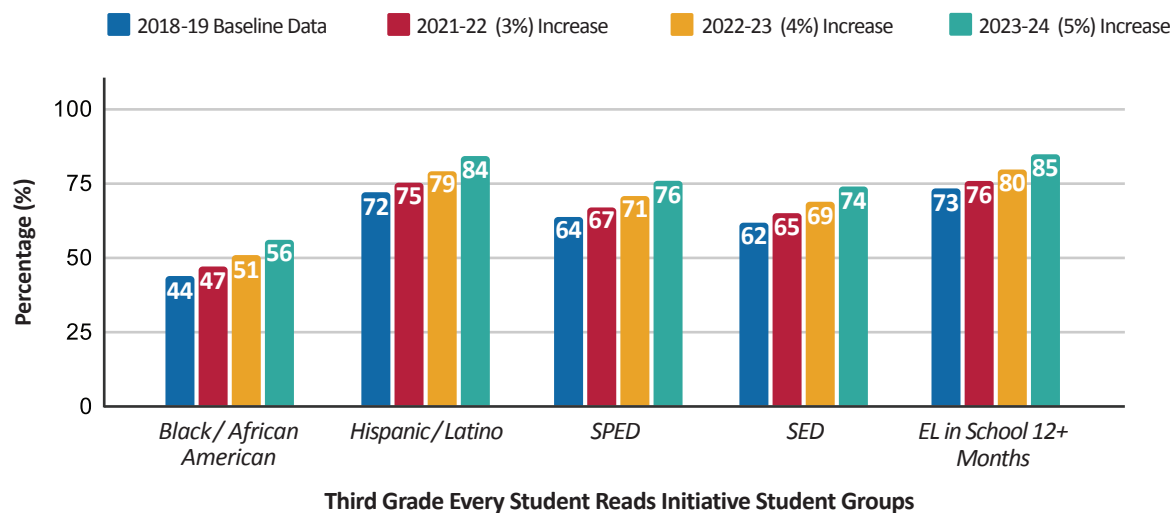
- All K-3 students were screened using the Shaywitz DyslexiaScreen and results were analyzed for all grade levels to determine next steps for students who scored "at-risk."
- All K-3 teachers, Special Education administrators and specialists, reading specialists, and principals trained in and utilized and/or supported OG methodology for phonics instruction, including calibration.
- Identified and purchased decodable books for each site to support ESRI initiative and OG methodology.
- Monitored, calibrated, and discussed the implementation of OG methodology and progress of ESRI students through monthly Districtwide elementary principal meetings, guided classroom observations, and teacher peer feedback.

Improved usage of Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) assessment for all TK-5 students

- Administered beginning-of-year BAS formative assessment to determine student reading processes and areas of focus to support the goal of having every student meet or exceed the middle-of-year reading benchmark.
- Administered and analyzed middle-of-the year BAS formative assessment, implications for instruction, and provided targeted supports (Tier 2 and Tier 3).

Progress Indicator 1: Grade 3 Reading Smarter Balanced Assessment Baseline and Achievement Projection

PAUSD's third grade ESRI is projected to drive a yearly 1% increase in student groups scoring "Near or Above Standard" in Reading.



Increased reading performance of struggling readers through cycles of improvement

- Established elementary school data meetings to review how students are progressing and identified next steps in instructional practices to foster growth.
- Four hundred fifty-one (451) students are receiving Tier 2 Intervention provided by our Reading Specialists, EL specialists, and Reading Intervention teachers across twelve elementary sites.
- Provided *Learning Ally* training for Reading Specialists (available for identified students in grades 3-5).



Excellence shall become the norm for all regardless of background or demographics

Strengthened Tier 1, 2, and 3 intervention protocols to address academics, mental health, attendance, discipline, and other barriers to learning

- Systemized pre-referral, interventions, and increased utilization and response of Student and Family Engagement Specialists at each site.
- Expanded learning opportunities beyond the school day to provide targeted academic supports for struggling students including, Right at School partnership and relaunching of PAUSD+ at elementary level.
- Implemented equity-focused restorative disciplinary responses to address disproportionality in out-of-school suspensions and provided data-informed targeted supports, including adoption of Discipline Matrix.
- Increased participation in career-themed pathways through internships, dual enrollment, and certifications for diverse learners including special population groups.

233

Pathway Completers



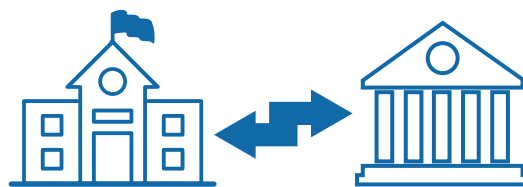
109

Students are in Internships



221

Students in Dual Enrollment



Projected to grow by 50% in 2022-23

110

Students Earning



A diverse group of 233 high school students are Pathway Completers, 109 high school students are in Internships, 221 high school students are in Dual Enrollment, and 110 high school students are receiving Industry Certifications at the end of Semester 1.

Ensured diverse representation and parent/community feedback to identify needs and amplify the voices of identified groups

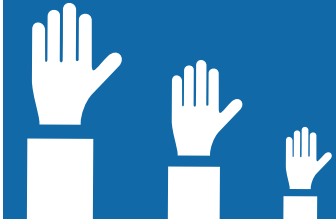
- Developed District Framework for Equity and System Wide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) working with the Board Equity Oversight Committee (BEOC).
- Assessed the experience of racial/ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, LGBTQ+ students, students in the Tinsley Voluntary Transfer Program (VTP), socio-economically disadvantaged students, and other target groups through surveys, equity-focused stakeholder groups, and other forums.
- Continued partnership with Special Education and community groups including Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Palo Alto Council of Parent Teacher Association Council (PTAC) to strengthen best practices in inclusion and meeting students needs.
- Continued to strengthen opportunities for Special Education students, including students with intellectual and developmental disabilities through the Palo Alto Career Training (PACT) Program at the Veterans Affairs and the Project SEARCH Program, a business-led, one-year, school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace.
- Increased availability and access to parent education and support to improve knowledge and skills to support student learning including Latino, Asian, and Pacific Island families information nights.

	<i>SED</i>	<i>Latino</i>	<i>Black/ African American</i>	<i>Pacific Islander</i>	<i>Mandarin / Cantonese-speaking Families</i>	<i>IEP</i>	<i>VTP</i>
<i>#</i>	1,352	722	88	54	143	333	405
<i>%</i>	*	53%	6.5%	3.9%	10.5%	24.6%	29.9%

** All the percentages are based on total number of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged (SED).*

Provided instructional materials and learning opportunities for staff incorporating diverse viewpoints in instruction

- Began piloting Second Step Social-Emotional Learning program at nine elementary sites that includes social justice components.
- Continued to offer racial equity and habit building opportunities including 21-Day Equity Challenge and Becoming an Antiracist Educator series for leadership team members.
- Secondary site administrators, teachers, and Special Education staff completed Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) Universal Design for Learning (UDL) training to incorporate diverse strategies in teaching.
- Conducted team school visits and routine equity walks to promote positive school climate.
- Expanded supports for struggling readers in grades 6-12 using universal screener and state and local assessment data to make targeted decisions about student needs.



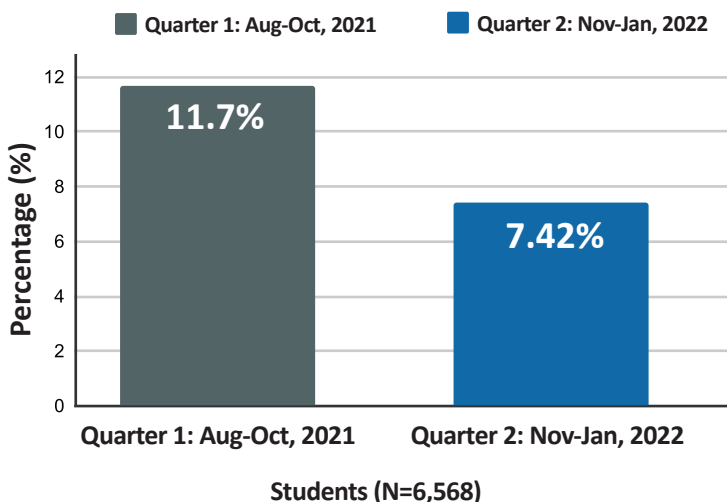
Overall, chronic absenteeism decreased Districtwide by 2.3% from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2

Implemented "Identifying and Responding to Student Engagement" tiered-response protocol and interventions

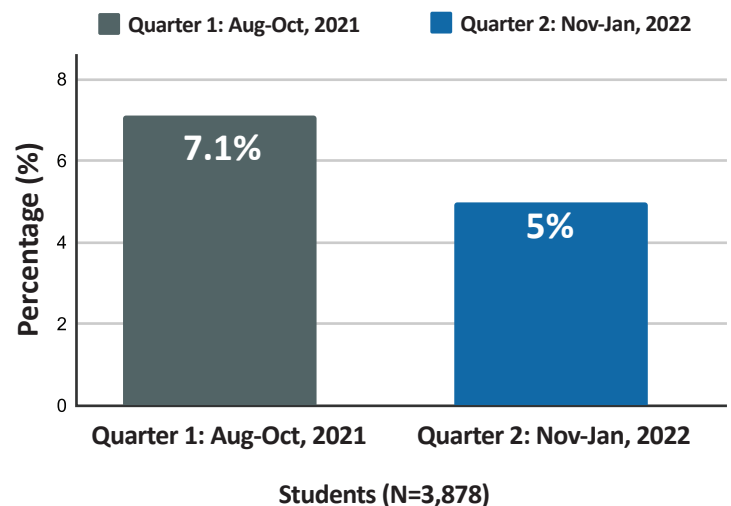
- Implemented a new Districtwide Attendance System (A2A) by properly coding students' absences for consistency and compliance, systematically leveraging PAUSD Attendance Flowchart.
- Reviewed data routinely to calibrate the tiered system and share best practices for improving attendance.
- Increased attendance through weekly attendance reports and follow-through with students and parents regarding absenteeism patterns.

PAUSD Student Attendance from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2

PK-8 Students Chronically Absent



High School Students Chronically Absent

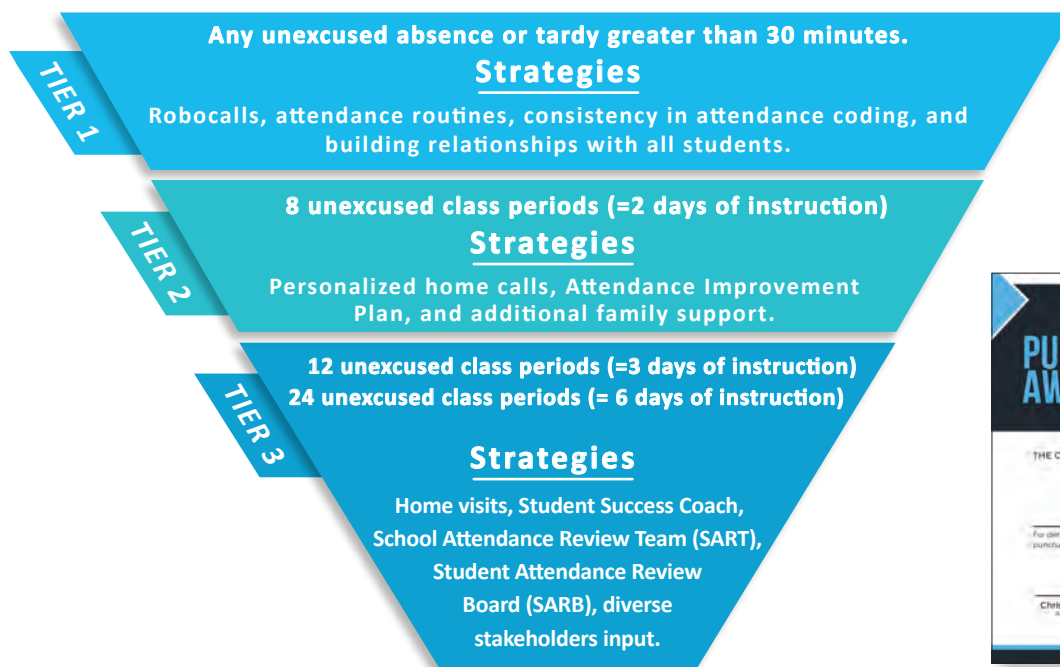


HEALTHY ATTENDANCE

Developed individualized attendance improvement plans for students who are chronically absent

- Students identified as benefiting from Tier 3 strategies received support from Student Success Coaches and Student and Family Engagement Specialist (SaFE) Specialists by examining chronic absenteeism or habitual truancy needs.
- Recognized students for improved attendance through positive incentives and reward systems (e.g., Punctual Panther Certificate, phone calls to parents of improved students, and goodie bags).

Relationship-Based Tiered Intervention Approach Key Strategies



Cultivated stronger family partnerships to alleviate barriers to attendance

- Conducted effective home visits to build trust.
- Strengthened relationships between students, families, and school through routine check points, direct contact, and targeted supports.
- Strengthened the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) process to include more community stakeholders and linkage to community services.
- Provided parent education on the importance of healthy attendance and reminding to keep ill students home.



- Over **75%** of high school students feel connected to friends and peers*
- Over **70%** of high school students feel safe going to a trusted adult for support*

*PAUSD High School Wellness Survey



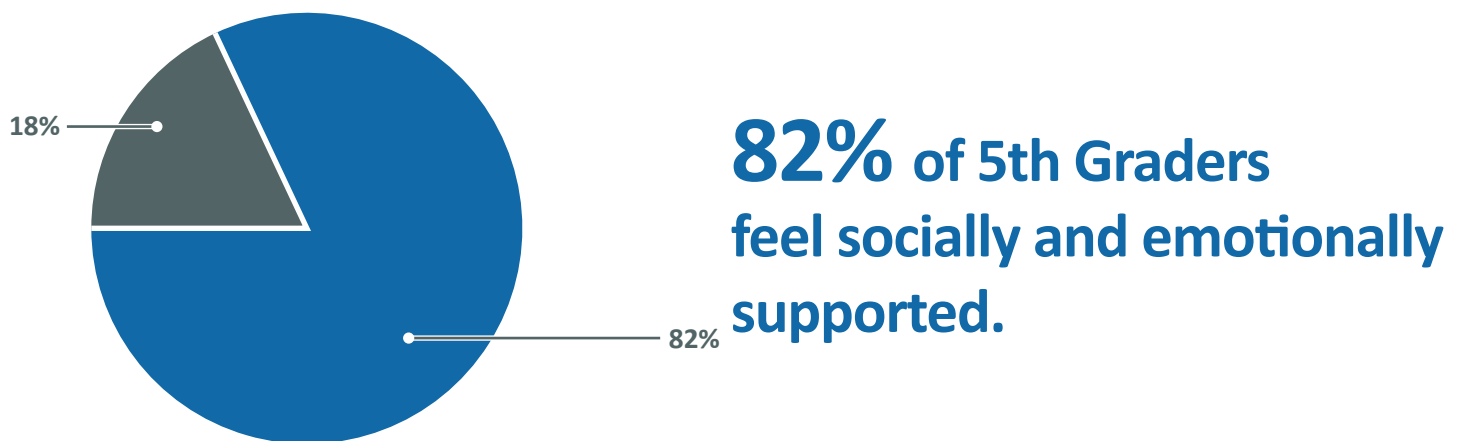
Strengthened tiered response to mental health needs from universal supports to targeted intervention

- Expanded Wellness Centers to middle school level. (e.g., opening of Rest Relax Recharge “R” lounge at JLS and Katies Place at Greene).
- Expanded group therapy and social skills groups at some elementary sites including (e.g., bullying prevention, conflict resolution, help-seeking behaviors, emotional regulation, and positive peer interactions).
- Reviewed and revised crisis protocols at the elementary level and provided additional resources/support around risk assessment, safety planning, and potential hospitalization protocols.
- Worked towards systemizing homework policies and practices.
- Adjusted the start times for schools to align with sleep research.

Established the Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) Design Team to lead, design, and implement Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)-aligned framework

- Used additional research-based, CASEL-aligned, surveys, and screeners to gauge progress on the development of student social-emotional skills and supports.
- Piloted research-based, CASEL-aligned, social justice-aligned Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Program (Second Step) with explicit instruction at nine elementary schools.
- Provided Trauma Informed Practice Training to teachers with practical strategies for students with trauma and built a sustainability model by developing these skills within staff.
- Identified options for age-appropriate universal mental health screener for early identification of needs.
- Established wellness baseline data through high school wellness surveys and used baseline to expand student SafetyNet (e.g., Counselors, School Psychologists performed targeted check-ins for students).

Social and Emotional Learning Supports Scale Questions



431 out of 689 5th grade students participated in the California Healthy Kids Survey.

Increased community mental health agency partnerships to provide workshops for students, parents, and staff

- Partnered with community-based agencies including Project Cornerstone and Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI) to develop parent psychoeducation webinar similar to Loving Solutions/Parent Project.
- Established additional support through Alcove providing walk-in support and therapy for students from ages 12 to 25, and Care Solace servicing the Palo Alto community.



- **PAUSD won the 2022 Glenn W. Hoffman Exemplary Program Award for Service to Others through the Creativity Cart Program**
- **More than 80% of graduating seniors to be awarded the Seal of Civic Engagement**

Increased service learning opportunities for students

- Provided opportunities to diverse students to engage in service to others through clubs, student body, teams, departments, and multi-age service projects across campuses.
- Sites expanded and organized community opportunities for students (e.g., food drives, toy drives, book drives, COVID supply drive, and service days in partnership with YCS).
- Identified other ways to be of service to others (e.g., Work with Ecumenical Hunger program, coat drive, toothbrush drive, sock collection, “Neighborhood Cheer” project, and delivering mugs and handwritten notes from students and staff to doorsteps of houses neighboring campus).



Implemented the State Seal of Civic Engagement for high school students

- Aligning with the state criteria, identified local criteria for new Seal of Civic Engagement through stakeholder input.
- Board approved the Seal of Civic Engagement implementation.
- More than 80% of graduating seniors to be awarded the Seal of Civic Engagement.

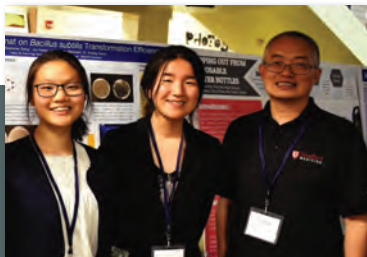


SERVICE TO OTHERS

Increased community partnerships, parent engagement, support, and education

- Created “1 Palo Alto” (1PA) initiative, over 800 parents who volunteered to take pressure off staffing issues at the peak of Omicron in addition to staff stepping in to serve roles well beyond their assigned duties.
- Provided daily COVID testing for staff and students, and established a citywide Community COVID Testing Center at Cubberley to meet the needs of Palo Alto residents.
- Nursing staff partnered with health organizations to host vaccination clinics.
- Community members continued to step up to be partners in education and mentors (e.g., Advanced Authentic Research mentors, and Adult School English as a Second Language Volunteer Tutor Program).

1
NE
PALO ALTO
+ = **800**
PTA[®]
everychild.onevoice.
**OVER
800
PARENT
VOLUNTEERS**



**COMMUNITY
MENTORS**



**COMMUNITY
COVID TESTING
CENTER**

GLOSSARY

1PA: Acronym for “1 Palo Alto” – a call to action to our community and parent volunteers so that “Together, Schools Stay Open”. For more information, visit the 1PA website.

A2A: Software and service solution that serves as PAUSD’s new Districtwide Attendance System. (Fall 2021 Priority Update to the BOE, 11/2/21)

AACI: Acronym for Asian Americans for Community Involvement. AACI serves individuals and families with cultural humility, sensitivity and respect, advocating for, and serving the marginalized and ethnic communities in Santa Clara County.

Benchmark Assessment System (BAS): One-on-one formative and summative assessment using the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems to determine student’s independent and instructional reading levels, helping to accurately and reliably identify each child’s instructional and independent reading levels.

CAC: Acronym for Community Advisory Committee. The Palo Alto CAC is a volunteer group that supports families of students with special needs.

CASEL: Acronym for Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. CASEL was established to provide high-quality, evidence-based SEL as an essential part of preschool through high school education.

CAST: Acronym for Center for Applied Special Technology. CAST is a nonprofit research and development organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals, especially those with disabilities, through Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Certifications: verifications of skill or knowledge attainment based on generally-accepted skill standards for an occupation. PAUSD offers several certifications through its CTE programs.

Chronically Absent/Chronic Absenteeism: A “chronic absentee” has been defined in Education Code Section 60901(c)(1) as “a pupil who is absent on 10 percent or more of the school days in the school year when the total number of days a pupil is absent is divided by the total number of days the pupil is enrolled and school was actually taught in the regular day schools of the district, exclusive of Saturdays and Sundays.”

COVID: Shorthand for Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. (John Hopkins)

Discipline Matrix: Matrix created to address disproportionality in school discipline with the establishment of consistent responses for student behavior. (Fall 2021 Priority Update to the BOE, 11/2/21)

Dual Enrollment: Dual Enrollment courses refer to high school courses that have gone through curricular alignment with a community college and whose students are enrolled in two institutions concurrently; therefore, earning high school credits and college credits simultaneously.

GLOSSARY

Early Literacy: Literacy is a combination of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Early literacy refers to learners using these skills from Kindergarten through 5th grade. (Superintendent Update, 12/10/21)

ELA: Acronym for English Language Arts. Information to help students achieve progressive levels of mastery so that they may communicate effectively in English and, ultimately, participate fully in society and the world of work. ELA classes help students improve their listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills.

EL/ESL: Acronym for English as a Second Language, also referred to as English Learners. Students who do not speak, read, write, or understand English well as a result of English not being their home or first language.

Every Student Reads Initiative (ESRI): By the end of third grade, all students will read at grade level. Resources will align with an "all in" approach to addressing early literacy.

General Obligation Bonding Rating: Rating systems to provide clarity around the components of credit risk.

IEP: Acronym for Individualized Education Plan or Program.

K: Acronym for Kindergarten.

LGBTQ or LGBTIQ+: Stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual and many other terms (such as non-binary and pansexual).

National Board Certified: National Board Certification is the most respected professional certification available in education and provides numerous benefits to teachers, students, and schools.

Niche: Online resource providing information on K–12 schools, colleges, cities, neighborhoods, and companies across the United States.

Orton-Gillingham (OG) Methodology: The Orton-Gillingham methodology is a direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive way to teach literacy when reading, writing, and spelling does not come easily to individuals, such as those with dyslexia.

PACT: Acronym for Palo Alto Career Training. PACT is a work experience program for students with special needs.

Pathway Completers: Students who complete a Career Technical Education pathway. A pathway is defined as a two to three-year course sequence that consists of an introduction (optional), concentrator, and capstone courses, as determined by the CDE.

PAUSD: Acronym for Palo Alto Unified School District

PAUSD+: Acronym for Palo Alto Unified School District Plus, an invitation program for economically disadvantaged, historically underrepresented, and credit-deficient students. (LCAP plan, 2020-21)

GLOSSARY

Per-Pupil Spending: The amount of money spent on education by a school district or the state, divided by the number of students educated. For most purposes in California, the number of students is determined by average daily attendance (ADA). (EdSource)

PiE: Acronym for Partners in Education. A Palo Alto non-profit educational foundation devoted exclusively to raising money for all Palo Alto Unified School District schools.

PTA: Acronym for Parent Teacher Association.

PTAC: Acronym for Palo Alto Council of Parent Teacher Associations. The Palo Alto Council of PTAs works with the district staff, the Board of Education, community partners, and the PTAs at 17 schools to support the students and families of the Palo Alto Unified School District.

SaFE: Acronym for Student and Family Engagement.

SARB: Acronym for School Attendance Review Board. SARB is composed of school and community members who meet regularly to diagnose and resolve persistent student attendance or behavior problems.

SBAC: Acronym for Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. Smarter Balanced assessment system is part of the California Assessment Performance and Progress System (CAASPP) which includes a comprehensive suite of standards-aligned assessments and tools (e.g. instructional supports, interim assessments, and summative assessments) to support effective teaching and maximize learning for each individual student.

State Seal of Civic Engagement: California award for students who demonstrate excellence in civics education and participation, an understanding of the United States Constitution, the California Constitution, and the democratic system of government.

SED: Acronym for Socio-Economically Disadvantaged as defined by required state reporting.

SEL: Acronym for Socio-Emotional Learning.

SPED: Acronym for Special Education.

Shaywitz DyslexiaScreen: Shaywitz DyslexiaScreen™ is an efficient, reliable, and user-friendly dyslexia test for K-3 students who may be at risk for reading difficulties.

SWIFT: Acronym for System-Wide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) driving the PAUSD equity agenda.

GLOSSARY

Tiered Interventions: Tier 1 intervention are high-quality classroom instruction, screening, and group interventions. Tier 2 interventions are targeted interventions whose intensity varies across group size, frequency and duration of intervention, and level of training of the professionals providing instruction or intervention. Tier 3 interventions are intensive interventions and include comprehensive evaluations, which can involve an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). (RTI Action Network)

Tinsley Voluntary Transfer Program (VTP): Allows minority students in the Ravenswood City School District to transfer to one of the following six school districts: Las Lomitas, Menlo Park City, Palo Alto Unified, Portola Valley, San Carlos, and Woodside. Non-minority students in these six districts may transfer into the Ravenswood City School District. (San Mateo County of Education)

TK: Acronym for Transitional Kindergarten. Currently, children in California can enroll in Kindergarten if they turn 5 on or before September 1. Younger children born after that date will be eligible to enroll in TK.

UDL: Acronym for Universal Design for Learning, a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. (CAST)

Wellness Center: Wellness Centers provide safe, supportive environments on school campus where students can go to discuss a variety of issues from depression, grief, self-esteem, family life and stress to dating violence, sexual identity, and health needs. Through both on-campus programming and community-based partnerships, students receive coordinated health education, assessment, counseling, and other support services to maximize student engagement and success.

YCS: Acronym for Youth Community Services. YCS engages young people from diverse mid-peninsula communities in meaningful service-based learning.



PALO ALTO
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Over **10,000** students
served through the following schools.

Elementary Schools

Addison
Barron Park
Duveneck
El Carmelo
Escondido
Fairmeadow
Herbert Hoover
Juana Briones
Lucille M. Nixon
Ohlone
Palo Verde
Walter Hays

Middle Schools

Ellen Fletcher
Frank S. Greene Jr.
Jane Lathrop Stanford

High Schools

Henry M. Gunn
Palo Alto

Additional

Greendell
Packard Children's Hospital/Stanford
Palo Alto Adult School
Alta Vista High
Foothill Middle College



PALO ALTO

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

QUESTIONS?



PROMISE WEBSITE



CHAMPIONS OF EXCELLENCE