

# Santa Barbara County Education Office

## California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP)

Peter B. Fitzgerald Community School

**Rene Wheeler**, Director

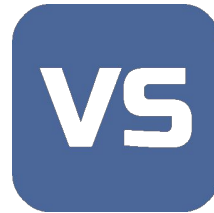
**Eugenia Ambrocio**, Community Outreach & Career Counselor

November 13, 2025

# County Community Schools Compared to CCSPP

## County Community Schools

- Public schools run by county offices of education
- Students in K-12 who are:
  - Expelled
  - Referred for attendance issues
  - Referred for Behavior problems
  - Homeless
  - On probation or parole
  - Parents or guardians request



## California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP)

- Supports schools' efforts to partner with community agencies
- Align community resources to improve student outcomes
- These partnerships provide:
  - Integrated focus on academics
  - Health and Social Services
  - Youth and Community Development
  - Community Engagement

# Rationale for Becoming a Community School



Baseline data from 2023-24...

- Students Experiencing Housing Insecurity: **23.3%**
- High Unduplicated Pupil Count: **100%**
- Therapy and Counseling Needs:
  - **50%** of the students were expelled from their home school.
  - **31.6%** in need of Substance Use Disorder Counseling due to their drug use.
- High Suspension rate: **40.7%**.
- High Truancy/ Absenteeism rate: **65.2%**
- School In-Stability rate: **94.2%**.



# Why Community Schools?

- Transform the way we “do” schools:
- **REIMAGINING** how schools engage with, strategize with, and follow up with all stakeholder groups
- To be **TRANSFORMATIONAL**, schools must prioritize relationship building with students, staff, families, and the community
- **STRATEGY** to redesign schools into community hubs. It involves the school, families, and community agencies working together to align resources for improved student outcomes.

# Four Pillars of Community Schools

**Integrated  
Student  
Services**

**Extended/  
Expanded  
Learning Time  
and  
Opportunities**

**Family and  
Community  
Engagement**

**Collaborative  
leadership  
and shared  
decision  
making**

# Assessing our Needs & Assets

- **Parents:**
  - Survey on 5/14/2024
  - Focus group on 3/20/2024 & 11/16/2024
- **Students:**
  - Survey on 05/17/2024 & 11/2024
  - **Empathy Interviews: 12/2024 & 5/2025**
  - Focus group on 04/15/2024 & 1/22/25
- **School Staff:**
  - Survey on 3/26/2024
  - Focus groups during weekly staff meetings



# 107473

## Empathy Interview - Protocols and Note-Taking Guide

### Protocols:

1. Welcome the student and explain the process.
2. Ask the questions and take notes. Feel free to ask follow-up or clarifying questions, like, "tell me more" or "how did that make you feel?"
3. Thank the student for their time.
4. Review notes, adding information that was left out and removing information that may identify the student. These notes will be shared and discussed at a January staff meeting. *The notes will eventually be coded and used for future plan writing and reporting.*

### Process:

1. We are very interested in learning more about your experience at FitzGerald so that we are able to reflect and improve the school.
2. I will ask you some questions and the information you share will be very helpful to help us understand what is going well and what areas we need to improve upon. When you are answering, I will be taking notes. Are you okay with me taking notes?
3. Everything you say is confidential, any identifying information will be removed and never shared publicly.
4. This interview is voluntary and each question is voluntary.
5. Do you have any questions?

### Questions

### Notes

Tell me the last time you laughed? Tell me about it.

Earlier today... because I'm always happy... "you make me laugh!"

What was your impression of FitzGerald before you came here and how does that compare to what it was really like at FitzGerald?

I heard that this was a school for "bad kids" and something may happen. But I really wasn't worried. The kids aren't bad, they just came here for stupid stuff.

What has changed or how do you know you're ready to return?

My ways of seeing things are different. I don't assume that when someone looks at me, I need to react. I'm more focused on graduation.

# Parents Feedback



- Counseling for Families
- Support for Students Dealing with Drug Addiction
- Economic Support and/or Referrals for Families in Need
- Field Trips



# Student Feedback



## Locally Administered Surveys revealed:

- Low Connectedness to School
- Want to Amplify Student Voice
- 40.90% of the students feel stressed at school
- 54% of students revealed that they did not feel respected or heard in the classroom and expressed a desire for a safe place to talk about their emotions.

## California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), 2023-24:

- 35% of the students strongly agree or agree that they feel connected to school
- 38% participate meaningfully
- 48% have a caring adult at school

# Staff Feedback

- 100% of staff believe that more parent involvement is needed at our school
- 100% feel more emotional support for students is needed
- Need alternative spaces for students to:
  - Learn
  - Study
  - Calming Space



# Priorities Areas



*Through our initial needs and asset assessment, three primary areas emerged as priorities for our community school:*

1. Positive and restorative school climate
2. Community and Family Engagement
3. Integrated student Support Services



# Positive & Restorative School Climate

- Training & Coaching in Restorative Approaches
- Student-Created Spirit Wear
- Transition Program for Returning Students
- Incentive Program Development
- Enhanced Campus Security
- Campus Beautification Efforts
- Facility Upgrades



# Community and Family Engagement



*Recognizing the vital role that family and community involvement play in student success, we have made significant strides in enhancing opportunities for parent participation.*

## **FitzGerald Community School Year 24-25 Parent Nights**

- Monthly Parent Workshops
- Parent-Driven Topics



October 16, 2024	How to access Community Resources
November 14, 2024	Strategies to Help Your Student Thrive in School
December 11, 2024	College and My Kids
January 22, 2025	Hidden in Plain Sight : FBSMV
February 12, 2025	SMJUHSD Pre-Registration for 8 <sup>th</sup> graders
February 19, 2025	TMHA Services for families in Santa Maria
March 19, 2025	QPR Training: Youthwell
April 16, 2025	How to advocate for your child's education
May 21, 2025	Parent Leadership Workshop: MALDEF's PSP program

# Integrated Student Support



- Hired Community Outreach & Career Counselor
- Career Coaching
- Comprehensive Career Assessments
- Enrollment Support
- ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences Screener)

# New & Expanded Initiatives

- Create a welcoming space for all families
- Host culturally responsive monthly workshops that provide dinner and childcare
- Offer interpretation services in Spanish and Mixtec for all events
  - a. Enrollment
  - b. Teacher-Parent meetings
  - c. Parent workshops
  - d. Newcomer students
- Create Student Clubs
  - a. Culture Club for students with a Mixtec cultural background to support inclusivity and cultural awareness with activities (i.e. a three week project to create an Altar de Muertos for the Day of the Dead - October 2024 & 2025)
  - b. Campus Beautification



# Collective Priorities became our Goals



## **Goal #1:** **Positive & Restorative School Climate**

*FitzGerald Community School will enhance the schoolwide program through the implementation of targeted initiatives fostering positive relationships, student connectedness, and amplifying student voice.*

## **Goal #2:** **Community & Family Engagement**

*Fitzgerald will foster a higher level of family engagement for families to be involved in decision-making, as well as opportunities to participate in educational workshops.*

## **Goal #3:** **Integrated Student Support**

*Students will be provided with integrated student support services to address individual needs and to help them in overcoming barriers impacting their education. (Per APR)*

# Goal 1: Positive & Restorative School Climate Outcomes

Metric(s)	Baseline (SY 2023-2024)	Year 1 Outcome (SY 2024-2025)
Decrease suspension rate	39.3% of students were suspended for one or more days	38.6% of students were suspended for one or more days
Increase students who identify as having a caring adult at school	48% of students report having a caring adult at school.	45% of students report having a caring adult at school.
Increase number of students who strongly agree or agree to feeling connected to school	35% of students strongly agree or agree to feeling connected to school.	45% of students strongly agree or agree to feeling connected to school.

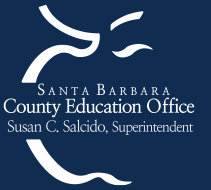
## Goal 2: Community & Family Engagement Outcomes

Metric(s)	Baseline (SY 2023-2024)	Year 1 Outcome (SY 2024-2025)
Increase the number of parents who attend Parent Information Nights and workshops.	21% of parents attended Parent Information Nights and workshops.	34.24% of parents attended Parent Information Nights and workshops.
Maintain the number of parents/guardians who are contactable through Parent Square.	95% of parents are contactable through Parent Square. All parents have signed up for Parent Square.	96% of parents are contactable through Parent Square. All parents have signed up for Parent Square.

## Goal 3: Integrated Student Support Outcomes

Metric(s)	Baseline (SY 2023-2024)	Year 1 Outcome (SY 2024-2025)
Increase the percentage of students attending school on a daily basis	81.5% of students attended school on a daily basis.	86.1% of students attended school on a daily basis.
Increase the percentage of students receiving counseling services	84% of our students received counseling services.	85% of our students received counseling services.

# Educational Partners



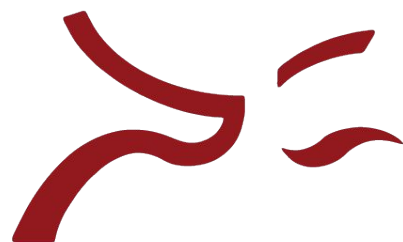
- Behavioral Wellness (BeWell))
- Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (CADA)
- Family Service Agency (FSA)
- One Community Action
- Planned Parenthood
- Transitions-Mental Health Association (TMHA)
- Allan Hancock College (AHC) Rising Scholars Network
- Community Health Centers of the Central Coast (CHC)
- Proyecto Campesino
- Santa Maria-Bonita School District (SMBSD)
- Santa Maria Joint Union High School District (SMJUHSD)

# SBCEO Partnerships

- Career Technical Education (CTE)
- Children's Creative Project
- Health Linkages
  - Health Navigators
  - Promotores Network
- Partners in Education
- Transitional Youth Services



# Santa Barbara County Education Office



SANTA BARBARA  
County Education Office  
Susan C. Salcido, Superintendent



Thank you