

**MID-CYCLE VISIT
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

FOR

J.E. YOUNG ACADEMIC CENTER

822 N. Abby St

Fresno, CA 93701

Fresno Unified School District

Mid Term Visit: April 1-2, 2019

Visiting Committee Members

Mr. Mark Campbell (Chairperson)

Superintendent, Calaveras Unified School District

Ms. Pegi Van Der Meulen

Program Specialist II Monterey County Office of Education Alternative Programs

I. Introduction

Include the following:

- **General comments about the school, its setting, and the school's analysis of student achievement data.**
- **Include a description of any significant changes and/or developments, i.e., program additions since the last full visit, changes in student enrollment, staffing changes.**
- **Describe the impact these changes and/or developments have had on the school and/or specific curricular programs.**
- **Briefly comment on the school's follow-up process. Include a description of the committee that has been responsible for overseeing the progress of the school's action plan and the preparation for the visit.**
- **Describe the process used to prepare the progress report.**

J.E. Young Academic Center (JEY) is an alternative education school centrally located in the Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) that serves students from 9th – 12th grade within a variety of independent study-based programs. JEY also operates credit recovery on all of the district's comprehensive high school campuses using Apex or Edgenuity programs. Additionally, JEY has developed an eLearn Online Academy, which services 7th-12th grade students that meet the eLearn criteria.

Changes

There have been some significant changes in J.E. Young Academic Center's program since the WASC Self-Study visit in 2015. Over the last three years there have been changes in program structure, curriculum, administration and master schedule. Additionally, they added an eLearn Online Academy, increased in technology, hired a full-time school social worker, and are now offering more student engagement opportunities.

2014-2015 School Year:

During the 2014-2015 school year, J.E. Young teachers underwent the task of rewriting the independent study modules that had been in existence for many years. Teachers used the Literacy Design Collaborative Framework that was being utilized throughout the district to write lessons that were aligned to the Common Core State Standards as well as the Fresno Unified Scope and Sequence. During

this school year, it was deemed that in addition to the new modules being developed, what students needed, was more “seat time” in front of their teachers in order to be more academically successful.

2015-2016 School Year:

2015-2016 began the first year of implementation with the new curriculum modules along with a new master schedule. JEY reduced the number of traditional, one day a week independent study teachers down to two. They taught students who were medically fragile or needed social emotional support and was deemed by a medical professional as not being able to attend school more than once a week. The remaining teachers at the JEY Abby site were placed in self-contained classrooms where they taught content specific courses using the newly created standards-based modules. This program was called Independent Study Instructional Model (ISIM). Students attended school two to three days a week, taking three to four content classes as well as one to two elective classes as opposed to prior years when students came once a week for one hour, meeting with one teacher.

The 2015-2016 school year was also the 1st year of the Jaguar Academy which was designed for 10th and 11th grade students who had earned 0-20 credits at the comprehensive high school. Students came to school five days a week from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Class sizes were approximately 25 students. Academically, these students needed an everyday program, but in a smaller setting than that of a comprehensive school. After two years of implementing the Jaguar Academy, the Jaguar Academy was dissolved due to a variety of factors such as: lack of academic progress, chronic attendance problems, as well as more discipline issues which resulted in a higher number of suspensions. Students transitioned into J.E. Young’s Independent Study Instructional Model (ISIM) beginning the next school year, 2017-2018.

2016-2017 School Year:

During the 2016-2017 school year, J.E. Young continued the Independent Study Instructional Model (ISIM), and students continued attending classes two to three days a week. Students who were in the Jaguar Academy continued coming to school 5 days a week, and the traditional one-day-a-week Independent Study program stayed the same as the previous year.

2017-2018 School Year:

There have also been significant changes in staffing at J.E. Young since the self-study report in 2015. The

previous principal, Mrs. Yolanda Jimenez-Ruiz was promoted to administrator overseeing all of alternative education in Fresno Unified. The vice-principal, Mr. Carson Wood was promoted as J.E. Young's new principal beginning the 2017-2018 school year. With his promotion, a new vice-principal, Rhonda Day, was hired. Tom Nixon joined the J.E. Young team overseeing the eLearn Academy. Also, at the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, a full-time social worker was assigned to J.E. Young.

In addition to staff changes, J.E. Young had curricular changes. J.E. Young leadership, in conjunction with the District Office began looking for a more rigorous curriculum with increased accessibility to students on site. During the 2017-2018 school year, J.E. Young moved towards more technology-based instruction, utilizing the Edgenuity online learning platform for 77% (10 out of 13) of the core content courses. Edgenuity is a standards-based online curriculum that empowers students to take ownership of their learning. It also allows students to work at their pace. It provides scaffolding within the lessons, and allows students to take a pre-test to determine what concepts they may already understand and then the program tailors the lessons to what the student does not understand. In addition, Edgenuity provides "real-time" data. When a student takes quizzes and tests, they know as soon as they finish, how they did.

In addition to moving to Edgenuity for most of J.E. Young's curriculum, Fresno Unified's first online school, the eLearn Academy was created at J.E. Young to allow students, grades 7-12, who meet the eLearn Academy criteria, flexible attendance options depending on student needs, as well as single course acceleration, accessed through the high school counselor. The program includes a 7-8 grade cohort, and 9-12 grade cohort. It offers a full six years of online curriculum, four years that meet a-g requirements for the University of California and California State University systems, using the Edgenuity online learning platform. The eLearn Academy has two full-time teachers and a manager who oversees the Academy.

Since moving to an online learning platform for the majority of J.E. Young's curriculum, there was a need to purchase more technology. Enough computers, laptops and tablets have been purchased for all students to have one to use in each of their classrooms, advisory and tutorial. In addition, there are some for students to check out as needed to use at home.

Other changes took place during the 2017-2018 school year which had a significant impact on students: there was an installation of a gym so that students can take physical P.E. Also, for the first time since January, 1982 at J.E. Young, students were able to start serving hot lunches in November, 2017.

2018-2019 School Year:

The 2018-2019 school year began with a master schedule change which has provided additional opportunities for students and staff. J.E. Young's attendance has hovered at 75%-76% percent for several years. When trying to find ways to improve overall attendance, it was noted that there are many holidays on Mondays and that students who were scheduled for Monday classes missed several classes due to holidays. It was determined that students really needed to have time with a teacher/mentor coach so that they have extra time to work on courses. Out of these discussions, a Community Leadership class was created and scheduled every Monday, for all students except students in traditional Independent Study who come one day a week. Students now come to school on Monday for their Community Leadership class in addition to two to three additional days of the week for their core classes and electives. Core classes and Advisory, where students get their electives, are now offered Tuesday – Friday.

During the Community Leadership class on Mondays, students are assigned to a teacher and during the 91 minute block of instructional time, students meet with the teacher to review their academic progress and attendance from the prior week, and if no progress was made, the teachers, as mentor/coaches, work with the student to try to get to the underlying reason why progress was not made, or why the student may have missed some school the week prior. The expectation is that during this time, the student sits down and gets additional time to complete work from the previous week. Mentor Coaching is taking place at all alternative education sites in Fresno Unified; however, each site is implementing the mentor coaching a little differently to fit the needs of their site.

During the summer, prior to the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year, several J.E. Young teachers and administrators attended a local Project-Based Learning (PBL) training. During this training, staff was trying to determine how PBL could work for Independent Study, given that students don't come every day. However, by the end of the training, it was determined that, although challenging, PBL could work at an independent study school. In order to make sure all J.E. Young students could participate in the PBL project, it was determined that 30 minutes of the 91 minute blocks on Monday's Community Leadership class would be PBL.

In addition to Project-Based Learning, J.E. Young is part of FUSD's Personalized Learning Initiative (PLI) who is partnered with Education Elements. J.E. Young has a PLI team of teachers who attend PLI trainings and bring back what they learn about Blended Learning, PBL, and share with staff. J.E. Young

is working on a blended learning model where students work on their Edgenuity at their own pace, but are given personalized or whole group instruction when needed. PLI also involves project-based learning, which J.E. Young has embraced.

Another change to J.E. Young is that Spanish is now being offered as an A – G class. A teacher was hired to teach the Spanish class which is an online Edgenuity course.

Process

J.E. Young parents have access to their student's CAASP assessment results. In addition, they also have access to the overall CAASP assessment results of J.E. Young and can see comparison data to that of the district, county and state by going to <https://caaspp.cde.ca.gov>.

Student data, including CASSP and the District Interim assessments are shared and reviewed with J.E. Young staff, School Site Council as well as to parents at the parent luncheons. Site leader principals meet with district administration, as well as in their Principal Accountable Communities (PAC), to review data by district, region, and site. They reflect and analyze student, teacher and leader artifacts, and identify leadership moves for the team to develop and improve.

Upon reviewing data at the site level with staff, discussions take place in the Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) about ways to address academic gaps. Teachers then put into place specific plans as to how they will address the academic needs of the J.E. Young students.

In addition, previous to the 2017-2018 individual CELDT assessment results were mailed home for review. The ELPAC test now takes the place of the CELDT, and parents have access to those assessment results as well.

In addition, J.E. Young leaders and staff discuss action plans to address to needs academic needs of students, and write into the Site Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) action plans to address those academic needs. For example, J.E. Young staff has shared how the investment of tutors through Fresno State's Teaching Fellows program has been very beneficial in supporting students; therefore, the tutors have been a constant in the SPSA action plan for several years. In addition, Khan Academy is another resource being used to support student needs, so it is also written into the SPSA's action plan, and the School Site Council is involved in the review and approval process accordingly.

Specific information for the progress report was collected and reviewed during scheduled staff and PLC

meetings and the process was coordinated with assistance from the site leadership team as well as the Instructional Leadership team (ILT).

II. Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up/Schoolwide Action Plan

- **Provide an analytical summary about the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section referencing the critical areas for follow-up addressed through each section.**
- **Note the evidence supporting the progress made and the impact made on student achievement.**
- **If any critical areas for follow-up were not included in the school's action plan, indicate what actions have been taken to address these issue(s) and include supporting evidence.**

Note: The school's schoolwide action plan should have incorporated all the critical areas of follow-up or major recommendations that were stated in the last self-study visiting committee report.

1. The staff use performance data to drive challenging learning experiences for students that involve the in 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, collaborative work, and meaningful application of knowledge and skills.

The report noted that prior to the implementation of the online learning platform Edgenuity, J.E.

Young staff used teacher created content modules that were aligned with the Common Core

State Standards and included 21st century skills such as critical thinking skills, problem-solving, collaborative work, and meaningful application of knowledge and skills. The instructional modules included activities, writing assignments and projects that ranged in DOK levels from 1 being foundational skills to 4 which required more analysis and critical thinking skills. Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, J.E. Young began using the online learning platform Edgenuity as the curriculum for the majority of the classes. The site referenced that moving to online learning proved to be challenging in the beginning as students and staff learned to navigate the system. However, after the first quarter, there was a large increase in the number of credits being recovered. At the end of the 2017-2018 school year, after

using Edgenuity throughout J.E. Young's system, over 31,000 credits were recovered.

Edgenuity allows for students to take a pre-test before each unit. Depending on the student's achievement level, Edgenuity builds a personalized, standards based unit of study based on the skills that the student had mastered according to the pre-test. Students are required to read, write and listen throughout the activities before taking unit tests. There are video tutorials throughout each unit to support students on skills and concepts that they need support with.

With a classroom environment, teachers are able to create a blended learning environment where the class is student centered, but the teacher brings in whole class instruction, small group instruction, as well as one-on-one instruction as needed.

During the visitation, based upon observations and feedback gleaned through dialogue with staff, the efforts and outcomes in this critical area were validated. Creating diverse learning opportunities in a variety of formats was observed to be an area of strength as was the use of data to drive decisions and direction. Blended instructional strategies and opportunities, with an increased emphasis on rigor, were common themes observed, and heard, during the visit.

2. The staff and administration adopt an assessment process aligned to Common Core State standards so that systemic, on-going assessment is used to improve student academic performance.

Since the Self-Study in 2015, as outlined in the report, J.E. Young has adopted a new curriculum, using the online Edgenuity platform, which allows students to work at their own pace. Teachers work with students daily, using data to make sure they are meeting their weekly goal that was set with the teacher. When the teacher notices a student is not meeting their weekly goals, they meet with the student to better understand what the student may be struggling with.

For each Edgenuity course a student takes, the student must take unit tests to

demonstrate proficiency. When a student does not demonstrate proficiency, they meet with the teacher for one-on-one re-teaching before retaking a unit test. Students must receive a 70% or better in order to move forward to the next unit.

In addition, Fresno Unified has ELA and Math Interim Assessment Tests that students take twice a year to demonstrate standards competency. Once students take the Interim Assessments, teachers are able to identify academic gaps and address them through whole class instruction, small group instruction, or one-on-one instruction as needed. The Edgenuity curriculum is standards based; however, because all student's are working on the individual courses/units they need depending on what credits they need to recover, the District Interim Assessment doesn't necessarily cover the specific standards students have been working on prior to them taking the District assessment.

All 8th grade and 11th grade students take the CAASP (SBAC) ELA and math state tests in the spring. Assessment results are analyzed to identify which areas show the greatest needs for improvement. Teachers identify and plan ways in which they can address the skills and concepts, but the implementation of those plans don't take place until the next school year, as the test results are not received before the end of the school year. Since J.E. Young is an Independent Study school, the students who took the SBAC in the spring may not be the same students enrolled at J.E. Young at the beginning of the school year; however, by analyzing the district wide SBAC results, teachers and administrators can determine the gaps in skills and concepts and devise action plans to address those gaps with the students enrolled at J. E. Young at the beginning of the new school year.

The Visiting Committee noted the significant progress made in this area and, while the efforts to strengthen systems and practices in this area are ongoing, the process and practices of

data analysis between staff and administration (in PLC sessions, in designated staff meetings and in other formats) has become much stronger.

3. The staff and administration use disaggregated data to ensure a consistent high level of achievement for all students, especially under-achieving sub-groups

The staff and administration use disaggregated data to inform instruction and continue to seek to strengthen this area.

Although J.E Young is an Independent Study school, and the students enrolled at J.E. Young in the

Spring, when the state testing is administered, may not be the exact same students

enrolled at the beginning of the school year, the staff and administration still use

disaggregated data to inform instruction. Assessment data such as the SBAC

results, District Interim Assessment results, as well as individual student results on their

Edgenuity Assessments are used to inform teacher instructional decisions.

The school has identified that the two largest low-achieving sub-groups are the

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, African American and Hispanic populations. The African

American population, district-wide, is the largest underachieving sub-group. FUSD has started

the African American Academic Acceleration (4A's) task force to identify and address the

fundamental cause for discrepancy in academic outcomes between African American students and other subgroups of FUSD's student population. The task force reached out to J.E. Young

in hopes that a mentoring partnership to provide personalized academic support and

monitoring for African American students can be started. J.E. Young will participate in

mentoring program to help African American students.

As a site, J.E. Young continues to look to identify instructional methods that address the needs of all its students, including the low-achieving sub-groups and to use disaggregated data that is relevant and meaningful..

4. The administration and staff develop a technology plan to purchase and integrate technology throughout the curriculum and project based learning to improve academic outcome and prepare students for college and career.

Since the 2015 WASC Self-Study, J.E. Young has purchased enough technology (laptops and tablets) so that every classroom, including advisory and tutorial, is equipped with enough devices so that every student has a device to work on while in class. In addition, a computer cart is stocked with tablets that students, who don't have access to technology at home, can check out as needed. In addition to the technology J.E. Young has purchased, FUSD began giving out Learning Companion Devices (LCD's) to students. During the summer extended learning session, seniors were given the LCD's to use throughout their senior year to support their learning needs. At the start of the 2018-2019 school year, the LCD's were given to 9th-11th grade students who wanted them. Students keep the devices through their senior year to support their learning needs.

Staff have been involved in project-based learning trainings, and have brought project-based learning to the classroom. J.E. Young staff and students have been hard at work researching the topic, "Are You Eating For Success?" as well as learning how wide-spread food insecurity is in Fresno. Students used technology to prepare a variety of presentations (power-points and video's), to demonstrate what they learned throughout this first project-based learning project.

Feedback gathered during the mid-term visitation validated the increased access to, and use of, technology as well as the ongoing efforts to increase and improve the schoolwide work on project based learning. Additionally, the plans to strengthen the program in both of these areas

are solid and backed by resources, momentum and capacity.

6. The District, staff and administration work toward increasing family and community involvement to build the positive image of school programs for students in the community.

J.E. Young has worked to increase family and community involvement to build a positive image of J.E. Young's school programs and activities. Prior to the 2014-2015 school year, there were no Parent Luncheons, no Open House or Back to School events for parents. Since that time, J.E. Young has committed to make J.E. Young a school that students, parents, and staff can be proud of. Parent Luncheons are held monthly (except January and summer) to keep families involved in what is happening at their student's school. Back to School Night (fall) and Open House (spring) events are held, and parents are invited and treated to a nice meal. During these events, parents receive their student's report cards and meet with their student's teachers. In addition, the school has parents who serve on School Site-Council as well as parents who have offered to help with school fundraising.

During the parent luncheons as well as the Back to School and Open House events, community members are invited to present and/or set up tables to provide resources for J.E. Young families. The number of parents attending the Parent Luncheons ranges from 12-20 parents. Parent participation in the Open House and Back to School Night events also varies, but consistently has approximately 40 families.

During the visitation, the committee heard validating feedback from parents and staff in this area. Called out as promising practices were the interactive nature of parent sessions (not just info sharing), presentations addressing topics deemed relevant to the parents (cyber safety, suicide prevention to name a couple), positive phone calls to parents from staff and JEY's overall strengthening of outreach efforts and communication overall. Data indicated that the

school's efforts are paying off.

III. Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations:

- **Comment on significant progress the school has made in responding to the critical areas for follow-up and in carrying out the related action plan.**

The school has taken highly effective steps to address all five critical areas of follow up. Progress has been noted in all areas, with a particular emphasis on the areas involving the use of data to inform decisions and direction. Technology is also an area that has been significantly addressed.

Over the last three years there has been a concerted, and successful, effort to strengthen the culture and climate of the school through a focused, driven and collaborative manner. The growth is notable in the data analyzed, the observations of the VC Committee and the feedback from staff, administration, parents and students.

Recommendations:

- **Comment on any critical areas for follow-up/action plan sections that have not yet been completely addressed, if applicable.**

The only recommendations would involve sustaining the positive efforts and outcomes thus far achieved and seek to elevate to higher levels the spirit, collaborative process, deep use of data and commitment to creating opportunities for students.

To continue to seek meaningful ways to maximize the use of data, with a specific note on ongoing efforts to use relevant disaggregated data to inform direction and address sub-group areas of need.

Leverage partnerships (with Microsoft, post-secondary institutions and other entities) to increase access to resources for students and staff in order to strengthen programs and opportunities

- **Identify any new areas of concerns, if applicable.**

There are not any new areas of concern that the Visiting Committee could identify through the reading of the mid-term report and site visitation.