

Alameda Community Learning Center

A Public Charter School of the Alameda Unified School District
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CLCS Board Report October 2012

Report Summary:

1. Acknowledgements
2. School Culture:
 - a. Hannah Camp is on the Horizon
3. Staffing
 - a. College Advisor
4. Important Professional Development
 - a. Inter-visitations @ ACLC
 - b. Interdisciplinary PBL
5. Enrollment
 - a. Enrollment window is open
6. API Release
 - a. 824 to 827
 - b. Similar schools = 2
 - c. Statewide Rank = 9
7. Tutoring Program
 - a. Q and A on data
8. Raising the Bar @ ACLC
 - o Proposal to eliminate the D
 - o Increase Graduation standard

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Full Report:

In week six of school at ACLC we are truly settling into to a rhythm. Learners are moving through their day with fewer questions about structure and procedure and more questions about grades and school culture. In my view, this is a good sign.

Acknowledgements:

I had the pleasure of making two presentations in CCC this week. First, Fiona Blackburn received a Letter of Commendation from the National Merit Scholar Corporation. Fiona did not advance to the finalist round but she was one of 1600 learners in the country to receive this acknowledgement.

Next, Molly Fenn was acknowledged by Stanford University for her significant contribution. She was nominated By Dylan Moore, one of our alumni at Stanford.

School Culture:

The legendary Hannah Camp experience is on the horizon. For years, seniors have organized a camp for new middle school learners as a place for them to bond with older learners. This year, ACLC is continuing the Hannah Camp tradition by inviting all NEW middle school learners to participate in this event so that they may have the opportunity to experience the true culture of ACLC while out in the wilderness.

As in years past, Hannah Camp will be held at the Tilden Regional Park. Learners will depart from ACLC on Monday, October 22 and will return to ACLC on Wednesday, October 24th. Hannah Camp parents/guardians, siblings, facilitators, community members, etc. are invited to attend this year's Hannah Camp Potluck! Please feel welcome to attend. It would be great to have all of you meet our learners.

Staffing:

I wanted to share with all of you that there has been a change in the college counselor position. Elizabeth will be moving on to continue her private practice in the East Bay. John Maiers, who has been a college advisor at Alameda High, will take on these responsibilities at ACLC immediately. John knows our senior class well because he was instrumental with scheduling last year at ACLC. I've drafted and attached a job description for the position for you to see. Keep in mind that this is a part time position.

Professional Development:

The ACLC staff is committed to not falling into a fixed mind-set. We discussed that notions of improvement can be scary and intimidating. So scary that facilitators may construct reasons not to reflect or attempt progress. You will see an example inter-visitation tool attached. We have committed to sharing our work publicly this year. Facilitators are entering their second round of Inter-visitations The goals are to provide opportunities for facilitators to visit each others classrooms to glean best practices as well provide an opportunity for facilitators to receive peer feedback. The inter-visitation cycle has three parts

- (A) Meet to identify areas of challenge, articulate growth areas, and identify specific areas of sought after feedback
- (B) Visit classrooms during instructional time
- (C) Debrief classroom visits and provide feedback

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Facilitators provide specific targets for the visit (check for understanding, stance, transitions, objective, agenda, alignment, etc.) and listen to colleague's feedback on the back end. We will move towards group visitations (doctors rounds) and video protocols as the year moves on.

ACLCLC has a full day professional development on the 19th. In Project Based Learning (PBL), students go through an extended process of inquiry in response to a complex question, problem, or challenge. We believe that the most rich opportunities to create "deeper learning is when two, three or four classes share common projects. On the 19th facilitators have committed to planning these project together. I have attached a project planning for you to get a sense of the strategies and tools we are taking advantage of. Our project will be rigorous, carefully planned, managed, and assessed to help learner's master key academic content, practice 21st Century Skills (such as collaboration, communication & critical thinking), and create high-quality, authentic products & presentations.

Enrollment:

Fully enrolling a school is no small task. It will involve weekends and evenings, enrollment fairs and information sessions, school visits and countless phone calls to prospective students. With that in mind, I should have a core group of staff members who are committed to leading the school's enrollment efforts. The Lead Facilitator has ultimate accountability for meeting enrollment targets, establishing relationships with schools and community based organizations, hosting information sessions and making communicating to key feeder schools and community based organizations.

I'll be using Rebecca as a support person until a permanent plan for a Lead Facilitator Support person can be put in place. Rebecca will coordinate information events and school visits, make phone calls to prospective students, and help coordinate the scheduling of events. She will also provides administrative support for information events ensuring that materials are printed and sufficient, contacts are updated in an excel contact list after each event and works to ensure that timely notification of application status is sent to all applicants.

- Enrollment dates and deadline
- Parent Information Nights: Oct 17 (Wed), Thursday, Nov 8, Dec 13 and Jan 10.
- Middle School Presentation 6 pm, High School Presentation 7:30 pm
- Tours of the school: Oct 18, Nov 9, Dec 14, Jan 11
- MS Tour: 8:30 am HS Tour 9:30 am

- Deadline for priority admission: 4 pm January 25, Lottery if needed Jan 28

Released API:

It was great to see our school API moved from 824 to 827. The snapshot attached is very insightful. I had previously reported to the board that I believed the API would drop. I'm happy to report that I was wrong. Moving forward, it would be prudent for our organization to understand accurate API predictor tools.

After evaluating the API, the demographic results are revealing. Our Asian learners and significant gains while our African American and Hispanic learners dropped. This is an area for growth moving forward. In an effort to interrupt this trend and increase we are creating a tutoring program for learners getting D's and F's. Learners who receive a D or F will be assigned 1 hour of Tutoring for each D or F they receive. This plans helps facilitators differentiate learners that need a quiet place to work and those who should be in for 1v1 help. I've attached that proposal for you to see evaluate.

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Two Proposals at ACLC

1) Eliminating the D at ACLC

I have initiated a conversation with the ACLC board about how we can successfully transition to no D school. Thus far I have presented the idea to facilitators, learners and the governing board. You wouldn't pay for "D" quality plumbing, fly with a "D" rated pilot or dine at a "D" restaurant. I'm proposing that Learners will only get grades of "A," "B," "C" or "N/C" (no credit) starting next fall. This practice is rooted in the belief that all learners can succeed in school and in life. Please see my move complete rationale for the proposal attached.

2) Increasing the graduation standards at ACLC

At ACLC learners start their graduation requirements in the 7th grade with Algebra. As a result, some learners are finished with math in the 9th grade. As I listened to people this summer give suggestions about the school, I regularly heard that the senior year was void of rigor. It is true that some learners take college classes. Unfortunately, most are not. I'm proposing 3 changes to the graduation requirement in order to make the senior experience at ACLC more robust.

1) Three years High School math requirement:

2) Demonstrate college readiness within Senior Seminar

Learners will work within Senior Seminar to accomplish the mission and demonstrate their understanding of the college process.

Each senior will:

- Complete a passing senior portfolio
- Apply and be accepted to a college or university.
- Complete a FAFSA form
- Apply for at least one scholarship
- Senior Internship
 - Minimum of 30 hours of documented experience for graduation
 - Presentation of learning
 - Closing report
 - Journal entries

3) Senior Year Academic Expectations

- Learners within their Senior Year will take at least five classes. Two of those classes can be off site at a college.
- All seniors will take senior seminar, 12th grade English and Economics and Government.