A-G Completion Improvement Grant Plan

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Name	Total Grant Allocation
Palm Springs Unified School District	$2,639,407

Plan Descriptions

A description of how the funds will be used to increase or improve services for foster youth, low-income students, and English learners to improve A-G eligibility.

Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD) has been working to increase A-G completion rates for many years. The district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) has featured A-G completion rates as a metric and has featured actions to improve A-G completion rates in each plan iteration since the inception of the LCAP processes. The table below reports the California Department of Education (CDE) posted rates from the DataQuest website for the last five graduation cohorts.

PSUSD A-G Rates for the Four-Year Adjusted Cohort per CDE DataQuest (https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/)					
Student Group	**2016-2017**	**2017-2018**	**2018-2019**	**2019-2020**	**2020-2021**
All Students	39.9%	40.0%	45.2%	42.9%	49.9%
Low Income (SED)	37.6%	37.6%	42.8%	40.6%	48.0%
English Learners	15.5%	16.2%	15.7%	19.3%	26.1%
Foster Youth	7.7%	16.7%	22.2%	14.3%	*

*not reported due to group size of 10 students or less

Although PSUSD has made significant improvement in this measure, increasing the district's overall rate by ten percentage points in the last five years, current rates indicate a continuing need to increase the overall A-G completion rate and continued effort in closing rate gaps between student groups. The district has also identified a need to increase A-G completion rates for additional student groups, including students with disabilities and underrepresented ethnicity groups. Although this plan is primarily directed towards improving results for low income students, English learners, and foster youth, it is PSUSD's intent to benefit students with disabilities and underrepresented ethnicity students who are represented within each of the primarily targeted groups as well. PSUSD recognizes many students will require additional opportunities and support to address pandemic-related learning and credit gaps.

The district's A-G Completion Improvement Grant Plan (A-G Plan) is designed to supplement and extend efforts outlined in the district's LCAP, adding layers of support for low income students, English learners, and foster youth to meet A-G requirements. The plan actions outlined below are organized by categories aligned to the eligible use of funds noted in Education Code 41590(c), with descriptions indicating how each action will increase or improve services for low income students, English learners, foster youth, and homeless students.

Professional Development

Staff professional development will be focused on multiple areas related to A-G completion. Training in grading practices for lead teachers, site administrators, and counselors will be provided to analyze current grading structures, identify and remove barriers created by ineffective grading practices, and move towards more equitable course grading systems within the high school grade span. Current grading data will be disaggregated in order to identify the effects of current grading practices on low income students, English learners, and foster youth as part of this work.

Grant dollars are budgeted to provide expanded training for teachers instructing Advanced Placement (AP) course sections, improving the use of instructional strategies and systems designed to support the learning of low income students, English learners, and foster youth in not only successfully completing these courses but also generating a qualifying score on AP testing. Additional funding would be dedicated to providing honors section teachers at both the middle school and high school levels access to AP training, in order to better align instruction between these course formats and increase success in AP testing and courses. The district will also begin the process of Pre-AP course development and training during the three year plan cycle, requiring training of teachers in the Pre-AP course structure in order to bring this course type to the district..

Additional training for counselors will be provided by the Counselor on Special Assignment (COSA) in the areas of monitoring the progress of low income students, English learners, and foster youth. Timely professional learning would be provided in response to data trends and monitoring, allowing the COSA to work collaboratively with counselors in identifying students in need of support and providing guidance regarding effective intervention practices and skill development to increase student success in A-G

coursework.

As part of the Task Force actions noted in a later section, professional development would be provided to support those teams' work in mastery grading practices, master scheduling strategies, leveraging technology to expand course offerings, and other topics related to support structures for low income students, English learners, and foster youth that could occur during the school day. Topics and focus areas will evolve over the course of the plan period, adjusting based on the analysis of student performance data and shifting focus to address needs specific to low income students, English learners, and foster youth.

Advising Plans and Pupil Supports

A Counselor on Special Assignment (COSA) will be funded in order to provide guidance, collaborative planning, and professional development to district counselors on monitoring student progress towards A-G completion. Support topics will include proactive use of the district's internal A-G monitoring system, providing timely interventions based on current performance data, and refining practices around master scheduling and student scheduling. In addition, the COSA will work with middle school teams in topics related to high school readiness, working with counselors to monitor student progress in preparation for A-G approved coursework in high school. The COSA will also host informational sessions and support sessions for families of low income students, English learners, and foster youth regarding district graduation requirements, A-G completion, high school readiness, and other skills needed for success in high school course work. Funding is included in the COSA action to provide start-up materials and equipment for the position (e.g. laptop, supplies).

Funding will be used to upgrade and further develop the district's internally developed A-G progress monitoring system. These upgrades will include new visualization tools, direct integration into the district's student information system, notifications regarding scheduling options and students identified for support, and a potential student portal allowing low income students, English learners, and foster youth to review their progress and review resources that provide guidance in completing A-G requirements.

Additional family and student engagement will occur through the work of the district's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within this plan. Awareness of graduation requirements, A-G requirements, and college acceptance and application requirements will be increased for families of low income students, English learners, and foster youth through workshops and resources developed for each specific group. College visits to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) will be provided to cohorts of 10th-12th grade low income students, English learners, and foster youth in order to provide them with information and exposure to these institutions, intending to provide motivation for A-G completion in both students and families from these underrepresented ethnicity groups.

PSUSD will use funds to develop a district wide onboarding program for students transitioning from 8th to 9th grade. Low income students, English learners, and foster youth will be invited to a week-long program during which the students will develop a course

plan for their high school years, including identifying A-G courses and learning about high school graduation requirements. These individualized plans will be used in consultations with counselors throughout the high school years, assisting in plotting a course that provides each student the best path towards A-G completion. The program will end with either a trip to a local college campus or similar experience providing context for maintaining and completing a rigorous high school schedule.

Expanding Access to Coursework

PSUSD will partner with Riverside County Office of Education in conducting a transcript audit, identifying courses and structures that are successful and others that are barriers for low income students, English learners, and foster youth in meeting A-G requirements. The results of this audit will inform initial work for two new district task force teams. The Grading Practices Task Force will be trained in effective grading practice methods and develop systemic district approaches to course grading practices at the high school level. Concepts that will be part of this work include mastery grading practices, standards based grading, the meaning and context of D grades, and the impact of zeros within a gradebook. The Master Schedule Task Force will focus on scheduling practices within the district, utilizing recommendations from the transcript audit to develop plans and systems around intentional and student-centered scheduling within the district. Topics for this group include studying access to A-G courses for low income students, English learners, foster youth, and other student groups and researching innovative practices on improving access to and completion of coursework. Exploration of the benefits and barriers of a six period schedule as compared to a seven period schedule, leveraging technology to allow for concurrent courses between district sites, and incorporation of interventions and tutoring during the school day will be part of this team's work.

The district will use the latter segments of the funding period to begin training and implementation of Pre-AP courses. AP training for honors teachers is part of the plan for professional development, leading to course sections using the Pre-AP format being available for low income students, English learners, and foster youth at all high schools. This course format will provide students with a rigorous course model designed to prepare students for future AP coursework.

Progress Monitoring and Outcome Measures

PSUSD believes in using multiple measures in monitoring programs and district systems. Monitoring measures for determining the effectiveness of plan actions and identifying needed modifications include:

- CA School Dashboard Graduation Rate Indicator
- A-G completion rates
- CA School Dashboard College Career Indicator
- AP/IB course enrollment, grades, counts of students tested, and qualifying scores

- Percentage of courses that are A-G eligible in high school settings
- Number of students per semester requiring A-G course retakes or credit recovery

A description of the extent to which all students, including foster youth, low-income students, and English learners, will have access to A-G courses approved by the University of California.

In the 2021-22 academic year, 66.9% of PSUSD high school courses are UC/CSU approved A-G courses. Distributions across A-G subject areas range from 63% A-G Approved (English and History/Social Science) to 100% A-G approved (World Language). The majority of high school courses that are not A-G approved are designed for students with significant disabilities, alternate education placements, and credit recovery structures.

As new courses are developed for district high schools, the district's Educational Services department and Curriculum Advisory group separately review course descriptions and attributes to ensure that new courses meet UC/CSU approved levels of rigor. Transcript analysis will provide additional insights regarding A-G course participation for low income students, English learners, and foster youth, while master schedule related actions within this plan will work to increase access and enrollment in A-G approved courses for each of these student groups.

PSUSD currently monitors student progress towards meeting A-G requirements using an internally developed reporting tool, allowing staff to identify students who are on-track or in need of support. Filtering is available to monitor the disaggregated progress of low income students, English learners, foster youth, and homeless youth, with the ability to drill down to individual student progress. Administration and counselors work collaboratively to identify students who require scheduling adjustments to access needed A-G courses to meet the requirements. Identified students are counseled and schedules are adjusted to assist low income students, English learners, and foster youth in meeting A-G requirements. Additional training and systems development will be implemented as part of this plan to improve scheduling processes to avoid misaligned scheduling for students using a proactive methodology as part of improving A-G completion rates. Further development of the progress monitoring tool is also incorporated into the plan in order to create a more proactive system featuring additional notification structures, direct live-time integration with the district's student information system, and creating visualizations that are easily interpreted by both students and staff.

The number of students who were identified for opportunities to retake A-G approved courses in which they received a "D", "F", or "Fail" grade in the 2020 spring semester or the 2020-21 school year and a description of the method used to offer the opportunity to retake courses.

The district uses multiple systems for course retakes. A resolution was passed by the PSUSD Board of Education in spring of 2020 to implement "hold harmless" grading due to school closures. Student grades for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester could only improve from the posted quarter three grade following pandemic related school closures. Students were permitted to change any D grade to a "P" passing grade, moving forward in their course sequence with support provided as needed in the next course since the UC and CSU systems would accept these course grades. Only F grades resulted in a need for course retakes and/or credit recovery efforts. Attendance during distance learning following school closure was poor, with many students disconnecting from their school during this time period. As a result of all actions and events noted, 1,713 students had one or more A-G approved courses requiring a retake from the spring of 2020.

In the 2020-21 academic year, grading practice returned to normal structures during distance learning. Students were provided support through the year in an effort to close learning gaps while still moving forward with new content. Attendance during distance learning continued to be a challenge in the high school grade span, with the district using multiple strategies to re-engage students with school. As grade postings occurred throughout the year, innovative methods of course credit recovery were used to support students in course completion. These methods included course retakes using online learning systems, models of content reteaching and make-up assignments to change grades when only a portion of the content created less than optimal grades, and an expansion of the district's Mission Graduate program. In July 2021, AB 104 allowed for students and families to request retroactive grade adjustments to P or NP, reducing the number of credit recovery students as the UC and CSU systems once again accepted P grades. The final counts of students requiring credit recovery in one of more A-G approved courses as defined by receiving an F, NP (no pass) or I (incomplete) grade was 3,002 from the fall 2020 semester, and 2,943 for the spring 2021 semester.

A description of how the plan and described services, and associated expenditures, if applicable, supplement services in the Local Control Accountability Plan and Learning Recovery Plan.

Identified actions within the A-G Completion Improvement Grant Plan (A-G Plan) align to Goal 1 of the district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), targeting improved academic outcomes for low income students, English learners, foster youth, and homeless youth. Although most expenditures are primarily designed to supplement LCAP actions related to staff professional development (LCAP Goal 1 Action 2) and additional A-G support (LCAP Goal 1 Action 8), additional plan actions are designed to be extensions of intervention efforts within the district's multi-tiered systems of support (LCAP Goal 1 Action 5) and Professional Learning Community work within the collaboration time provided through the LCAP (Goal 1 Action 3).

Actions and services within the A-G Plan either directly supplementing or extending LCAP actions are noted in the table below.

Action	A-G Completion Improvement Grant Plan Action Title	LCAP Action Alignment
Action 1	Counselor on Special Assignment (COSA) - 3 years	Goal 1 Action 2 - Staff Professional Development ● COSA provides professional development to district counselors, high school teachers, and site administrators regarding data-driven practices, effective scheduling and counseling strategies, grading practices, and other A-G completion related topics.
Action 3	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: A-G Awareness and Engagement Initiatives	Goal 1 Action 8 - Additional A-G Support ● Builds awareness of A-G requirements and college admission requirements with students in and families of underrepresented ethnicity groups, low income groups, English learners, foster youth, and homeless youth.
Action 5	High School Readiness and Onboarding Programs	Goal 1 Action 5 - Multi-Tiered Systems of Support - Academics ● Middle school progress monitoring with responsive intervention to prepare low income students, English learners, foster youth, and homeless youth for high school. Goal 1 Action 8 - Additional A-G Support ● Awareness building of A-G requirements, individual student plan development, and college admissions requirements awareness for underrepresented ethnicity groups and LCFF groups represented in the unduplicated pupil percentage counts (low income students, English learners, foster youth, and homeless youth).
Action 6	Intervention Programs Supporting A-G Course	Goal 1 Action 5 - Multi-Tiered Systems of Support -

	Completion	Academics Targeted and responsive intervention during the school year to assist low income students, English learners, foster youth, and homeless youth in passing A-G courses with a grade of C or better.
Action 9	Staff Professional Development in A-G Completion Related Topics	Goal 1 Action 2 - Staff Professional Development Staff development in A-G related content, including but not limited to grading practices, Advanced Placement course instructional strategies, A-G course instructional system alignment, and scheduling practices.
Action 10	Upgrades to District A-G Progress Monitoring System	Goal 1 Action 5 - Multi-Tiered Systems of Support - Academics Progress monitoring for low income students, English learners, foster youth, and homeless students towards meeting A-G requirements, allowing for timely and appropriate intervention, counseling, and support structures during the high school years.

Plan Expenditures

Action Number	Programs and services to increase or improve A-G completion	Budgeted Expenditures
Action 1	Counselor on Special Assignment (COSA) - 4 years	$587,550
Action 2	District Transcript Audit via Riverside County Office of Education (including associated professional development)	$50,000
Action 3	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: A-G Awareness and Engagement Initiatives	$360,000

Action 4	Grading Practices Task Force	$100,000
Action 5	High School Readiness and Onboarding Programs	$400,000
Action 6	Intervention Programs Supporting A-G Course Completion	$500,000
Action 7	Master Scheduling Task Force	$100,000
Action 8	Pre-AP Course Implementation: Initial Training and Materials	$40,000
Action 9	Staff Professional Development in A-G Completion Related Topics	$412,853
Action 10	Upgrades to District A-G Progress Monitoring System	$89,004
	TOTAL	**$2,639,407**