Meeting A-G at Graduation

Communication Plan

*Background*

At a May 2016 board meeting, the San Juan Board of Education approved changing the graduation requirements for the Class of 2023 to align with UC/CSUS A-G requirements.

San Juan Unified graduation requirements have remained largely unchanged for decades. Like most California districts, current graduation requirements do not align to University of California and California State University’s “A-G” entrance requirements. Students are able to graduate with A-G requirements if they are careful and thoughtful in their planning. Additionally, current standards require less math coursework than recommended by industry leaders, leaving many graduates without the skills necessary to be successful in college or career.

A representative group of stakeholders recommended and the board agreed that the district’s graduation requirements be aligned by default with A-G standards.The default academic pathway would be A-G aligned and students would be able to “opt-out” with a selection of non-A-G courses that will meet graduation requirements in each subject area.

## *Initial Research*

Discussions around current high school graduation requirements revealed that:

* Most stakeholders were unaware that students graduating with the minimum district requirements did not automatically meet A-G entrance requirements.
* Significant concerns exist around making graduation requirements too complex or difficult without proper interventions and supports in place.
* Timing of any change would need to take into consideration the need for long-term planning to allow students to meet their unique and diverse needs.

Additional research is needed to ensure understanding and support for this initiative. The specific research questions that need to be answered are listed in the feedback objectives section of the plan below. Some of the research methods could include:

* Interviews with student groups to discuss the change, challenges and opportunities for student involvement in communicating the changes.
* Interviews, forums and surveys of multilingual populations to better understand how these changes will affect particular stakeholder communities and unique opportunities to reach them.
* Additional surveying of 5th-7th grade families to gauge support for the change and discover unique communication opportunities and challenges.
* Review of other districts that have undertaken similar changes and auditing their methods to replicate successful initiatives.

## Planning & Analysis

### Audience(s)

General objectives under each audience have been established and will be refined based on the baseline awareness and use of planning tools that must be established.

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| **Audience** | **Subaudience** | **Feedback Objectives** | **Awareness Objectives** |
| Employees | Teachers | What do they need to assist students in meeting the bar? Communication, materials, training, lesson plans, special events, etc.  What do they think will assist in increasing the use of the planning tools? Computer labs, family nights, lesson plans, etc? | Increase awareness of current grad requirements and benefits of meeting A-G  Assist in increasing student and family use of planning tools for selection of high school courses |
|  | Administrators |
|  | Counselors |
|  | Classified |
| Parents | Current High School Parents | What is their knowledge of A-G requirements?  Where are they in terms of supporting the change to A-G by default?  What do they need to support them and their child in navigating A-G? | Increase awareness of current grad requirements and benefits of meeting A-G  Increase awareness of available academic supports  Increase use of planning tools for selection of high school courses |
|  | Current Middle and Elementary School Parents |
|  | Parents Support Organizations | How can they assist in getting the word out about this change? |
| Students | Current High School Students | What is their knowledge of A-G requirements?  What is their knowledge of available supports? | Increase awareness of current grad requirements and benefits of meeting A-G  Increase use of planning tools for selection of high school courses |
|  | Current Middle School Students | What is their knowledge of A-G and career pathways? |
|  | Current Elementary School Students |
|  | Student Leadership | How can they assist in getting the word out about this? change? |
| Community | Business Partners/Leaders | What is their knowledge of A-G requirements?  Where are they in terms of supporting the change to A-G by default?  How can they assist in getting the word out about this? | Increase awareness of current grad requirements and benefits of meeting A-G  Understanding the San Juan Unified is a leader in ensuring students have more options available  Understanding that San Juan is preparing more students for regional workforce demands |
|  | Civic Groups |
|  | NGO’s |
|  | Advocacy Groups |
|  | Residents (Non-Parent) |

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### Core Messages - May alter based on feedback through Thought Exchange Process

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| **Message A** | **Message B** | **Message C** |
| **Current standards do not meet college or career readiness expectations** | **High expectations supported by a flexible implementation and additional supports will encourage students to excel** | **The new standards will be implemented incrementally, over a period of time that facilitates individual success** |
| *UC, CSU and many private schools require incoming students take certain courses known as the “A-G” courses.* | *Currently, students and families must plan to exceed San Juan graduation requirements if they want to meet A-G standards. The new requirements would provide A-G alignment by default.* | *Planning your high school courses takes time and forethought.Implementation of new standards will start with current sixth grade students.* |
| *SJ graduation requirements do not meet A-G by default so they can't get into a four year school out of high school and/or have to spend more time in college.* | *Students who want or need to modify their course selections will be able to choose from multiple courses, some A-G and some not A-G aligned.* | *Tools and communication will be put into place now to ensure students can be successful and plan to meet their own unique needs.* |
| *Business partners and industry leaders tell us that our students need more math skills to be successful employees.* | *Supports will be provided to ensure students are successful.* | *Our students and staff will have the time and support to work together for success in A-G and non A-G pathways* |

## Implementation

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| Strategy | Description | Output Measures |
| Feedback Campaign to gather input and feedback on new guideline implementation | Host online and in person forums for students, families and employees designed to share the recommendation and solicit feedback. Adjust implementation and messaging based on feedback, suggestions and concerns.   * Publicize using School Messenger, Facebook, Newsletter | * Number of forums * Participation rates in f2f and online forums * Engagement rates - number of comments and suggestions received |
| Awareness Campaign -Increase student, parent and employee awareness through a coordinated information campaign and increased exposure to planning tools | Based on feedback campaign, use existing communication channels to inform and educate about graduation standards, A-G recommendation, adjustments made based on feedback.   * Web-based and board/lobby story and video * Social media as appropriate for info and events (Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook) * Newsletters (staff oriented story, leadership story, community/family stories for district and school newsletters) * Board updates on communication activities and results * Consider insertion in existing ad campaigns * Media advisories at milestones, events, tie-ins with national or statewide stories | * Readership information * Interaction levels * Media analysis * Additional analytics |
|  | Review and modify existing documentation to identify opportunities for improved clarity and student/family support   * Family handbook * FACE materials & events * Counseling materials & events * Other district materials * Other school materials | * Number of documents modified |
|  | Create/Adjust online information   * Add A-G requirements as appropriate to Q and Naviance systems for student and family planning purposes * Create new website section on A-G that ties in with district college and career site | * Number of modifications * New section creation * New section analytics |
|  | Based on feedback campaign input, develop printed materials to assist with support and implementation of the initiative   * Multiple audiences * Distribution at campaign events * Provide to school counselors, lobbies, FACE team | * Number of materials created * Distribution channels and rates |
|  | Host business leadership meeting/meal  Through CTE program, host business partners and potential partners for a discussion on graduation requirements   * Promote through internal connections, Facebook, local papers * Initial meeting to inform, request input and support * Follow up meeting to discuss results and additional support needs | * Attendance * Engagement |
|  | Work with student leadership teams to develop peer-to-peer campaigns that solicit feedback and then build awareness and support. Potential ideas:   * Student led social media efforts * Student press conference * Student designed materials for student and family distribution * Student ambassadors to serve as media spokespeople, booths at events | * Engagement levels * Efforts TBD documented and associated analytics |
|  | Conduct listening circles with students struggling in IM1 and freshman English to determine concerns and additional supports (conducted in consort with PLI) | * Identification of additional supports needed in earlier grades * Identification of support for transition to 9th grade |
| Evaluation Effort to gather input and feedback on success of campaign | Host online forums for students, families and employees designed to solicit feedback about the success of the campaign. Adjust implementation and messaging based on feedback, suggestions and concerns.   * Publicize using School Messenger, Facebook, Newsletter | * Participation rates * Measurement of knowledge, perception and behavior over initial feedback campaign results |