Yellowstone College Prep
Campus Needs Assessment: 2023-2024

BELIEF

We believe that all students are born with purpose and destined for success.

MISSION

At Yellowstone, we inspire, empower, and invest in our students so they can achieve their highest potential and fulfill their intended purpose.

VISION

We will develop our brilliant young thinkers into curious scholars and service-oriented leaders, through a character development program, a data-driven culture, and a student-centered teaching and learning environment where all of our scholars are prepared to live choice-filled lives.

Yellowstone College Prep
2023-24 Comprehensive Needs Assessment

(Last Revised: 06/21/2023)

School Profile

Yellowstone College Prep (YCP) opened its doors in 2018 as an open-enrollment public charter school, it is the sole campus in the Yellowstone College Prep charter district. For its inaugural year of operation, Yellowstone served 220 students in 5th through 8th grade. For the 2023-24 school year, YCP will serve a projected 300 students in 6th through 9th grade (in 2021, we reset the grade levels served to be 6th-8th grade due to enrollment demands and the ongoing impact of COVID-19). Each year the campus will add a grade level, until it is serving roughly 500 students in 6th through 12th grade in the 2026-27 school year. Our academic program includes small class sizes (no more than 20 students per class), five blocks of instruction every day with a daily advisory/character development period, and access to a robust set of elective and extra-curricular opportunities. Yellowstone's geographic boundary includes Houston ISD, Galena Park ISD, and Pasadena ISD, with a concentration of students coming from the greater Third Ward area of Houston.

For the 2022-23 school year, the student profile was as follows:
- 98% African-American
- 2% multi-race and American Indian
- 46% male /54% female
- 97% qualify for the free/reduced meal program
- 15% Special Education
- 82% At-Risk students
- 3% Homeless student population (McKinney-Vento)

The average daily attendance rate for the 2022-23 year was roughly 95%. Yellowstone has no English Language Learner students. By the end of the year, over 50 students were identified for 504 and/or SPED services.

Special Programs

For our fifth year of operation, we had a State Comp Ed and Schoolwide Title I program that included reduced class-size, parent and family engagement activities, an extended school day, after-school tutorial programming, intervention support (including interventionists and instructional assistants), student behavioral support, summer school, and staff professional

development along with specialized consulting. All of these evidenced-based initiatives helped in 2022-2023 and we will need to continue in 2023-2024.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment Process

This past school year (2022-23) was the second year of full in-person campus instruction after the COVID pandemic. Even still, in the fall we still experienced family inertia and chronic absenteeism that needed to be addressed with significant intervention. Despite this, we made significant academic and student culture/campus climate gains. We will use the lessons learned to inform our plan for the 2023-24 school year.

As part of our comprehensive plan to address the learning loss caused by Covid-19, we added instructional leadership positions, including a Director of Student Achievement, Director of Math, and Director of Literacy Instruction. We created an additional learning block throughout the day to support both reading and math intervention, and a student intervention that takes place every morning Monday - Thursday and throughout the school day for our 6th and 7th graders. Every student had a chromebook they could use at school, any period of the day. Our scholars also had the opportunity to engage in an enhanced PE and athletics program as well as other extra-curricular activities to motivate them to strive for academic excellence.

Our "Scholar Success" Committee met in the spring and early summer to evaluate and assess our programming and the results of the school year. We evaluated the following data sources:

- TEA Accountability Ratings and Related STAAR Data
- Student demographic data
- SpEd student data
- At-risk student data
- (when available) Other demographic data from neighboring schools within the attendance boundaries
- Teacher feedback and survey data
- Recruitment activities (e.g., input from parents and student surveys)

The data showed the following:

Demographics:

Strengths: As noted the previous year, the committee again reflected that Yellowstone is serving a population of students that has historically not been given access to the same educational opportunities as their more affluent peers in other neighborhoods in Houston. This concentration and homogeneity of the student population at Yellowstone creates a unique opportunity to provide a transformational experience for hundreds of students who otherwise would not have access to programs like this.

Problems: Because Yellowstone is specifically serving a student population that has not had access to these educational opportunities, there are many challenges to overcome to create a rich learning environment. It was discussed that well over 95% of the students qualify for the free/reduced lunch program and the majority of students we are serving come from communities where the average family income is less than $25,000 a year. This has created a vulnerable context for many of our students and families—where in addition to the demands of a school environment, they are also facing many obstacles in many other facets of their life.
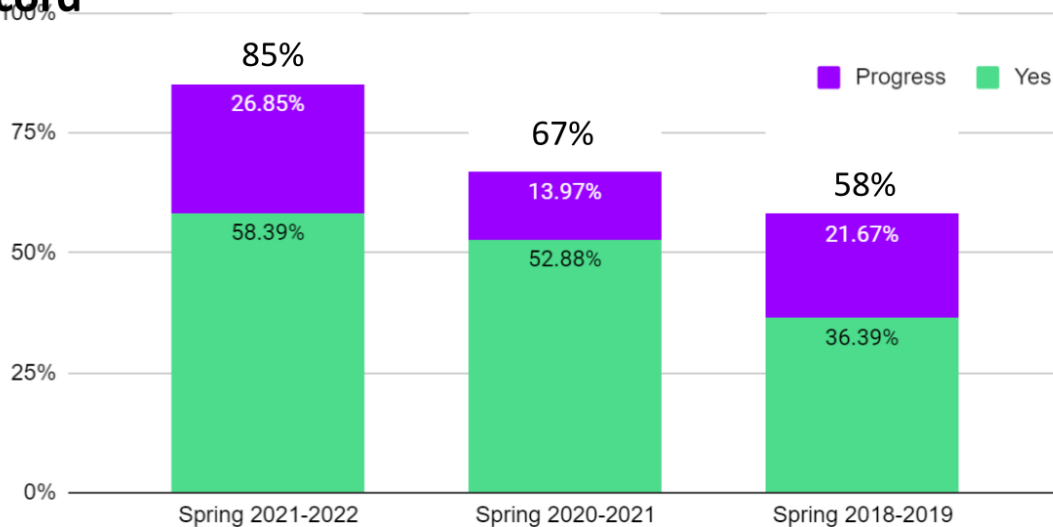
Student Achievement/Growth:

Strengths: Despite the continued disruptions caused by COVID and the significant learning loss from the prior two years, our students showed strong growth on the MAP assessment that was administered in the fall, winter, and spring:

86% of 6th-8th grade students showed significant growth in MATH from Fall to Spring—our highest year on record
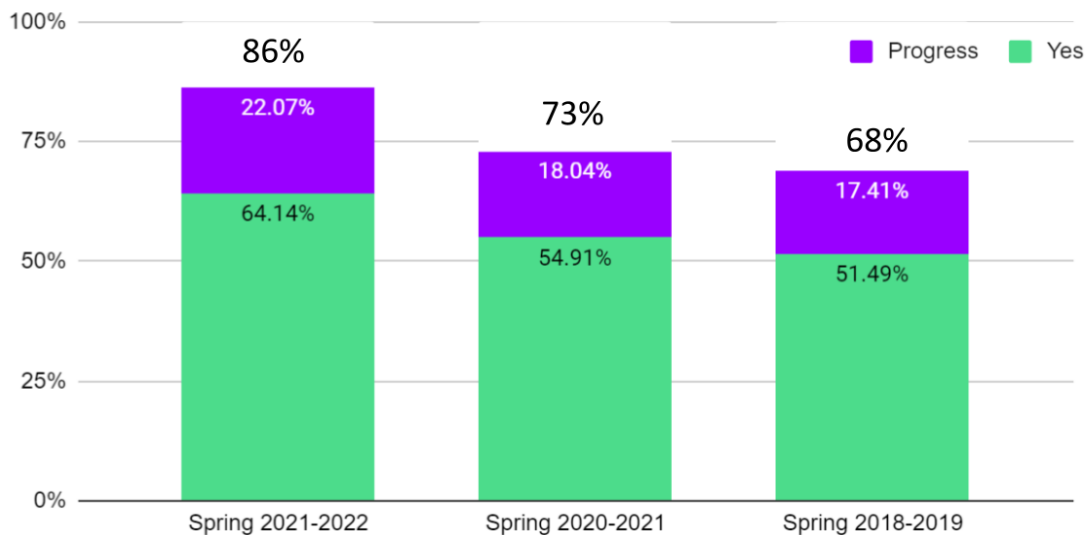
85% of 6ᵗʰ-8ᵗʰ grade students showed significant growth in READING from Fall to Spring—our highest year on record

Problems: MAP data also highlights that our students still have significant ground to make up when it comes to overall achievement.

Comparing Performance to our YCP Goals: We Achieved our Targets

Student Academic Performance: MAP	Target	BOY	MOY	EOY
% of students on grade level for MAP Reading	35%	27.8%	35.9%	**36.4%**
% of students achieving growth target for MAP Reading	70%		81.7%	**85%**
% of students on grade level for MAP Math	30%	20.5%	24.8%	**30.7%**
% of students achieving growth target for MAP Math	70%		84.2%	**86%**

The committee noted that we must make significant gains as a "College Prep" school over the next few years to ensure our seniors are ready to persist to and through college, or enter the workforce. It was also noted that it will take more than one year to Additional focus on and monitoring of individual and cross-sectional student data would be beneficial. We also believe

there continues to be a need to identify and provide additional assistance to special populations- an assistant devoted to special education along with all of the evaluation, diagnostic, specialty services, appropriate software, curriculum, technology, and supplies will continue to be needed.

Family and Community Involvement:
Strengths: The lingering effects of COVID -19 really took a hit on our parent engagement and involvement. We responded to last year's survey by adding transportation back into our program, and roughly 60% of our students take advantage of our daily bus service. The main area of strength was our ability to connect frequently with families by phone (and in person) when needed, due to our small size. Beyond this, we know that this is an area for significant growth and improvement.

Problems: We had very low participation in our parent engagement survey, and it was difficult to hold families accountable to coming to campus for parent-teacher meetings and other related activities. While we had strong participation at our campus-wide celebrations, we know we will need to do more to have our parents take active ownership of their student's academic progress. Yellowstone will need to be innovative to re-engage families and continue to raise our attendance percentage in the 2023-24 school year.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:
Strengths: This year we were able to leverage a strong and aligned curriculum in Reading, Science, and Math. This year we also were able to consistently leverage remedial math and ELA instructional software which further supported our scholars' student achievement.

Problems: More focused teacher professional development around curriculum and resources. Training and resources for exit ticket tracking. Content-target reading materials and extend student learning experiences. Having more opportunities for science experiments, etc.

School Organization, Staff Quality, Recruitment and Retention:
Strengths: Going into the 2023-24 school year, we have retained a high percentage of the instructional staff. This provides a major advantage for YCP, as the teachers have built strong relationships with students and it demonstrates an overall healthy culture and school environment. In addition, staff surveys this year also reflected our staff feeling supported in this work as that will continue to be a priority and goal going into the 23-24 school year.

Problems: Through the course of the year, we lost and replaced our original Dean of Students and, later in the spring, our School Counselor. While we continued to operate at a high level, this did add critical positions to be hired for the 2022-23 school year. Overall staff morale and building relationships (through both recruitment and retention) will continue to be a priority as we continue to strengthen our school culture.

School Culture and Climate:
Strengths: Our scholars on campus had consistent town hall meetings, clubs, and celebrations throughout the year. Going into this school year we realize the need to have consistent leadership that prioritizes our student culture. This past year, we hired an Assistant Principal to help lead and support our scholars as we jump into the school year. This will also ensure that we continue to hold the bar of excellence high for our scholars to ensure they realize their fullest potential.

Problems: We had a huge inconsistency with student attendance this year across the board. Scholars not showing up on time and absences reflected our scholar academic success. This past year we had a decline in student referrals due to the circumstances around the pandemic. We also realize the need for our scholars to have consistent rewards and consequences to ensure that we are supporting our scholars. A School Counselor, social work services, and behavior management software would help address the social, emotional, and mental health needs of our students, particularly resulting from Covid-19. A school nurse to monitor the health situation on campus continues to be necessary as well because students cannot learn if they are not healthy. Finally, we believe school assistance with professional uniforms would help create a feeling of belonging for our scholars.

Technology:
Strengths: Our scholars each received a chromebook that they had access to during the school day. The chromebook was used in some capacity nearly every period of the school year.

Problems: Concern around online testing, and capacity for chromebooks for implementation, and continued concern around the age of some of the chromebooks, as they have a short shelf-life.

Summary of Identified Problems and Related Strategies

Here are the problem statements the SDMC identified:

1. While we achieved our attendance rate of 95%, it remains a priority for the coming year.
2. While MAP scores have grown from the primary pandemic years, they are still lower than the national average and show continued room for improvement.
3. As of this writing, we still do not know our EOY STAAR data, but anticipate that our students will need to continue to grow in each tier (does not meet to approaches, etc) to reflect our commitment to academic excellence.
4. Student discipline incidents declined dramatically from our early years of operations, but we know that this will be a focus area this year to address the social-emotional trauma that has resulted from the pandemic.

Based on these problem statements, and the comprehensive needs assessment that we conducted, the SDMC focused on three areas of primary focus for the coming year that are addressed in these three goals:

1. The Domain 1 (Student Achievement) scaled score will increase to a 75 on the annual STAAR exam by the end of the school year (this can be achieved by hitting 75 approaches, 40 meets, and 15 masters).
2. In Reading, at least 40% of our students will score at the 50th percentile on the NWEA MAP Reading exam and 35% on the NWEA MAP Math exam by the end of the school year.
3. We will have an average attendance rate of at least 95% for the year.

These three goals are articulated and further defined in our accompanying Campus Improvement Plan. We are excited to continue with our fifth year of operation as we grow and learn from our first four years as a campus community.