

**SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS,  
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES  
CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
FOR**

**Julian Charter School**

**1704 Cape Horn Avenue  
Julian, California 92036**

**Charter Approved by Julian Union School District**

**April 11, 2016 through April 13, 2016**

**Visiting Committee Members**

**Dr. Franci Sassin**, Chairperson  
Director of Business Services, California Connections Academy Schools

**Julie Miranda**  
Teacher, Sycamore Academy of Science and Cultural Arts

**Jeff Moreno**  
Small Group Instruction Lead Coach, Pathways in Education

**Yvonne Oliver**  
Teacher, John Burroughs High School

**Elizabeth Phillips**  
Teacher, Riverside Virtual School

## Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

Julian Charter School (JCS) is an independent study K-12 charter school sponsored by the Julian Union (Elementary) School District, a small rural district in San Diego County. The school was founded in November 1999 to meet the needs of students underserved by traditional systems and for families with a strong desire to homeschool. JCS initially was founded as a non-classroom based independent study school that was primarily home based. As students got older, and as the school grew and evolved, a flexible, classroom-based educational option for students was added, primarily based on requests from parents and the perceived needs of the students. Consequently, two, three and four day a week classroom-based academy programs were introduced starting in 2005, which currently serve all grade levels. Under these two models, there are currently 2,560 students served in 13 centers throughout the San Diego, Orange, and Riverside Counties. Visiting committee members visited a total of 10 different locations in San Diego and Riverside counties to observe teachers and students in all the various programs.

Students at Julian Charter are part of an independent study education model and are generally referred to as being in the "home study program" or the "academy program". Home study students are divided into two main groups, kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8) and high school (9-12). Daily instruction of K-8 home study students is done by the parent acting as teacher, under the supervision of a state credentialed educational facilitator (EF). These students may get instruction one day a week at a learning center, take an online eClass offered by JCS, or elect to use vendor funds for instruction from one of the school's approved vendors. Home study at the high school level offers classes at three levels of instruction: college prep (CP), basic, and foundational (non-diploma bound). Options for high school students include home study--using teacher specialist-designed courses of study or portfolio courses (parent-designed courses of study approved by the school), INSITE (four-day-a-week onsite independent study with teacher facilitated support), and academy programs. High school home study students may also take classes at academies as space permits.

Academy students are also divided into two main groups, K-8 academies and 6-12 academies. Students at the K-8 academies are taught by a certificated teacher 4 days a week (74% of the time), with the parent acting as teacher 1 day each week (26% of the time). These academies all have a project based focus. At the 6-12 academies, student instruction with a certificated instructor may vary from one to four days a week, with all remaining instruction coming from the parent acting as teacher, under supervision of the assigned certificated teacher.

Julian Charter School's vision is to provide an exemplary personalized learning program in a supportive, resource-rich learning environment. The school is dedicated to excellence and committed to nurturing passionate lifelong learners.

The Mission of Julian Charter School is: Empowering learners with educational choice.

The school has established Schoolwide Learner Outcomes aligned with the long standing core values of the school. The outcomes state that all students will:

- Demonstrate *creativity and innovation* through rich learning opportunities.
- Show *commitment* to reaching their full potential through setting goals and managing their time and resources.
- Value *choice* to develop individual educational pathways to help meet personal learning objectives and to become lifelong learners.
- Foster *excellence* in their effort and their work through high self-expectations.
- Practice *integrity and compassion* through personal responsibility, a strong moral character, and respect for different ideas and cultures.

Student enrollment has remained steady over the past three years. The grade level breakdown is 48% in K-5, 28% in 6-8 and 24% in 9-12. Approximately half of the students are enrolled in the home study program and the other half in the academy program. Gender breakdown is also equal between boys and girls within the two programs. Racial/ethnic breakdown is: white (60%), Hispanic/Latino (20%), two or more races (13%), and other (7%). Approximately 32% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch based on family income levels. Family education levels vary as follows--at least one parent has/is:

- A high school diploma: 9%
- Some college:20%
- A college graduate or advanced degree:42%
- Declined to state:28%

The population of students with disabilities has increased significantly from just under nine percent in the 2011-12 school year to 12.3% as of December 2015. One-third (33%) of students with special needs qualify for an IEP under SLD, with OHI, SLI, and AUT accounting for other large populations of qualifying students.

On the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) 2014-2015 administration, the participation rate was 90.8% in ELA and 92.3% in math. Approximately 57% of students met or exceeded standards in ELA and 34% of students met or exceeded standards in math.

	ELA Achievement Level Distribution				Math Achievement Level Distribution			
	Exceeded	Met	Nearly Met	Not Met	Exceeded	Met	Nearly Met	Not Met
<b>Overall</b>	20	37	25	19	14	20	33	33
3	21	28	25	26	11	26	32	31
4	26	21	23	30	15	20	33	31

5	18	35	21	27	13	24	32	31
6	15	42	29	15	13	21	37	29
7	17	46	24	14	21	22	30	27
8	18	39	29	13	15	14	31	40
11	25	42	25	8	3	15	35	47

In similar schools comparison, JCS students outperformed their California peers in both ELA and math. JCS outperformed their San Diego County peers in ELA. JCS also outperformed other local charter schools which offer similar programs to JCS's.

On the California High School Exit Exam, 10th grade census administration pass rates have exceeded statewide averages in 4 of the 5 past years. Math pass rates have exceeded the statewide average 2 of the past 5 years.

**CAHSEE Pass Rate by Significant Subgroup-English Language Arts**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Schoolwide</b>	88%	82%	82%	89%	92%
<b>Statewide</b>	80%	82%	83%	83%	82%
<b>Male</b>	80%	80%	79%	88%	89%
<b>Female</b>	95%	85%	84%	89%	95%
<b>Special Education</b>	25%	33%	38%	63%	62%
<b>Socioeconomically Disadvantaged</b>	95%	72%	77%	91%	90%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	97%	85%	73%	89%	91%
<b>White</b>	86%	84%	84%	88%	92%

**CAHSEE Pass Rate by Significant Subgroup-Math**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Schoolwide</b>	84%	81%	74%	81%	87%
<b>Statewide</b>	81%	83%	84%	84%	81%
<b>Male</b>	78%	82%	78%	83%	84%
<b>Female</b>	90%	79%	71%	79%	89%

<b>Special Education</b>	*	37%	40%	48%	36%
<b>Socioeconomically Disadvantaged</b>	79%	63%	63%	85%	81%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	84%	86%	64%	73%	81%
<b>White</b>	86%	80%	76%	83%	90%

JCS has a relatively low English Language Learner population since it is an independent study school and students are homeschooled a minimum of 26% of the time. Since the parent is the primary teacher at least part of the time, the majority of parents and students attracted to the school are fluent in English. All ELLs are administered the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) to annually assess language abilities. The two most common Primary Home Languages of the English Learners are Spanish and Russian. For the past five years, the number of students who scored in the Advanced or Early Advanced exceeded California’s rate. The ELL re-designation numbers are shown in the table below.

Students with PHLOTE	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
# of English Learners	9	17	22
# of Fluent English Proficient (IFEP) Students	15	18	20
# of Re-designated (RFEP) Students		2	6

Cohort graduation rates for the past three years have been approximately 79%.

Year	Cohort Graduation Rate
2013-14	81.6%
2012-13	79.4%
2011-12	76.4%

The graduation rate has continued to slowly increase in the past three years and is now slightly above both the county and state rates.

Graduates meeting UC/CSU entrance requirements have consistently remained at or above the authorizing district average, however the percentage is significantly lower than county and state averages, and has also shown variability over the years. It should be noted that the only high school students reported under the authorizing district are charter school students as the district is an elementary district. Until this school year, JCS had one other level of curriculum at the high

school level called non-college prep (NCP). The NCP courses met board-approved graduation requirements but were not approved as a-g courses by the UC. NCP courses were eliminated this year. JCS does not offer Honors or AP classes; however, there are plans for writing honors courses for some core content classes over the next four years that will be submitted for UC a-g approval. Students may earn college credit by taking courses at a community college or through AP testing.

<b>Graduates Meeting UC/CSU Entrance Requirements</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>State</b>
<b>2013-14</b>	22.8%	15.5%	47.8%	41.9%
<b>2012-13</b>	8.9%	7.5%	45.7%	39.4%
<b>2011-12</b>	25.6%	23.6%	43.2%	38.3%
<b>2010-11</b>	24.7%	24.7%	41.9%	36.9%
<b>2009-10</b>	38.7%	38.7%	41.5%	36.3%

Students in grades 5, 7, and 9 are administered the Physical Fitness Test and results are analyzed for trends. The school has seen a decline in overall physical fitness levels as students get older.

Average Daily Attendance has consistently exceeded 95% since the 2009-2010 school year. As an independent study program, the time value of student work products is judged by a certificated teacher in order to determine attendance.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>
<b>ADA Percentage</b>	96.67%	97.73%	97.82%	98.32%	98.31%	97.56%

Dropout rates are below the authorizing district average, and have been similar to state and county averages. The school is analyzing possible reasons for the change in drop out rate in 2013-14.

<b>Annual Adjusted Dropout Rate</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>State</b>
<b>2013-14</b>	.09%	18.0%	2.7%	3.1%
<b>2012-13</b>	4.8%	20.1%	3.5%	3.9%
<b>2011-12</b>	5.9%	10.7%	3.5%	4.0%

JCS has a comprehensive Special Education program providing supports and related services to students in all eligibility areas. Students are provided services in four locations: the Student Services building in central San Diego, the Temecula Facility, the Coachella Valley Facility, and the Orange County Facility. Approximately 12% of the student enrollment have an IEP, with the most commonly seen disabilities reported as SLD, OHI, AUT, and SLI. JCS employs 11 special education teachers, 5 instructional assistants, 3 school psychologists, 1.8 FTE speech language pathologists, plus several part time staff, such as a 0.40 FTE occupational therapist. The school also contracts with private vendors for additional speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, vision therapy, physical therapy, and assistive technology services. An additional 3% of the students have 504 Plans, for such impairments as ADD, anxiety, depression, fibromyalgia, orthopedic conditions, and PTSD.

Julian Charter School has one Executive Director who leads a team at the cabinet level consisting of a Director of Education, a Director of Operations, a Human Resources Director and a Chief Business Officer. The Director of Education heads a team consisting of two Assistant Directors of Academy Programs, one Assistant Director of Home Study, one Assistant Director of Special Education, one Assistant Director of Technology and Training Development, and one Coordinator of Assessment and Intervention. In addition, the Systems and Compliance Manager, the Resource Center Manager, and the Communication and Admissions Specialist report to the Director of Education. There are 164 teachers employed with 92% possessing clear teaching credentials. The average years of teaching is 11.5 years with an average of 6 years teaching at JCS. There are also 2 counselors and 19 non-certificated staff.

After analysis of the school needs based on data, past successes and stakeholder input, the school has identified three critical learner needs which are linked to the schoolwide learner outcomes and core values of *commitment, choice, excellence, creativity and innovation, and integrity and compassion*.

The critical learner needs are:

**1. Support students in becoming life-long learners.**

Rationale: If students become independent learners and are given the skills they need for career and college readiness, they can apply those skills to all aspects of life. These life skills transcend academics and ultimately contribute to the long term success of all learners.

**2. Increase students' mathematical strategy and problem solving ability.**

Rationale: Number flexibility and understanding big ideas in mathematics contribute to mathematical proficiency. Math is really about a few big ideas that are connected (Boaler). A focus on the standards of mathematical practice will help students to think mathematically and therefore perform better regardless of what they remember or were taught.

**3. Increase student capacity to integrate reading, writing and speaking across the curriculum.**

Rationale: By increasing focus on reading skills in grades K-5, students will develop the cognitive strategies necessary to build and share knowledge from text. The school should lay the foundation that students will build upon as texts increases in complexity.

The mission, vision and core values of the school focus on a resource rich personalized learning experience. This is echoed in the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes. The data demonstrates that although the school has had great success in providing access to a variety of quality offerings, additional improvement in some areas can be made so that students reach their full potential, regardless of grade level or program selection. This has led the school to develop its critical learner needs as part of overall continuous school improvement efforts.

At Julian Charter School, parents have actively selected an independent-study charter school. This parent selection has led to the student body make-up for JCS and contributes to the student achievement of our students. JCS does not have a typical student; each independent-study student is unique. Parents who select to place their children in JCS normally fit into one or more of these groups: a) traditional home study parents who are actively involved in their children's education, b) parents who want to be partners in their children's education in a blended environment, with their child accessing a credentialed teacher for part of the time each week, and/or c) parents whose children have not been successful at non-independent study schools.



## Chapter II: Progress Report

Since the last self-study, there have been a number of major changes affecting Julian Charter School:

**Professional Learning Communities:** With an understanding that JCS offers many learning programs, the school is still one school, and articulation amongst programs is important for both horizontal and vertical alignment. PLCs were established to encompass all teachers in academies and home study programs. Thirteen PLC groups are divided into: K-1, grades 2-3, grades 4-5, Special Education, English 6-8, Math 6-8, Social Science 6-8, Science 6-8, ELA 9-12, Math 9-12, Social Science 9-12, Science 9-12, and Electives 9-12. The implementation of PLCs has been gradual since the last self-study.

**Common Core State Standards:** JCS began transitioning to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) during the 2013-2014 school year. San Diego County Office of Education staff led week-long CCSS training for JCS staff to begin discussion of how to transition to CCSS through JCS's unique learning environment. During the 2014-2015 school year, PLCs created CCSS-aligned scope and sequences in all grade levels. Curriculum adoption is scheduled to be completed in 2018, and the school will continue to interpret CAASPP data to help drive instruction. Since all JCS students are homeschooled for a minimum of 26% of total learning time, parents also needed to be informed. The school's parent portal includes a 3-minute video explaining the importance of common learning goals and carefully selected links about CCSS to help parents guide their children towards CCSS mastery.

**STAR Teacher Rubric:** The Educational Leadership Team designed the STAR Teacher Rubric to evaluate teachers. It consists of five STAR domains (grow professionally, use best practices, impact student learning, collaborate with colleagues, and contribute to the school community) that are divided into 9 measurable subdomains. Teachers are scored on a 4-point scale to determine the overall qualification of each teacher as highly effective, effective, developing, or ineffective. The rubric is being piloted during the 2015-2016 school year. The evaluation cycle consists of an initial meeting with the teacher and Assistant Director, evidence gathering, and an end of year meeting in June to complete the STAR Teacher rubric.

**Increase in Students with Disabilities:** An increase in the number of students with disabilities has resulted in increased staff, space, and services. The school maintains rented facilities in Orange County and Coachella Valley that are dedicated almost exclusively to providing Special Education services. Services are also provided at the school's other facilities. Education specialists meet with parents to help facilitate incorporation of strategies in the home study setting.

**Facilities Purchase:** JCS created a new 501c3 corporation, SDORI Charter School Properties, LLC, to purchase facilities. A management company, Cardinal Industrial, manages the properties, tenants, and leases. In March 2015, JCS offered a \$26 million dollar bond to secure four facilities: three in Riverside County and one in San Diego County. The bond will allow the school to stabilize facilities costs and to build a stronger balance sheet over the next 30 years.

The school has devoted significant energy and resources to acquiring, remodeling and moving into new facilities over the past few years.

To better address identified needs, JCS has aligned the Strategic Plan, WASC plan, and Local Control and Accountability Plan to focus on the schoolwide critical areas for follow-up. During the second WASC full self-study in spring 2010 the school identified three critical areas for follow-up which were focused on writing, algebra, and student support. These critical areas became part of the schoolwide action plan—the blueprint for school improvement—through the time of the 2013 mid-term review. Significant progress on the critical areas for follow-up had been made and verified by the mid-term Visiting Committee, so the school revised the action plan to reflect emerging needs and vision.

. The three new areas for future work identified by the school during the mid-term WASC visit were:

1. Expand expository writing strategies across the curriculum.
2. Refine, design, implement and assess instructional and curricular strategies to enable all students to master algebra.
3. Refine, design and implement comprehensive support strategies for all students.

The school has provided detailed explanations for how it has met these areas for follow up, and is now beginning to work from its newly revised Action Plan. The various ways that the previous goals were met are described below.

### **Critical Area for Follow-up 1: Expand Expository Writing Strategies Across the Curriculum**

All high school English teachers received training in CSU Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum (ERWC) beginning in 2013. The curriculum was adopted for grade 12 students and supplemental expository models were incorporated in grades 7-11. School Pathways Student Information Services is a curriculum program allowing educational facilitators to choose from 1,000 learning modules, including those with writing strategies in all content areas for homeschooled students. Writing strategies, including material from Common Sense Media and project-based assignments with cross-curricular writing requirements were added. School-wide student profiles were introduced in the 2015-2016 school year where teachers select at least one math sample and one writing sample each semester to be placed in each student's online student folder to help facilitate conversations in PLCs. Writing assignments were evaluated based on a common rubric developed between English and history teachers. Math teachers require students to include written justifications of their answers as part of CCSS implementation. Project Week celebrates writing across the curriculum. Google Apps for Education was adopted the 2013-2014 school year to further develop student writing and communication between teachers and students through embedding technology into the curriculum. Beginning in 2013-2014 school year, home study learning centers had dedicated writing classes. The language arts page on the school website has writing assessments for each grade level, rubrics, and student writing examples. Students are required to complete two writing samples annually and student results are discussed in PLCs.

**Critical Area for Follow-up 2:** Refine, Design, Implement and Assess Instructional and Curricular Strategies to Enable all Students to Master Algebra

All teachers administer Renaissance Placement (RP) tests to all second through ninth graders at the start and end of each school year. Participation has increased annually, with a Fall 2015 rate of 93% for the RP math test. In-house created math placement tests for all middle school and high school students inform appropriate course placement and identify needs for student support. Since the implementation of the math placement test, students are more appropriately placed in the correct course resulting in fewer students earning a D or F. All math teachers were trained in Jo Boaler's research on math mindset and have created instructional math videos to help parents and students with math. High school math sequencing is transitioning from the traditional math sequencing to the integrated math series. Benchmark questions were created to align with the math CAASPP test. Additional eClasses and online resources such as IXL, Khan Academy and TenMarks were offered to support math in middle and high school levels.

**Critical Area for Follow-up 3:** Refine, Design and Implement Comprehensive Support Strategies for All Students

JCS implemented a comprehensive plan to identify students needing support. Student profiles with math and ELA work samples are stored in Google Drive. Teachers document students struggling with social and emotional concerns in the student profiles. Renaissance Place tests in ELA and math, formative assessments, class grades, CAASPP, and CAHSEE scores (if available) are used for identify academic supports needed. The SafetyNet program supports struggling students through interventions and monitoring, and also contains assessments and supporting documents for students with 504 Plans. The staff portal page called Supporting Struggling Learners has a list of RtI strategies for Tier 1 intervention. Students needing additional supports are referred for Student Support Team for Tier 2 intervention.

The High School Electives PLC adopted new textbooks and wrote new curriculum for elective courses over the past three years to provide students new learning opportunities. The 2014-2017 EdTech Plan includes more tech-enabled student supports, including the purchasing of Chromebooks, and software or web-based tech supports, such as BrainHoney, Discovery Education, TurnItIn.com, and Renaissance Place. An increase in interdisciplinary lessons and project based learning helps deepen student understanding in multiple content areas. Regularly scheduled teacher Forums provide focused professional development opportunities including structured and unstructured time with teacher-led small groups, as well as PLC time for collaboration.

The Visiting Committee recognizes that the school has an active and effective school improvement process in place, and that over each of the last several three year periods, the critical areas for follow up have been fully met and therefore the school has revised its Action Plan regularly in order to focus on new areas identified as areas of need.

### Chapter III: Self-Study Process

The school's schoolwide learner outcomes state that all students will:

- Demonstrate *creativity and innovation* through rich learning opportunities.
- Show *commitment* to reaching their full potential through setting goals and managing their time and resources.
- Value *choice* to develop individual educational pathways to help meet personal learning objectives and to become lifelong learners.
- Foster *excellence* in their effort and their work through high self-expectations.
- Practice *integrity and compassion* through personal responsibility, a strong moral character, and respect for different ideas and cultures.

The self-study process provided the opportunity for all stakeholders to research, collaborate, assess, plan, and modify the organization's instructional and operational practices to ensure personal and academic success for all students. All teachers and administrators were part of a Focus Group. Home Groups consisted of Professional Learning Committee (PLC) groups for teachers, plus groups for support staff and parents. Beginning in the Spring of 2013, the school used its Strategic Planning process to frame the work on the self-study. During this process, the school's mission, vision and core values were examined and reaffirmed. Strategic planning work was done via in person meetings as well as online collaboration. Organization, training, and preparation for the self-study began in Fall of 2015. Focus Group meetings were held regularly during professional development time that is built into the school's schedule for PLCs. In addition, each Focus Group and Home Group collaborated electronically using Google apps and online synchronous meeting software. Analysis of school data and accomplishments, as well as relevant guiding questions were used as a foundation for the self-study process. Focus Group Leads were assigned based on leadership roles from the PLCs which led to a shared leadership model within the Focus Groups. Each Focus Group examined evidence and collaboratively wrote and edited their section of the self-study report. They worked together to identify areas of strength and areas for growth. The Focus Group leaders then asked for the group to prioritize the identified areas of strength and growth for that section of the report; working within their groups to come to agreement. School and WASC leadership then asked all Focus Group members to examine all areas of the report and prioritize the highest areas of need. These were then ranked in order of importance based on this feedback.

The primary method for seeking input from parent and student groups was via multiple online surveys, as well as discussions at some meetings. Survey data was provided to Focus Group members for analysis and reflection. Other key stakeholder groups include the Board of Directors and the School Advisory Committee. They were given key sections of the report, such as the strengths and areas of growth and were asked to provide input. The final report was provided to all stakeholders prior to submission to WASC.

The school leadership continuously monitors the various action plans of the school, and works to be sure they are in alignment, including the WASC Action plan, the LCAP, the charter goals, and the Strategic Plan. The leadership and board review and analyze student

achievement measurements, including comparisons with surrounding schools, and the identify areas where additional growth is needed. The schoolwide learner outcomes reflect the school's mission, vision and core values, and student achievement is reviewed relative to school and family expectations, as well as the district and state expectations for the charter. As goals are met, the action plans are updated in order to insure continual school improvement.

The action plan emerged from schoolwide discussions and Focus Group meetings that occurred throughout the course of the self-study process. The Leadership team met to compile, organize, and formulate action plan steps that address the critical needs identified. Goals were developed and/or assessed to support the organization's commitment to high expectations for all students. The planning process included analysis of the school profile and achievement data which was then used to determine areas for improvement in student performance. In addition, the professional development program is focused on increasing student achievement and is designed to address the action plan goals.

With respect to monitoring and accountability, the administrative Leadership Team monitors the progress of the action plan and oversees the follow-up procedures on a regular basis. Ongoing commitment by all stakeholders to fulfilling the goals as presented in the action plan has been demonstrated in the past and is expected to continue. The Leadership Team is committed to their role in overseeing execution of the action plan.

It was clear to the Visiting Committee that the school used the self-study process to re-examine their purpose, align their goals, gauge their progress, remedy critical needs, and plan for the future. The self-study process was successful in engaging all stakeholders and in meeting the objectives of the accreditation process.

## Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

### CATEGORY A. ORGANIZATION: VISION AND PURPOSE, GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, STAFF, AND RESOURCES

#### A1. Vision and Purpose Criterion

To what extent does the school have a clearly stated vision and mission (purpose) based on its student needs, current educational research, current educational research, the district LCAP, and the belief that all students can achieve at high academic levels?

To what extent is the school's purpose supported by the governing board and the district LCAP and further defined by schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards?

#### Vision

Julian Charter School's vision is to provide an exemplary personalized learning program in a supportive, resource-rich learning environment. The school is dedicated to excellence and committed to nurturing passionate lifelong learners.

#### Mission

Empowering learners with educational choice.

#### Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

All students will:

- Demonstrate *creativity and innovation* through rich learning opportunities.
- Show *commitment* to reaching their full potential through setting goals and managing their time and resources.
- Value *choice* to develop individual educational pathways to help meet personal learning objectives and to become lifelong learners.
- Foster *excellence* in their effort and their work through high self-expectations.
- Practice *integrity and compassion* through personal responsibility, a strong moral character, and respect for different ideas and cultures.

As part of their last strategic planning process during the 2013-14 school year, Julian Charter School updated their vision and mission statements, and reaffirmed their core values. These values support the belief that all students can learn, but that each student is unique and needs a personalized learning environment and strategies. The JCS core values have been written into a student friendly version by the school's PLCs, which allows them to then also function as the school's student learning outcomes. During the strategic planning process, two guiding questions had the greatest impact on shaping the vision and mission of the school: "Who is our customer?" and "What does the customer value?" JCS concluded that parents that choose JCS

over the local “walk zone” school or a site based charter school are looking for choice and innovation in an educational model for their children. The student/community profile has also had significant influence, as half of the students enrolled participate in the home study program, and all students are taught at home by a parent or guardian at least 26% of the time. JCS has been very purposeful in aligning their LCAP, WASC growth plan, and their own strategic plan.

JCS invited all stakeholders to participate in the strategic planning process, and any stakeholder who expressed interest in being part of the working group was included. All stakeholder groups were represented in the working group. Much of the input received from students and families was gathered through electronic communication due to the organization of JCS, which is operating learning centers spread across three counties.

The mission, vision and core values are firmly in place and appear to be shared and understood by all stakeholder groups. The purpose of the school is strongly reflected in the school’s organizational structure, as well as in the implementation of school wide annual goals, the strategic plan, and the schoolwide learner outcomes. The student learning outcomes are evident throughout the school sites by being posted in every classroom, and many common areas. The school indicated that it would like to further improve in this area through consistent communication and interaction with parents in regards to the vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes, since parents provide a significant portion of the instructional plan for every student.

Every five years, the governing board goes through a process to develop a long term strategic plan. This process has evolved from its inception to include all stakeholders in the planning project. The plan is reviewed bi-annually by the governing board and leadership cabinet. The school annually engages in the LCAP process to evaluate student and school needs. The strategic plan, LCAP, and WASC self-study goals are purposefully aligned. On a monthly basis, the Educational Leadership Team reviews the progress made towards achieving the goals of each plan. A tool developed to assist with this review is the Major Plans Action Items Document.

## **A2. Governance Criterion**

To what extent does the governing board have policies and bylaws that are aligned with the school’s purpose and support the achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic, college, and career standards based on data-driven instructional decisions for the school?

To what extent does the governing board have delegate implementation of these policies to the professional staff?

To what extent does the governing board monitor regularly results and approve the single schoolwide action plan and its relationship to the Local Control and Accountability Plan?

The Board of Directors is made up of five voting members. Parent members represent the three different geographic regions served by the school, one member represents the community at large, and the final member is the district appointed board member. Parents and community members typically serve on the board, and when a member leaves, recruitment is targeted at replacing that member, primarily from within the school community. The Board has been

relatively stable, with board members serving multiple terms and rotating the officer responsibilities. The Board meets quarterly and rotates meeting locations between the different JCS facilities. The Board can also call special meetings as needed. Internal guidelines, regulations, and policies govern the authority, operation, and make-up of the board. School operations, policies, and planning are reviewed by the governing board at the regular quarterly meetings. Board meetings are held in compliance with the Brown Act. The board gives final approval on all policies and procedures.

The governing board is resolute in its practice to make all decisions student centered, fiscally sound, and legally compliant. At regularly scheduled meetings, the governing board evaluates plans, proposals, and progress towards school goals. The appraisal of progress on action plans is a standing agenda item for the Educational Leadership Team, and reports are given to the governing board as well as to the school's Advisory Council. The mission, vision, core values and schoowide learner outcomes are examined in depth by all stakeholders during the strategic planning process which is on a five year cycle. Board members participate in the strategic planning team, and the work of that team has a significant impact in affirming and refining the school vision and mission.

The school has adopted policies and procedures to ensure the safety of students online. The JCS policies related to technology can be found in the following documents: Acceptable Use Policy, Software and Electronic media Loan Policy, Teacher Technology Proficiency Requirement Policy, and Email and Internet/Communication Systems Policy. The EdTech Plan addresses upgrading or updating technology. Each teacher at JCS is provided with a laptop. Chromebook carts are available for student use at each academy, along with some Mac laptops and ipads. To further enhance student safety online, JCS is implementing a sign-in process at every school site which would record all computer activity and filter software used.

Both Advisory Council and Board meetings are open to all parents and staff. Invitations are posted to the school website, and sent via email updates. Parents and community members are actively recruited to apply for open board member positions. JCS' LCAP is posted to the school website each year. Access for parents is also available through a link posted to the parent portal. Relationships with local businesses have been developed with the school sites in their geographic area. These relationships have been more challenging schoolwide, as the school is spread throughout three counties.

The Executive Director and the Educational Leadership team are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school. The governing board evaluates the Executive Director, and sets school wide policy and procedures.

The governing board meets quarterly and as part of its annual cycle, has regularly scheduled agenda items on school and student performance. Data is analyzed and presented to the board by the Executive Team. The leadership regularly report to the board on their programs, and board members receive written administrative and operational updates twice a month. At the December and June meetings, school goals are reviewed and feedback is given through the Major Plans Action Items Document. The board has a regular review process for fiscal and budgetary items



and monitors compliance. Fiscal oversight is conducted regularly by review of financial documents.

JCS uses the employee handbook, parent acknowledgment form, and notifications linked through the parent portal to outline complaint and conflict resolution procedures. The school is William's compliant, and has received no William's complaints. The school has a Uniform Complaint Procedure in place and accessible to the community.

### **A3. Leadership: Continuous Planning and Monitoring Criterion**

To what extent based on student achievement data, does the school leadership and staff make decisions and initiate activities that focus on all students achieving the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic, college, and career standards?

To what extent does the school leadership and staff annually monitor and refine the single schoolwide action plan and make recommendations to modify the LCAP based on analysis of data to ensure alignment with student needs?

Through invitation and surveys, all stakeholders were involved in the strategic planning process. Parents, teachers, classified staff, and at least one student make up the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council is involved in approving the school planning process. Feedback regarding school programs and culture is received annually from parents, staff and students using surveys sent out to these stakeholders. Local businesses, such as Cardinal industrial and Torrey Pines bank, were instrumental in acquiring facilities for JCS. Due to the strong need for family-teacher partnerships, parents and students participate in the hiring of the JCS' academy teaching staff. Parents are invited to observe and students participate in demonstration lessons performed by potential candidates.

Evaluating school wide student learning has proved challenging for JCS recently due to the lack of data from statewide testing. JCS utilizes Renaissance Place to access student baseline and growth data in reading and math. Students are tested multiple times per year. The school has felt that RP testing has not been able to give reliable results. An outside vendor has been engaged to provide disaggregated school wide data for academies and the home study programs from last year's CAASPP results. This data was given to each Educational Facilitator, academy and SPED team for their own groups of students. Data is being collected to monitor the LCAP goals.

The CBO generates a monthly budget allocation report for the Executive Director. This report is used to frequently evaluate and ensure that at least 80% of JCS' resources are spent on direct instruction and instructional support. A professional development plan is generated by the Educational Leadership Team (ELT) after evaluating the staff needs against the progress towards goals. The ELT also has input regarding funding allocated to achieve School wide Learner Outcomes.

The STAR Teacher Rubric and STAR Staff Rubric have been implemented this year by JCS to evaluate performance and support professional growth amongst the staff. In both the academy and home study programs, collaboration and peer observation takes place. Twice a year feedback is received from all staff through surveys. Professional Learning Communities meet on a bi-weekly basis to improve instruction. Last year the PLCs aligned school wide scope and

sequence documents to the CCSS, and this year they are working on curriculum adoption and determining common assessments. This year the staff has started to use Google drive to maintain student folders which include work samples, student profiles, assessment documentation, and other pertinent documents. Growth in this area can be achieved through staff training on how to use data to drive instruction and using the CAASPP Interim Assessments for formative assessment.

The majority of the high school specialist (core content subjects) teachers in the Home Study school are Leading Edge technology certified. While some teachers in the home study and the academy programs are involved in blended learning, there are no teachers who instruct students strictly online. JCS is in the process of transitioning to using Canvas as their schoolwide LMS. Teachers are being provided with online synchronous trainings or recorded webinars through Canvas.

The JCS Cabinet evaluates the school's focus on successful student learning at their quarterly meetings. The alignment of the Strategic Plan, LCAP, and WASC action plan are maintained through the Major Plans Action Items Document, and reviewed at the Educational Leadership Team's monthly meeting. The coordinator of every academy is part of the Team Link meeting, lead by the Assistant Directors of Academy Programs. The Team Link meeting is held every six weeks to communicate expectations and gather feedback from the academy staff. PLC leads meet with the Academy Assistant Directors and the Assistant Director of Home Study to discuss alignment of instruction and achievement of expected tasks. The Assistant Directors are responsible to evaluate staff according to the STAR teacher evaluation rubrics. They are assisted through bi-weekly reports sent by the Academy Coordinators and weekly reports sent to the Assistant Director of Home Study by their staff.

Email and shared Google documents are the main forms of school wide communication. The Executive Director sends a weekly update to the entire staff. JCS maintains staff, student and parent portals through their website to communicate information and share resources. Questions from staff, students, and parents are received and evaluated using JCS' Help Ticket database. Conflict resolution is conducted in person.

#### **A4. Staff: Qualified and Professional Development Criterion**

To what extent does a qualified staff facilitate achievement of the student academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes through a system of preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development?

To what extent is there a systematic approach to continuous improvement through professional development based on student performance data, student needs, and research?

The job descriptions for JCS staff were revised in 2015. These new job descriptions were used to identify the key attributes of an effective teacher at JCS and helped construct the STAR rubrics being used to support staff growth this school year. The Human Resources department created the Teacher Qualification Tool to evaluate whether a teacher is highly qualified in the subject area they are teaching. All teaching positions are held by credentialed teachers. JCS utilizes EdJoin to post job opening. Using this site, candidates are required to fill out an application, post their resume and letters of recommendations. Chosen candidates are

interviewed by teachers, coordinator, Assistant Director, and Director of Educations (according to the learning site for which they are interviewing). If appropriate, candidates demonstrate performance tasks and a sample lesson. Riverside County of Education runs the Induction program used by JCS for its teachers.

A Human Resource staff member meets with every newly hired employee to explain the terms of at-will employment and directs them to the employee handbook found on the staff portal. The Executive Director presents the school's goals and theme for the year during the staff forum at the beginning of the year. At this meeting, all staff, the Executive Director and Director of Education meet and greet the new staff. The Assistant Directors of Education, Academy Coordinators, Lead Education Facilitators, and the Lead Specialist in the home study program each hold responsibilities for teacher training. Teachers also have access to screen casts for common processes and a searchable help system through the staff portal. Teachers are also able to participate in the Induction program through the Riverside County of Education to clear their preliminary teaching credentials.

The JCS Knowledge Base is a Google drive folder which contains the documents regarding the school's policies and procedures, and can be accessed through the staff portal. Team Link meetings are held for the coordinators of the academy programs to review procedures and practices. School wide procedures and practices are reviewed at the coordinators Team Link meetings. The coordinator handbook is available in the Knowledge Base. Through the Knowledge Base, home study educational facilitators also have access to their handbook, which is updated annually. The HR department sends out a link to the Employee Handbook and asks all staff to read and acknowledge it on an annual basis.

JCS holds an all school staff forum at the beginning and again at the end of each school year. Training for staff, school wide announcements, and the presentations of the annual goals by the ED are given at these meetings. Online trainings are also performed throughout the year, such as the mandated reporter training. About every six weeks, certified staff attend additional forums. At these forums, PLCs hold in person meetings, teacher-led workshops are conducted on topics proposed by the Growth Team, and 'Unthink time' is given for teacher selected topics. Growth Teams were established by JCS to lead the thinking and planning of the workshop time at the forums, and are composed of interested stakeholders. The last hour of forums are used for Unthink time, where staff can explore and support other interests. JCS allows for leaders of workshops and staff who have attended outside conferences or workshops to post summaries on the Growth Blog, which all staff can access through the staff portal. JCS staff routinely attend outside conferences including SDCOE workshops, SDCUE, CUE, ELDA, CCSA, and MOOCs. Time to attend professional development and to work on teacher projects is provided during the all school Project Week. All-Academy Collaboration and Training meetings are held quarterly for the academy programs. In December of 2015, the board approved the professional development plan created by the ELT to use funds from the state's Teacher Effectiveness Grant, which will focus on the school's alignment with the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes and Critical Learner Needs.

Utilizing the new STAR teacher evaluation rubric, the Assistant Directors will meet with the each staff member they are responsible for, at least twice annually. The rubrics solicit responses by both the staff and administrator to facilitate discussion. The ADs are exploring the use of Canvas as a platform to house the completed rubrics, teacher's e-portfolios, and discussion logs. ADs, lead coordinators, and Academy Coordinators all perform teacher observations. Big Blue Button is an online, synchronous meeting tool utilized by the lead specialists to conduct bi-weekly meetings and trainings for home study high school specialist teachers. Most of these specialists are Leading Edge certified, since they are instructing in a blended learning environment, although they are not considered online instructional staff.

JCS is optimistic about the measurable effect implementing the STAR rubric will have on staff growth and student learning. JCS acknowledges the limitation of the rubric, as it does not provide for teachers to reflect on their teaching or include evidence of professional development, so that remains the responsibility of the teacher to provide. Posts about professional development on the JCS Growth Blog have been positive. A reflection process and colloquium are part of the Riverside COE induction program at the end of the year. According to teacher surveys, JCS teachers would like to receive more training on the use of data, how to support all learners, and Math and ELA strategies.

#### **A5. Resources Criterion**

To what extent are the human, material, physical, and financial resources sufficient and utilized effectively and appropriately in accordance with the legal intent of the program(s) and LCAP to support students in accomplishing the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

The governing board and Executive Director are committed to make policy, procedural, and fiscal decisions using the guiding principles of “is it student centered and “is it good for kids?” The Executive Director makes final decisions regarding staff and leadership requests, based on the impact for students and financial feasibility.

A variety of curriculum and learning resources are available to students at the Resource Center, which also support all learning styles. For resources not found at the RC, or for specialized classes, Parents utilize educational unit (EUs) and vendor class instruction (VCI). Typing Pal and Discovery Ed are online resources available to all JCS students. Bookshare is another specialized online resource available to high-need students.

Each year's budget is created based on reviewing the budget used for the previous year, and the projections for student enrollment for the upcoming year. “Wish list” items are evaluated for their possible inclusion, the previous year's one-time expenditures are removed, and salary schedule adjustments are considered when needed.

The Annual Audit is conducted in coordination with the authorizing district's audit, and uses standard practices and a state certified auditor. No audit findings, exceptions or deficiencies have occurred.

Books and instructional materials are stored at the Resource Center. JCS operates 13 learning facilities. One is provided by Julian USD at the district office, nine are in San Diego county, but outside of JUSD, and three more are outside of San Diego county. Using a private bond, JCS has recently purchased four facilities to maintain greater autonomy and control of their facilities.

The JCS Safety Committee meets on a quarterly basis.

The Visiting Committee confirmed that all locations are safe, clean, orderly and well maintained. Emergency procedures are posted and accessible to all staff at all locations. The facilities, while varied and non-traditional, serve the needs of the unique school programs.

The Executive Director utilizes an “open door policy” for staff to express ideas and needs, which includes electronic as well as in person communication. Requests made for the purchase of resources and materials are reviewed by the Educational Leadership Team. When teachers or parents cannot find the resource they are looking for at the Resource Center, there is a procedure in place for them to use their educational units towards purchase of an alternative, as long as school policy is adhered to.

The CBO and ED give hiring and PD updates to the board, which oversees the budget. The board approves a professional development plan, which they confirmed was in alignment with all major JCS plans in December of 2015.

The board engages in long term fiscal planning through development of five year budgets. The strategic plan, charter and LCAP also include multi-year budgets. The CBO, Executive Director and Board consistently monitor such factors as enrollment, student demographics, ADA and SB740 compliance to watch for possible changes which might affect the fiscal health of the school. Progress towards achieving the goals of the strategic plan, LCAP and WASC growth plans, as well as their fiscal components, are reviewed on a regular basis. The Executive Director is transparent with all staff about the fiscal plans of the school. It is not uncommon for the ED to include financial information in weekly email updates to the staff.

#### **A6. Resources Criterion [Charter Schools only]**

Have the governing authority and the school leadership executed responsible resource planning for the future?

Is the school fiscally solvent and does it use sound and ethical accounting practices (budgeting/monitoring, internal controls, audits, fiscal health and reporting)?

JCS makes decisions regarding resource allocation in accordance with its Strategic Plan, WASC growth plan, and LCAP. As part of their regular meetings, the Educational Leadership Team evaluates the progression of the action plans from these three major plans. The updating of the school’s vision, mission, and confirmation of its core values were conducted during the strategic planning process. An open door policy is implemented by the Executive Director to receive regular feedback regarding needed resources from JCS staff. The budget is approved each year by the Governing Board.

JCS is a direct-funded charter school. The Chief Business Officer is shared by JCS and JUSD. The CBO works closely with the SDCOE. The same auditors that assure educational compliance for JUSD are also used by JCS to examine their own charter school compliance. In accordance with district policy, the auditor partner or firm is rotated or changed every three years. The Memorandum of Understanding is utilized by JCS and JUSD to detail the specific operational relationship between the two educational entities.

Budgeting, payroll, accounting, contracts, and personnel processes are handled internally by JCS through financial systems administered by SDCOE. JCS is presently transferring to Peoplesoft,

a new financial management system utilized by SDCOE.

JCS financial operations follows the state mandated budget reporting requirements and use a standardized state accounting code system (SACS), which is in line with Charter School Law. JCS receives its general school funding from the Local Control Funding Formula through average daily attendance in specific grade level spans, as well as other state and local funding sources. As an independent charter school, JCS' funding is based on a non classroom-based funding determination. JCS funding has been set at 100 percent by the State Board of Education. Four of facilities JCS rents are owned by SDORI Properties LLC, a holding company set up by JCS to own property assets. A management company has been hired by SDORI to oversee this partnership, to ensure there is no co-mingling of books. The management company has been trained by an auditor on the fiscal practices of public schools.

All staff are commonly updated on the fiscal matters of the school in the weekly email updates by the ED, and verbally in an address given by the ED at the Staff Forums. This year the Ed let the staff know that the year's budget was established for 120 more students than enrolled for the year. The Advisory Council is given a fiscal update quarterly. Governing Board meeting are open to all stakeholders interested in attending and board minutes are available publicly.

JCS' fiscal reserve is down from 13% during the '14-'15 school year to 8% for the '15-'16 school year. One source of this can be attributed to the stress put on schools by the state in past years because of uncertainty of funding, lowered funding rates, and altered payment dates, however, this is currently improving and the board will examine increasing reserve amounts. There is a higher fiscal reserve percentage required by JCS's bond authorizers than the 5% that is recommended by the state, so the school will maintain the amounts required by the bond.

While independent study law requires the student to teacher ratio to be no greater than 25 to 1, JCS has maintained a ratio of 17 to 1 this academic year. In this pilot year of the STAR teacher evaluation rubric, JCS is examining its salary schedule in relation to performance based pay, in order to explore the possibility of additional staff compensation. JCS feels a greater student to teacher ratio is needed to support the move to merit based pay.

JCS has put emphasis in marketing by updating signs, improving the user friendliness of its website, as well as contracting to create a marketing newspaper and academy videos for marketing. Word of mouth is seen as the most influential tool to bring awareness for the school. The school has a Communications and Admissions Specialist position who performs marketing tasks for JCS.

The primary venues where stakeholder's voice is heard by JCS regarding future planning are through the Advisory Council and Governing Board meetings. The school leadership indicated that improvement in this area could be achieved through the inclusion of questions on the bi-annual school wide survey soliciting parents' thoughts on where they would like to see the school in three to five years.

Recent issuance of a bond and subsequent purchase of facilities has led to an increased focus on the long range capital needs of the organization. Bond requirements will create accountability for the school.

Financial and operational summaries for JCS are sent to the Governing Board, JUSD Board, SDCOE, and the CDE. The JCS LCAP is posted online and all interested stakeholders are welcome to Governing Board and Advisory Council meeting.

JCS has maintained a reserve fund of 8% this academic year, in order to ensure financial stability, and exceed the minimum suggested by the state. This is below the amount the school's bondholders would like. Fiscal decisions are made in light of the status of the school's current enrollment, and in accordance with what is best for students, as well as the critical learner needs of students, and progress towards the schoolwide learner outcomes.

Operating costs are shared quarterly with stakeholders at Advisory Council and Governing Board meetings. Significant operating costs are reviewed annually with all those who make budget decisions.

#### **A7. Resources Criterion [Charter Schools only]**

Has the school developed policies, procedures, and internal controls for managing the financial operations that meet state laws, generally accepted practices, and ethical standards?

All Internal control requirements recommended by best practices are followed by JCS. There is sufficient training and oversight of fiscal policies and practices by leadership and the board. Fiscal audits are conducted annually in line with the accounting principles and state-mandated requirements for charter schools. No exceptions or deficiencies have been revealed during the audit process in the history of the school. An audit of pupil attendance accounting to validate ADA totals is conducted in May. The second portion of the annual audit is conducted in the fall and is focused on teacher credentialing compliance and all fiscal matters. Using the school's budgeting process, such items as long-term debt schedules, multi-year contracts, and capital projects are regularly tracked and monitored.

A system of checks and balances exist between the CBO, ED, Director of Operations and the Human Resources Generalist. The practices of the Director of Operations and the Human Resources Generalist are monitored by the CBO and ED, and in turn the practices of the CBO and ED are monitored by the Director of Operations and the Human Resources Generalist. The ED is responsible for the signing of contracts and checks. In the absence of the ED, the CBO has authorization to sign checks. The Human Resource Generalist monitors the school's payroll, which is also overseen by the Executive Director and the CBO. The vendor clerk, purchasing clerk and the accounts payable clerk review bank reconciliations, deposits, and withdrawals. Only the ED has the authorization to use the school credit card in accordance with established policies and procedures. The treasurer tracks all purchases made using the credit card by viewing all statements. The statements are also presented to and monitored by the Governing Board.

The organization has a policy in place for contract approval. Larger contracts and leases are brought to the board for formal board approval, while for smaller vendor contracts, the Executive Director is authorized to directly approve the contracts. The Executive Director keeps the board informed about all purchases and a board member reviews all transactions regularly for oversight purposes.

**CATEGORY A: ORGANIZATION: VISION AND PURPOSE, GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, STAFF, AND RESOURCES**

**Areas of strength for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership, Staff, and Resources (if any):**

- Stakeholders determined the vision, mission and core values/student learning outcomes during the strategic planning process and the strategic planning process has become an institutionalized part of JCS.
- All major plans, such as LCAP, WASC growth plan, and Strategic Plan are in alignment and are focused on student needs.
- Professional Learning Communities and Forums are firmly established to allow consistent and predictable professional growth opportunities.
- Systems (email, portal, website, etc.) are in place for effective communication in a school where all staff rarely gathers together in one location.
- JCS Leadership demonstrates stability and dedication to student centered decision making.
- JCS teachers and staff demonstrate that they are enthusiastic and committed to the school's core values.
- JCS has remained fiscally and operationally sound, maintaining a positive relationship with their sponsoring district, and acquiring significant facility assets which will support student learning but with minimal disruption during the acquisition process.

**Key issues for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership, Staff, and Resources (if any):**

- Teachers need focused professional development in the areas of data analysis and data-based decision making, including by program, learning sites, and class roster.
- Research and evaluation of additional relevant data indicators as they relate to college and career readiness would lead to a better understanding of whether graduates are truly college and career ready.
- Many board policies need to be reviewed and updated.

**Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

Self Study, Focus Group interviews, Board agendas and minutes, Board policy manual, LCAP, Strategic Plan, Advisory Council composition, Budgets and budget reports, Audits, Facility tours, Staff retention rates, Professional development plan, Teacher evaluation STAR rubrics, Staff surveys, Multiple technological and communication systems



## CATEGORY B. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: CURRICULUM

### B1. Rigorous and Relevant Standards-Based Curriculum Criterion

To what extent do all students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-based curriculum that supports the achievement of the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

To what extent through standards-based learning (what is taught and how it is taught), are these accomplished?

Teachers at Julian Charter School have created a K - 12 scope and sequence in order to plan lessons which align to CCSS and the upcoming NGSS throughout their sites and programs. High school teachers will begin using a new Integrated Math curriculum next year. Annually, new Integrated Math courses will replace each outdated math course. Teachers also work together in Professional Learning Communities and participate in professional development many times throughout the year. Teachers work in both grade level and subject area teams share teaching strategies, resources, data, and collaborate on projects aligned to CCSS. In addition to professional development, teachers may participate in “Unthink Time” where they choose a topic to pursue learning and teaching. Examples of “Unthink Time” topics and projects include math curriculum focus, individual research, or book studies such as Thanks for the Feedback.

Julian Charter School teachers have attended multiple in person and online professional development trainings including ELDA Spotlight Series, SDCUE Conference, and the Google EdTech Summit. Through these professional development trainings, teachers remain current in educational research and thinking in topics such as STEaM, Google Apps, education technology, reading, writing, and mathematics. Teachers who participate in these professional development opportunities are expected to share what they’ve learned with the larger body through the Julian Charter School Growth Blog.

High school students at Julian Charter School can enroll in various programs which include: earning a high school diploma, preparing for college, or preparing for a UC education after high school. Students are given a list of courses needed for each option and meet with a counselor to choose the most appropriate course choices for their goals. Together, students and Academic Counselors create a four year plan.

Julian Charter School offers courses online for students preparing for a UC education; online courses include benchmark assessments and a culminating final exam.

Career readiness opportunities are available to Julian Charter School students through JA BizTown, field trips, home study projects, on campus learning experiences, and guest speakers.

In order to build congruency, Julian Charter School teachers utilize strategic lesson planning, the K - 12 scope and sequence, professional learning communities, and collaboration. The K - 12 scope and sequence is used to determine alignment to CCSS, and lesson plans are chosen from a variety of resources. Lessons contain both direct instruction and project based elements.

Teachers use both formative and summative assessments. Students demonstrate their knowledge through formal assessments, presentations, reports, interviews, and projects. Lessons and assignments incorporate academic, college and career readiness standards.

Julian Charter School students demonstrate CCSS mastery through a variety of culminating assignments such as community based projects, STEM projects, blog posts, presentations, summative assessments, and performance tasks. Student work is collected on an ongoing basis. Culminating assignments are assessed with rubrics.

Student engagement can be found in the variety of student work available such as participation in Project Week, STEM galleries, community art and music demonstrations, Math Carnival, Business Bazaar, Living Museum, book publishing, science experiment days, and other personalized learning opportunities. As discussed with the Visiting Committee, students shared their excitement with the hands on opportunities such as candle making, music video creation, and the Star of India tour. While visiting classrooms, students were engaged in group activities and classroom experiences.

Julian Charter School offers three tracks for students: high school diploma, college readiness, and UC education. All students have a variety of choices within the school offerings. Students with special needs are given differentiated lessons centered around life readiness. Home study students meet with teachers every 20 days to evaluate student progress. Home study students are also able to attend weekly learning center classes. Educational Facilitators meet with students on a weekly or monthly basis (at least once every twenty days and more often as needed) and are able to differentiate and adapt curriculum to meet each students' needs. Special Education Case Managers collaborate with special education students, parents, vendors, therapists, academy teachers, and Educational Facilitators to best modify and accommodate curriculum so that it is accessible to each student.

Discipline integration at Julian Charter School is demonstrated through the school's Project Week when every student selects and implements a project. Projects, framed by teachers, are designed to be interdisciplinary through the use of English Language Arts in math, science, and social studies. Some programs within Julian Charter School are shifting towards interdisciplinary courses such as communications, humanities, and STEaM. In these courses, CCSS are taught through integration where teachers consider multiple learning styles.

Outsourced curriculum such as IXL, Discover Education, RAZ Kids, Read Naturally, Rosetta Stone, BYU online courses, Kahn Academy, Discovery Education, Stock Market Math, and Common Sense Media focus on high quality and engaging lessons, project based learning, and real life problem solving. These courses are CCSS and NGSS aligned which promote college and life readiness skills. Although these resources are currently scattered across Internet sites, Julian Charter School is moving towards having these resources available in one location through the upcoming integration of Canvas management system.

Curriculum was once reviewed by curriculum teams, but these teams have disbanded. Curriculum review is now done in PLCs, within academies, and amongst small cohorts regularly

to ensure content is relevant and aligned to CCSS. Julian Charter School teachers look for and pilot innovative and relevant curriculum. Parents have access to a plethora of materials and curricula in the Resource Center. With so many options, differentiation and personalization of curricula meet the needs of Julian Charter School's stakeholders.

Julian Charter School teachers create and select all curricula for students. They ensure the curricula is based on CCSS and Smarter Balanced Performance Tasks. The curricula is based on the K - 12 scope and sequence. Scope and sequences are standards based and were created in PLCs and small groups.

Julian Charter School works with local colleges, schools, and universities such as Palomar City College, Mt. San Jacinto City College, Grossmont, Cuyamaca, Biola, and College of the Desert to best prepare students. Students at Julian Charter School may take courses on local college campuses. These courses are paid through the home study high school budget. Students can choose to take such courses as Calculus, College ELA and Math Prep, Sign Language, and other electives at these colleges. Teachers refer to college admission standards and EAP data when creating relevant lesson plans. Counselors regularly attend college conferences to ensure they are best guiding students. After graduation, Julian Charter School maintains communication with students. Alumni speak to current Julian Charter School students regarding their educational experience, many also volunteer and mentor students. Some Julian Charter School alumni have returned and work as employees.

## **B2. Access to Curriculum Criterion**

To what extent do all students have equal access to the school's entire program and are provided assistance with a personal learning plan to prepare them for the pursuit of their academic, personal, and career goals?

Along with the three paths available for Julian Charter School high school students, the Academies use project based and performance tasks in lieu of traditional textbook based curriculum. Students can follow their personal passions when working on these tasks. They are encouraged to incorporate STEaM, Visual and Performing Arts, and coding into their projects.

Julian Charter School students also have access to courses at community colleges. Students with special needs are supported with exposure to post-secondary education, career exploration, and personal development.

When students enroll at Julian Charter School, students and families attend information meetings to discuss the different opportunities available. Parents and students discuss CCSS curriculum standards, home study, communication, the school calendar, project based learning, policies, and the role of a home study parent.

Home study parents meet with Educational Facilitators (credentialed teachers) at a minimum of once every 20 days to review student work, curriculum, and educational goals.

Julian Charter School students and parents are offered a variety of ways to personalize and differentiate instruction. Assignments can be modified to meet the interests and academic levels of all students. Academic counselors meet with eighth - twelfth grade students annually and by appointment to provide ongoing support. Parents, students, and teachers work together to create IEP plans to properly support students with special needs who are enrolled in all Julian Charter School programs. Counselors also advise high school students on preparing them for college or UC prep tracks. Academies encourage parental feedback through meetings, forums, and online means.

Canvas Learning Management System has not yet become fully implemented, but when it does, it will allow Julian Charter School to communicate across multiple platforms with parents and students.

Parents have access to Julian Charter School's Resource Centers to find curricula and materials that will best teach their children CCSS and NGSS lessons. These can be modified to best meet the needs of each student. Additional resources can also be purchased from approved vendors to meet student needs.

Accommodations and modifications are easily implemented by Julian Charter School parents and teachers to fit the academic and personal interests of each student. Depending on a student's needs, students may transfer between programs if space is available.

Julian Charter School high school teachers evaluate past course grades and classes to best place students. They use multiple strategies to problem solve and ensure each student can master the CCSS. Using formative assessments allows teachers to re-teach as needed. Student assignments and small group placement is based on data from Renaissance Place scores, CAASPP scores, SD Quick scores, and Running Records.

If students fall below grade level, teachers communicate concerns with parents and students receive additional support through in class interventions and placement in the Safety Net program. Teachers collaborate to implement and adjust classroom accommodations, interventions, and assistive technology to individualize learning and support.

Julian Charter School works with local colleges to allow students the ability to take courses which encourage their individual needs and interests. This also introduces students to post-secondary education. Academic Counselors meet with students to set post-secondary goals and choose appropriate courses and academic track. Students also attend college fairs, listen to guest speakers, attend field trips, and complete projects regarding career and college readiness.

Many of Julian Charter School's projects revolve around collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking which are essential skills needed for postsecondary high school options.

### **B3. Preparation for Career and College Criterion**

To what extent are students able to meet all the requirements of graduation upon completion of the high school program and be prepared for success in college, career, and life?

Project based learning is highly utilized at Julian Charter School. These projects incorporate essential skills for postsecondary experiences and real world applications. Julian Charter Home Study students develop research, project development, time management, and organization skills. Students learn and apply technological skills through online courses, resources, and projects.

High school students who are academically ready can take college courses at many local college campuses. Students are able to participate in pre-professional and vocational performances and competitions to develop passion, mastery, character, and build resumes.

Julian Charter Schools offers a multitude of vocational and real world applications. Fifth and sixth grade students participate in BizTown curriculum which allows them to prepare and then run a business. Middle and high school students work with community mentors to complete autobody and woodshop courses. Seniors participate in a year long career project which includes conducting interviews, working with a mentor, and writing a report. Project Week allows students to create businesses and home study students participate in junior achievement courses through the learning center. field trips allow for students to gain hands on experience within various businesses including veterinary and performing arts. At the INSITE locations, vocational exposure is brought to students through speakers from the military, police, beauty careers, and others. Job fairs, ROP training, work experience, and the flexible environment allows students to pursue their real world passions. Special education teachers can identify students interested in Job Corps programs and work to ensure their participation.

Test prep courses for CAHSEE were available when the test was still a graduation requirement. Currently, beginning in the 8th grade, students meet with an Academic Counselor annually to set goals and choose courses based on vocational aspirations. Julian Charter School families may use vendor monies to purchase community college course or tutoring in order to meet graduation requirements. Eleventh and twelfth grade students participate in the EAP program which supports their postsecondary goals.

## **CATEGORY B: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: CURRICULUM**

### **Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum (if any):**

- The curriculum is easily modified and accommodates students individually.
- Dual enrollment in community college courses is available to students who meet high academic standards.
- A variety of programs are available to students and families which focus on personal needs and educational interests such as project based learning, cross curricular projects, individualized learning, performance task learning, and embedded 21st century skills.
- Personalized and differentiated instruction is given to each student based on their strengths, interests and areas of need.
- Students and families have “voice” and “choice” in instruction, academies, programs, and curriculum.
- Abundant resources are available online, through educational experiences, from educational providers, and via a well-stocked Resource Room.

### **Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum (if any):**

- Relevant CCSS aligned textbooks/curriculum for students in all programs, including Special Education, have not yet been obtained.
- Alignment, unity, and clarity of K - 12 Scope and Sequence is in the beginning stages.
- Once developed, use of the aligned K - 12 Scope and Sequence to create relevant, school wide, benchmark assessments in all core courses, grade levels, and programs will enhance student learning and school wide outcomes.
- Continued development of rigorous, college prep coursework, including addition of honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses, will improve college readiness.

### **Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

Self Study, Focus Group interviews, Classroom observations, Student interviews, Parent interviews, Teacher interviews, Curriculum review, Scope and Sequence, School created folders, Educational Facilitator observations, tour of Resource Center

## **CATEGORY C. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: INSTRUCTION**

### **C1. Challenging and Relevant Learning Experiences Criterion**

To what extent are all students involved in challenging and relevant learning experiences to achieve the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

The Committee observed students were highly engaged in their classes and genuinely interested in participating in class activities. Because every site had its own culture and academic identity, we had a real sense that students had expressly chosen each site for the unique learning opportunity. For example, students enrolled in the San Diego Academy of Arts, students were busy rehearsing for their production of the musical “Bye Bye Birdie”. In some classes, students worked on the costumes, in others students were studying vocal skills, yet in another class students were analyzing a drama scene; so that overall the Visiting Committee had a sense that students were working as a team while fine tuning very specific skills needed to excel in the performing arts.

In the Murrieta Middle School Academy, Mr. Rogalski, the Art and Science teacher understands the value of introducing different science concepts through art. As a result his classroom is a fascinating blend of art projects which highlight the natural integration of science with esthetics. His students seemed enthusiastic about his PowerPoint presentation on human bone structure and were taking notes, some of them on their laptops. When interviewed, he expressed his appreciation of the intellectual and academic freedom Julian Charter School had afforded him: “In a traditional setting, if I wanted to focus on a specific aspect of the curriculum to enhance its delivery through art, I would be rebuked for wasting time, here, I feel empowered to use my expertise of the integration of art and science to enhance my instruction and connection with students.”

The Visiting Committee also observed that teachers used a variety of instructional methods so as to cater to different learning styles. In the social study class, for example, students were acting out “The Silk Road Trade”, and in the Health class, students were acting out scenarios to illustrate what they would need to do in dangerous situations.

Students enrolled in the Home Study program echoed the same sentiment of learning empowerment through greater academic freedom. A junior explained that because she was in charge of her own schedule, it became her responsibility to manage personal time so that it did not interfere with her academic assignments. She also added that this model let her customize her schedule to her learning style: “ I can’t focus well early in the morning, when I get up late and go to bed late, I feel more alert, more ready to engage with complex materials.”

Another major advantage of this model is the ability, for the Home Study as well as for the Academy students, to customize the curriculum to their favorite fields of study. One student, for example, explained that his love of travelling and blogging occupied an important aspect of his life and that these were the specific skills he needed to hone to prepare for his future career. “I understand the need for a well-rounded education, but I want to be able to focus on knowledge that will be relevant for my professional life. I don’t want to be stuck in a 9 to 3 model where my life is pre-arranged for me.” This focus on specializing is emphasized starting as early as Kindergarten where students are encouraged to explore and create projects that reflect their budding interests. The Visiting Committee observed that Julian Charter School works best for

students who value choice and curriculum customization so as to either discover, or nourish specific skills and, in the process, thrive personally and academically. Education Facilitators help gauge the effectiveness of the course of study chosen by focused students. They validate the academic work and provide the proper tools.

Acceleration and specialization of specific subjects is not the only way the school customizes the curriculum. The EFs provide remediation through tutoring, material supplementation, and personalized attention for students with special education needs. They function as guides and ensure that students remain within grade levels. For students who fail to perform within grade levels, the Safety Net program provides remediation with the help of a variety of strategies that EFs share so as to be the most effective.

Because all EFs have access to a student portfolio containing work samples from all core subjects and for the entire cycle of the student at the school, even if the student moved from one site to another, they are able to customize the guidance they provide and update it as students evolve.

INSITE provides a safe harbor for high school students who struggle with taking six classes at a time. They can focus on one or two classes at a time every six weeks, and still be able to complete high school in time. EFs and Special Education staff provide a customized education plan for each student. Students typically come into the site twice a week to receive the services they need. Failure to come in can result in a “strike” which alerts educators and coordinator that special attention might be needed. Strikes can also safeguard students from potential parental neglect. In addition, all students and parents have access to Education Units they can use for tutoring from approved vendors should they need it for extra support.

## **C2. Student Engagement Criterion**

To what extent do all teachers use a variety of strategies and resources, including technology and experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom that actively engage students, emphasize higher order thinking skills, and help them succeed at high levels?

The school uses their observation of students working and the work they produce to monitor their engagement in challenging and relevant learning; while putting a special emphasis on the evaluation of students with diverse backgrounds and abilities. Students learn at home, in the classroom and abroad, with the frequent organization of field trips and even occasional international travel.

All students participate in challenging and complex Performance Tasks and Project Based Learning aligned with CCSS. In addition, seniors complete a career project. Parents have the opportunity to learn more about the Common Core and how it affects the instruction of the curriculum.

At home, parents monitor student work daily, and every few weeks, an Education Facilitator (EF) checks on the student work too. Students who struggle with benchmark testing receive intervention, which includes the Safety Net Support program. Online learning management systems houses result of each student’s achievement in order to guide instruction.

Specialist teachers in core content areas design online classes and the entire course materials are available immediately, but with the expectation that students should complete at least one module per week. Students have to complete assignments with due dates, though they can be



extended. Specialists communicate directly with students to evaluate their work, provide reminders, and by appointment, provide group or individual tutoring. Specialists also receive monthly reports from Educational Facilitators.

Additional information about the course alignment with CCSS standards and 21<sup>st</sup> skills is provided at the beginning of the year, each semester and/or per assignment. Students use course syllabi checklists and benchmark due dates to understand school expectations. In the Home Study high school programs, pacing guides and syllabi (for core subjects) are available online.

The Academies use an online management system to track complete assignments, academic standing, and mastery of standards and learning outcomes. Online classes offer asynchronous collaboration, synchronous instruction, plus live learning and the opportunity to schedule in person meetings with the instructor. Teachers use ipads, google chromebooks, laptops, document cameras, interactive projectors and various educational apps to integrate technology.

In the home study program, parents collaborate on curriculum design with the Education Facilitator to adapt to students' educational goals. All students use research programs and use academic databases to create MLA formatted research papers. Students performing below grade level benefit from intervention strategies that may modify work and benchmarks and provide them with additional online tools to track their progress.

## **C2. Student Engagement Criterion**

To what extent do all teachers use a variety of strategies and resources, including technology and experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom that actively engage students, emphasize higher order thinking skills, and help them succeed at high levels?

Teachers are available to answer questions in person, over the phone or via email or text messages. They also offer parents curriculum options and learning strategies. Students often have the opportunity to improve their assignments before they receive a final grade.

Students often work in project-based assignments. Students receive instruction initially followed by a variety of performance tasks. Instruction includes guidance on the use of technology to complete assignments.

The school emphasizes writing across the curriculum. Teachers frequently evaluate work samples, Google documents and emails created either at home or at an Academy.

Students participate in school government, volunteering and leadership programs. They have the opportunity to organize school events such as campus tours, dances and a variety of events on campus. These opportunities aim at improving self-confidence, public speaking skills and organizational skills. Next year, there will be a community outreach program. Students will have a choice of organizations to work with in order to form a stronger bond with the community

**CATEGORY C: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: INSTRUCTION**

**Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction (if any):**

- The school provides a wide array of program choices so as to allow students a voice in the course of their studies, which in turn gives them the responsibility to identify their individual interests and academic strengths.
- Academic freedom teaches students to become responsible lifelong learners who have the ability and experience necessary to organize themselves and create effective and satisfying schedules.
- Families benefit from academic freedom as they spend more time with their children and become more involved with the content of the academic materials and the methods of instruction necessary for optimal delivery. Students also report that socializing with people from a larger range of ages has widened their intellectual perspectives.
- The use of EFs and customized curriculum has enabled more individualized instruction. Students can choose to spend more time on more challenging materials.
- Instruction is standard-based and is in the process of incorporating CCSS.
- Students have access to a variety of online classes, an abundance of multimedia technologies, and community college courses. These opportunities allow students to become acquainted with the rigorous demands of college instruction.
- The school programs offer a variety of instructional methods and support for students of different abilities and backgrounds. Teachers and students benefit from more flexible schedules.
- Administration, students, staff and parents communicate regarding students’ progress effectively via email or in person and are thus able to modify instruction and provide timely support.
- Students have access to a wide variety applicable learning experiences and rich resources.

**Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction (if any):**

- There is a need for more systematic and comprehensive assessment of teacher technological competencies.
- Students and parents are not yet fully informed about CCSS and lack relevant materials, including the Special Education department.
- Home study families are inconsistent when integrating technology with student learning.
- Internet connectivity negatively impacts technology based activities at some sites.
- Julian Charter School enrollment would improve, become more competitive, and student choice would expand if AP courses were offered.
- There are limited opportunities to see and experience different programs in order to understand instructional difference.

**Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

Self Study report, Focus Group interviews, Classroom observations, Student interviews, Student work samples, Parent interviews, Staff interviews, School website, outreach materials, Assessment samples, Syllabi samples, lists of field trips

## **CATEGORY D. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **D1. Using Assessment to Analyze Monitoring and Report Student Progress Criterion**

To what extent does the school use a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, analyze, and report student performance data to the school staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders?

Multiple opportunities to assess and analyze student achievement are available at Julian Charter School. Students in grades K-9 take Renaissance Plan tests in language arts and math to demonstrate growth twice a year. CAASPP assessments are given in the spring in grades 3-8 and 11. Teachers in the academies and the EF teachers for home study students administer benchmark assessments in all subjects. High school students are given common school-wide benchmark assessments across all programs. Project based learning leads to multiple projects which are assessed using rubrics. The rubrics generally include writing standards in addition to the content area.

Data from these assessments are analyzed by teachers through individual student dashboards and online gradebooks, including BrainHoney for homeschool high school, TeacherEase for secondary academics, and Canvas for elementary academies. In the 2016-2017 school year, all programs will transition to Canvas. Parents are informed of student progress through an online gradebook and CAASPP student reports mailed home. Parents of independent study programs understand their child's progress because they are teaching their children at least part-time as the parent-teacher. To guarantee this, home study EF teachers regularly review student progress with parents and if the student is not staying on track, guidance is provided. In the classroom setting of the academy programs, parents are also given regular feedback regarding student progress, often on a weekly basis. CAASPP data is reported annually to the school Advisory Council and the governing board, disaggregated by such things as program and grade level.

Due of the nature of independent study, most parents are much more deeply involved in their children's education than traditional school parents. With home study students, assignments are given in advance to the parent-teacher and standards are listed on the Assignment and Work Record (AWR) form. Parents of students at the Academy have their children learning at home at least a 26% of the time and can directly monitor learning of the assigned academy home study assignments. Most academies send home a monthly newsletter stating what topics are being covered both in the classroom and at home. K8 academies use standards-based report cards. Parents, teachers and students have access to various online programs that track student progress in various subjects/standards. JCS staff members meet to discuss student progress and evaluate growth on an ongoing basis during PLC meetings. The school improvement planning processes, including the strategic planning, WASC and LCAP processes help inform all stakeholders about the school's academic expectations, core values and schoolwide learner outcomes.

JCS offers a large variety of ways to monitor students' progress towards meeting academic and college and career readiness standards, such as Renaissance Plan assessments, benchmarks, online supplemental programs, semester finals, student projects, and writing and math assessments gathered in the student profile folders on Google. From evidence gathered during Focus Group interviews and site visits, teachers across all programs appear to have in-depth knowledge of student progress toward the school's academic and non-academic expectations.

JCS is in an ongoing conversation on the basis upon which students' grades and growth and performance levels are determined. Renaissance Plan, placement tests, and/or teacher created material are used as a starting point for a child's instructional level. Parent-teachers and Educational Facilitators are continually discussing student progress and what grade a student has earned. High school specialists are involved in these discussions at the high school level. Academy teachers meet with students individually to discuss academic progress as well as discuss with colleagues during staff meetings. In K-8 academies, student groups are re-leveled based on student growth. Standards-based report cards are used to evaluate whether students are prepared to advance to the next unit, course, or grade level. Teacher Professional Learning Communities build collaboration in creating standards-based scope and sequences to assist teachers in teaching and evaluating students based on state-wide expectations.

## **D2. Using Assessment to Monitor and Modify Learning in the Classroom Criterion**

To what extent do teachers employ a variety of formative and summative strategies to evaluate student learning?

To what extent do students and teachers use these findings to modify the learning/teaching practices to improve student learning?

Students are assessed through a wide variety of means, including reading program assessments at all grade levels, daily writing warm-ups, teacher-created assessments, projects, debates, presentations, performances, group work, experiments, science labs, experiential activities (e.g. at the San Diego Safari Park and Catalina Island), and research projects. In addition to the state's CAASPP testing, the school has implemented a standardized assessment program to measure individual student growth in math and English Language Arts (Renaissance Place).

Project Week is a good example of an assessment strategy that goes beyond just a typical test. Project Week is done across all programs, and highlights student learning and skills across multiple content areas. Projects are presented to an audience and awards are given. The broader community is also engaged via many student projects. Assessments are CCSS-aligned and data results are used to drive and differentiate instruction. PLCs have begun working on school-wide CCSS-aligned assessments, including benchmarks and final exams, to be administered to all students across all programs. Rubrics will also be developed and teachers will have the option to select from a menu of common assessments which best fit their group of students. The high school program already has common benchmarks in each core subject area and across all programs. This allows the school to determine if high school students in different learning programs are all meeting the same standards for a given course. A few English teachers in high

school have begun implementing a common writing rubric to grade essays and this type of work will be continuing elsewhere.

Examples of student work were easy to find and were examined by the Visiting Committee. Teachers collect, evaluate and store significant amounts of student work because of the nature of an independent study program.

JCS students are assessed through multiple means including curriculum-embedded assessments. These assessments are supplemented with computer-based assessments, oral assessments, written assessments, projects, and hands-on demonstrations. Teachers analyze the effectiveness of assessments and made modifications in order to get an accurate portrayal of student mastery of the grade level standards. Teachers consistently modify the teaching/learning process based on the many ongoing assessment data received. This is done in several different ways depending on the student's program and the relative role of the teacher and the parent-as-teacher.

Students receive timely feedback from their teachers, parent-teachers, peers, and through self-reflection. In academies, teachers meet with students individually to discuss missing assessments or low scoring work. In the home study program teachers meet at least monthly with students to review student work, both for completion as well as for mastery of content. High school students in the INSITE program meet up to four times a week with teachers who dialogue with the students about their progress and then provide written progress reports for the student and parent weekly. Teachers also meet with each other to collaborate on individual student progress across disciplines. Students are surveyed regularly to collect feedback for school improvement. In student group and one on one interviews with students, as well as student observations, the Visiting Committee found that students are excited and engaged about their learning experiences and find that the personalized approach to learning is preparing them for future success in school and beyond.

Teachers in home study and academy programs collaborate on test questions, common assignments, rubrics, and grading to calibrate similar grades. Data from statewide assessments are used to drive curricular changes and decisions. Checks for understanding are used through pretests, visual and verbal assessments, and proctored final exams. Home study teachers use assessment data to guide the parent-teachers to modify the curriculum and offer intervention strategies when needed. Curriculum modification may be to provide enrichment or acceleration, to provide alternative instructional approaches, to provide re-teaching, and more. In academy settings, teachers will use assessment data to differentiate instruction and/or re-teach, often using small group and learning center rotations to do this. Teachers form and use both homogenous and heterogeneous student groups based on assessment data. Teachers across all programs will recommend home study work and projects that are tailored to student academic needs as well as to student interests.

**D3. Using Assessment to Monitor and Modify the Program Schoolwide Criterion**

To what extent does the school with the support of the district and community have an assessment and monitoring system to determine student progress toward achievement of the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

All stakeholders are kept involved in monitoring student progress. Parents, students and teachers are constantly aware of individual student progress. The school leadership and PLC groups regularly examine academic progress against the school's goals and student learner outcomes for the whole school, grade levels, departments and programs. The Board of Trustees of the school's authorizing district (Julian Union Elementary School District) monitors all aspects of the Julian Charter School through oversight activities and through their representative on the JCS governing board. Student scores with analysis on the CAASPP, as well as reports on progress on the schoolwide learner outcomes are presented to the JCS governing board and Advisory Council at least annually.

Based on assessment results, the school has adapted its strategies and modified goals in order to further improve. For example, JCS has purchased online programs and other interventions, such as RAZ kids for students in grades K-5, to supplement academic achievement. For home study students, Educational Unit funds may also be used for tutoring services for students struggling based on various assessments.

Chromebooks have been made available for students in the Academies so that they can be more computer literate for online assessments. Renaissance Place was added, and these assessment reports are used inform parents and adjust curriculum and instruction. The professional development plan is regularly reviewed and input from teachers and administrators is used to prioritize professional development activities.

**CATEGORY D: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability (if any):**

- Regular communication about assessment results between teachers, student, parents, special education staff and administrators creates a team effort to support students and ensure their academic progress.
- Julian Charter School provides a wide variety of assessment tools, both standardized and authentic, that are regularly utilized within all programs and which allow the school to identify students who are not meeting grade level standards.
- JCS holds teachers accountable across all programs for monitoring student assessments and differentiating instruction based on assessment data.
- Most student assessments in all programs are performed in person via a proctored environment. This insures integrity of the assessment program in independent study and home study

**Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability (if any):**

- Implementation of the intervention program can be inconsistent, for example, the level of detail in Concern Reports, the frequency of SSTs, the location and availability of student data, and access to modified or alternate curriculum for students who are in the SST process.
- Teachers are in need of training in the use of various assessment options, including the interim CAASPP assessments.
- Development and implementation of a menu of grade level and core content level CCSS aligned common assessments and associated rubrics across all programs is in the formative stages.

**Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

Self Study report, Focus group interviews, One on one interviews, Observation of student work and projects, Assessment data, Board agendas and minutes, Teacher Forum and PLC agendas, Survey data, LCAP, Core values and SLO posted

## **CATEGORY E. SCHOOL CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH**

### **E1. Parent and Community Engagement Criterion**

To what extent does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to encourage family, business, industry, and community involvement, especially with the learning/teaching process?

JCS offers a variety of ways parents can engage both inside school and out in the surrounding community. JCS parents are continuously involved throughout the year as they share the teaching responsibilities for their children approximately 26% of the time and more (depending on the program). The majority of learning programs enjoy strong Parent Teacher Organizations. Parents volunteer to coach sports programs, drive students to JCS events, organize dances, run fundraisers, offer to help in the classroom when applicable and monitor a parent Facebook page. Some parents serve on the Advisory Council or governing board. The Visiting Committee was able to speak with the board president who is a parent of multiple students in the school. The team also observed parents reading with students in the classroom.

There are many ways in which parents are informed of their child's school events or news. The use of online tools such as TeacherEase, Remind, Google calendar, Pathways and the school's website have offered many avenues for information. There are multiple school events throughout the year which offer JCS the opportunity to include the community and for the students to explore the surrounding areas. There are field trips with partnering home school groups, organized fundraisers and the widespread use of community vendors to offer extra-curricular classes such as piano lessons and visual and performing arts.

Community Resources are utilized through various projects such as the Butterfly Effect, where JCS stakeholders offer to fund a charity of the butterfly finder's choice. The theme of the year is "be the change you want to see in the world" and is based on the book by Andy Andrews. JCS students are required to participate in Project Week where many of the projects are community service focused. Local college and job fairs are announced and attended by high school students in the community. JCS partners with Lawrence Hall of Science, at UC Berkeley to develop curriculum and participate in research based projects. There are student run fundraisers where the money raised goes towards charities such as 'pennies for patients'.

The Visiting Committee met with local vendors who are contracted with JCS to teach guitar and theatre. We were able to observe the vendor crafting a stage for Charlotte's Web. Staff reported to the team, that students take advantage of relationships within the business community to participate in vocational apprenticeships, such as mechanics, carpentry, fire fighting, and cosmetology. Staff indicated that they would also like to see JCS grow in their consistency and scope of offering vocational educational opportunities to students.

### **E2. School Environment Criterion**

To what extent is the school a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning?

To what extent is the culture of the school characterized by trust, professionalism, high expectations for all students, and a focus on continuous school improvement?

JCS has instilled policies such as a disciplinary process, a drug free workplace, safety plans, child abuse notification procedures, a civility policy, search and seizure procedures, student



discipline, suspension and expulsion policies, and acceptance use policies for Internet use. These policies have been put into place to ensure that there is protocol for certain events and a process for which investigation will take place when needed. In addition to these policies, all students participate in safety drills, all sites have first aid kits which are inspected and restocked. Staff members have been CPR, first aid and epi-pen trained. There are posted evacuation routes and prior to the use of technology, students are trained on how to properly use the Internet through Common Sense Media curriculum.

Good classroom management skills were evident across sites, which leads to a focused learning environment for Academy students. JCS instills core values in all stakeholders and the student learning outcomes reflect the high expectations and concerns for student growth. Academic integrity is emphasized to students in their school handbook, in the first unit of some writing courses, and in the “strike” policy. JCS recognizes students through various methods, such as a ‘spotlight’ on their website, or the use of ‘red cards’ to spotlight high school students who go above and beyond. Students at Murrieta High are also holding discussions on different prosper facets each month. Seniors participate in an online career portfolio which they research three career options and present to the 11th graders.

JCS fosters an atmosphere of trust, respect and professionalism through staff forums. Teachers are evaluated for professional growth. STAR Teacher job descriptions are incorporated into the rubric for measuring teacher performance. Teachers are allowed to perform a self-assessment that aligns to the STAR rubric, and they meet with their supervisor twice annually to receive feedback. Teachers and staff recognize each other’s growths and successes through these forums and notes are taken during these meetings to record the share outs. In the weekly email to staff, the ED will often include “Kudos” to staff members who have gone above and beyond. JCS also recognizes a “Newbie Teacher” of the year as well as outstanding teachers, and classified staff.

### **E3. Personal and Academic Support Criterion**

To what extent do all students receive appropriate academic support and intervention to help ensure school, college, and career success.

To what extent do students with special talents and/or needs access to a system of personal support services, activities, and opportunities at the school?

To what extent are these enhanced by business, industry, and the community?

JCS follows the RtI process to ensure students who need additional support get identified and offered the support they need. JCS uses student profiles/ folders with milestones noted. In addition, JCS counselors create newsletters to high school students and parents which are emailed to home study students as well as distributed through the Academies. One area JCS does not participate in is CIF sports, but there is an intramural athletic program. The Visiting Committee was able to interview one student who participates in football, soccer and ultimate Frisbee. Students in this athletic program compete with various neighboring charter schools. High school students meet with counselors once per year and then more by appointment when requested.

JCS offers services such as counseling, articulation services, and health services. When a student needs more than basic services, a staff member completes a concern report to share with the

Safety Net team. This ensures proper documentation of concerns. JCS counselors keep records of community service that is given outside of school.

JCS has a well-known mission and vision statement along with core values shared among the staff and families. Teachers customize assignments for parents to execute with their students on Fridays. They share curriculum guides with parents to offer guidance throughout the year. They have compiled an educational materials resources list for student use. Students also use Google student folders.

JCS keep student profiles and have services in place for students who are EL's or hold IEP's or 504 plans, and for high school students who need extra support. Educational Material Resource funds are used to purchase additional curriculum. IEP students must have written in their IEP that independent study placement is appropriate. Vendors may be used to service students out of the area.

JCS offers tutoring for students in need, using a variety of tutoring programs at each of their sites to meet the needs of all their students. JCS offers all high school students the opportunity to take college level course work at the local community college and if the class is passed, JCS reimburses students for taking the class as well as for books. AP testing is offered, but currently not AP classes.

Students shared their excitement over field trips with their parents and peers such as candle making for colonial units, and an upcoming trip to the Star of India. The Visiting Committee observed such things as live baby chicks in the classroom, student created gardens, ponds and compost. One location reported a partnership with local gardening companies which donated materials for students. Sixth grade students have the option to attend camp at no cost to them at two locations: Pathfinders Ranch and Camp Surf. Fifth and Sixth graders participate in BIZ Town where students get to role play in various careers through a mock economy.

JCS offers intramural athletics where students from all sites, including home study, have the option to participate and compete against nearby charter schools. Students participate in online discussion boards and organized park visits allowing opportunities to socialize collaborate.

## **CATEGORY E: SCHOOL CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH**

### **Areas of strength for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth (if any):**

- JCS implements strategies and processes for the regular involvement of family, business, industry, and the community, including being active partners in the learning/teaching process for all programs. JCS uses business, industry, and community resources to support students, such as professional services, business partnerships, guest speakers, job fairs, field trips to local employers, and evaluation of student projects and classroom presentations.
- The school has existing policies, regulations and uses its resources to ensure a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning. The school has a culture that is characterized by trust, professionalism, high expectations for all students, and a focus on continuous school improvement.
- Students with special talents and/or needs have access to a system of personal support services, activities, and opportunities at the school.
- The school has available adequate services, including referral services, to support students in such areas as health, career, and personal counseling and academic assistance, including an individualized learning plan.
- Strategies are used by the school leadership and staff to develop and implement personalized approaches to learning and alternative instructional options.
- Parents are actively involved in school activities, parent organizations, committees, curriculum development, and individualized student learning outcomes.

### **Key issues for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth (if any):**

- Communication of the programs offered for student in both the local community as well as extracurricular opportunities is inconsistent across programs and sites.
- Streamlined use of communication among all sites and programs is a work in progress.
- The vocational/career technical education options and relationships with local businesses do not yet meet the needs of high school students.
- Families report a strong interest in additional opportunities for home and independent study students to collaborate and socialize together both at school or in the community.

### **Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

Self Study, Focus group interview, Student Interviews, Teacher interviews, Student learning opportunities such as BIZ town in pictures, Butterfly Effect project by Andy Andrews, Binders at each site to showcase various events and student work, Safety Net, outreach materials

## Part B: Schoolwide Strengths and Critical Areas for Follow-up

### Schoolwide Areas of Strength

1. Stakeholders determined the vision, mission and core values/student learning outcomes during the strategic planning process and the strategic planning processes has become an institutionalized part of JCS.
2. JCS has remained fiscally and operationally sound, maintaining a positive relationship with their sponsoring district, and acquiring significant facility assets which will support student learning but with minimal disruption during the acquisition process..
3. Curriculum is easily modified and accommodates students individually.
4. Student/family “voice” and “choice” in instruction, academies, programs, and curriculum.
5. Families benefit from academic freedom as they spend more time with their children and become more involved with the content of the academic materials and the methods of instruction necessary for optimal delivery. Students also report that socializing with people from a larger range of ages has widened their intellectual perspectives.
6. Administration, students, staff and parents communicate regarding students’ progress effectively via email or in person and are thus able to modify instruction and provide timely support.
7. JCS provides a wide variety of assessment tools, both standardized and authentic, that are regularly utilized within all programs and which allow the school to identify students who are not meeting grade level standards.
8. The school has existing policies, regulations and uses its resources to ensure a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning. The school has a culture that is characterized by trust, professionalism, high expectations for all students, and a focus on continuous school improvement.
9. Parents are actively involved in school activities, parent organizations, committees, curriculum development, and individualized student learning outcomes.

### Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up

The Visiting Committee concurs with the school’s identified areas that are outlined in the schoolwide action plan. These are summarized below:

1. Teachers need focused professional development in the areas of data analysis and data-based decision making, including by program, learning sites, and class roster, as well as career and college indicators.
2. The vocational/career technical education options and relationships with local businesses do not yet meet the needs of high school students. Increasing these opportunities will address the critical learner need of “supporting students to become life-long learners” and will improve career and college readiness for all students.

In addition, the Visiting Committee has identified areas that need to be strengthened:

3. Development and use of an aligned K - 12 Scope and Sequence to create relevant, school wide, benchmark assessments in all core courses, grade levels, and programs will enhance student learning and schoolwide outcomes.

4. There are limited opportunities to see and experience different programs in order to understand instructional difference. Increasing this practice will support teachers, improve instruction, and help create consistency and equity across the school's various programs.

## **Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement**

The schoolwide action plan is very detailed and addressed each Critical Learner Need identified by the school through the use of multiple specific SMART Objectives for each CLN. Objectives include such items as: development of life skills courses and assessments for these skills; increased preparation and participation in College Board exams including PSAT and SAT; implementation of a new math curriculum and supports and resources; increased professional development for math and reading and literacy; implementation of common benchmark math assessments; increased common reading and writing assessments; and improved analysis of assessment data in math and reading.

The Action Plan identifies three Critical Learner Needs with associated data analysis, rationale, action steps, timelines, responsible persons, resources, growth targets, and desired outcomes. The plan includes measurement, monitoring, communication, and target improvement levels. The plan could be enhanced by showing the alignment to the school's LCAP goals. The specific goals support increased student achievement through improvement of student's 21st century skills, increased preparation for college and careers, and improvement in student math and reading skills.

The Action Plan is reasonable in terms of scope and time. All instructional staff members and administrators have responsibility for various items and areas of the Action Plan and are committed to successful implementation of the plan. Resources are available to implement the Action Plan and various school initiatives are integrated into the plan. The Plan includes professional development for staff so that the initiatives can be implemented successfully. The school has demonstrated in the past that it can effectively implement and update its Action Plans and it is expected that this will continue. Leadership has put processes into place to follow up and monitor the Action Plan, in coordination with monitoring of other major initiatives, such as the LCAP. These processes have been shown to be effective and are part of the school culture of continual improvement and their focus on accountability.

Factors that will support continued school improvement include JCS Leadership's capacity and stability and their dedication to student centered decision making. In addition, JCS teachers and staff demonstrate that they are enthusiastic and very committed to the school's core values. Communication is good throughout the organization, and improvements in communication are ongoing. High levels of parental support and involvement will also lead to success in implementation.

Possible impediments include limited financial resources, challenges due to the wide geographic area served, and the level of long term work that will be required.

In summary, the school is making major positive changes in the lives of the families and children

in the community. The school has successfully implemented many new initiatives, innovations and programs in recent years and has continued to see positive results and continued school growth. As the school further improves structures and strategies, along with continued critical analysis of schoolwide outcomes, additional successes will be evident. The commitment by the Julian Charter School to its mission and core values and the caring attention given to students by staff and parents will continue to lead to high student achievement and to an organization that continually evolves and embraces self-examination.