

Legacy Project – Castro Middle School

Title of Project: Aspirations Day

Description of the Project: Aspirations Day is Castro's annual career exploration event. It is an all-school event that takes place toward the end of the school year and is intended to be a culmination of activities presented throughout the school year that help student develop a sense of who they are and who they might become. Our hope is that our students will be moving toward the Aspirations quadrant and developing the ability to dream and set goals for the future while being inspired in the present to reach those dreams. We know that students who are inspired in the present will be more engaged and successful students and the goal of Aspirations Day is to help students begin to envision a future of possibility for themselves. We would like our students to be thinking not only about *what* they will do, but also *what kind of people* they would like to become.

Aspirations Day is organized as a career fair with many booths representing different career fields. We incorporate student voice into the event by conducting a survey during the planning phase to gather student input about their interests, strengths and abilities. We also engage a group of 3-4 students to be part of the planning team that meets for several months to plan and coordinate the event. This year, our intention is to involve families by including professionals from our school community and outreach has been conducted to share about the event with parents and seek volunteers from within our families. We involve the community by inviting community partners to represent career fields and seek donations from organizations and businesses in our local community. We incorporate the concepts of student voice by encouraging the professionals who participate to not only share about the activities and preparation for their careers, but also to include related values, skills and personality traits that have led them to and have helped them be successful in their careers.

Outcomes: We would hope to see students develop a deeper sense of self and an increase in their aspirations for the future as measured by the Student Voice Survey. We would also like to see increased involvement from students in the planning and implementation of the event. As we incorporate more student voice elements into the event, we hope the outcome will be a more engaging and transformative event for students and the professionals who participate.



Evidence:

Evidence also includes the pre-event student interest survey, event flyer and printed activity that students completed during the event last school year.

Next Steps:

- Use Advisory class to engage students in self-exploration activities that encourage reflection on their values, interests, personality traits and goals. These activities would occur periodically throughout the school year. Aspirations Day would then be the culminating activity for this year of exploration.
- Open the Aspirations Day planning team to all students, rather than just Leadership or AVID students, and adjust the ratio of students to adults on the planning team (i.e., include more students) in order to amplify student voice in the event planning.
- Provide a pre-event survey to the professionals that solicits some personal information (for example, 3 words that describe you, a defining moment that led you to choose your profession) that could be highlighted during the event (for example, each booth could have the person's responses in a visual format so that students could be reading information as well as interacting with the professionals)
- Make a more explicit attempt to Incorporate the 8 Conditions of Student Voice into all of the Aspiration Day activities