

DEMOCRACY PREP

AT THE AGASSI CAMPUS



Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus 2020-2021 Academic Report

Submitted September 17, 2021 to the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority

BASIC INFORMATION

Basic Information	
Name of charter school	Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus
Grade level(s) to be served in 2021-2022	K-12
2020-2021 enrollment (as of June 30, 2021)	1,068
Projected enrollment for 2021-2022	1,120
Current waiting list for 2021-2022	250
Website address	http://dpac.democracyprep.org
Name of board president	Joseph Morgan
Board president email address	Joseph.morgan@unlv.edu
Board president phone number	702.895.3329
Name of school leader	Adam Johnson
School leader email address	adam.johnson@democracyprep.org
School leader phone number	347.504.5354

PROGRAM DESIGN, INSTRUCTION, & ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

1.1 MISSION AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

The mission of Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus (DPAC) is to educate responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship.

Consistent with other schools in the Democracy Prep Public Schools network (DPPS), DPAC implements the five common elements of a high expectations, high support school:

- **Rigorous college-prep academics** – The academically rigorous, research-proven program includes the core subjects, with a focus on literacy, as well as engaging electives such as art, music, and physical education;
- **More time to learn** – The school year includes more than 180 days of instruction, and students in need of additional individual support have the ability to attend after school tutoring and on additional Saturdays;
- **Data-driven decision-making** – DPAC utilizes a sophisticated feedback loop of frequent data collection and analysis including a network-wide data tool, interim assessments, and comparative academic measures to drive effective instruction;
- **Safe and supportive school culture** – The DPAC school culture is based on the “DREAM Values” according to which all staff and students live: Discipline, Respect, Enthusiasm, Accountability, and Maturity; and
- **Exemplary talent** – DPAC has an extremely selective staff application process, and all staff members undergo extensive performance reviews and receive weekly professional development during the school year and three weeks of PD during the summer.

In addition to featuring the above common elements of high expectations, high support schools, DPAC is unique in its commitment to three other key design elements:

- **Commitment to educating all students, in all subjects, in all grades** – DPAC actively recruits students at risk of academic failure, including those with Multilingual Learner classifications, IEPs, and 504 plans, and strives to enroll students in high-needs subgroups in numbers similar or greater than those in traditional public schools. High support is provided for students to achieve high expectations.

- **Authentic civic leadership and engagement** – DPAC places an explicit focus on preparing scholars to become civic leaders in their communities through civic initiatives, community engagement, as well as mandatory speech and debate; and
- **Running schools on public funds** – DPAC operates the core programs on the public funds it receives from the city, state, and federal government.

1.2. INSTRUCTION

In the 2020-2021 school year, approximately 125 of DPAC Elementary’s 497 students opted into participating in DPAC’s hybrid model once this option was available in March 2021. Any student was allowed to opt into the hybrid option -- scholars with specific educational needs were encouraged to participate. Throughout the school year, DPAC sought to maximize the amount of in-person instruction. However, if families desired to opt into a virtual model, it was available for them the entire year.

Throughout the pandemic, DPAC supported scholars through a variety of efforts and initiatives. DPAC provided direct instruction to all scholars (either virtual or hybrid). Additionally, DPAC leveraged online programs to support scholars in virtual learning, including Nearpod, MobyMax, and iXL. These educational platforms were also used to make in-person learning as effective as possible. DPAC also leveraged incentive programs to foster scholar engagement throughout virtual and hybrid instruction. Finally, scholars and families were provided with tools to support scholar learning, including providing every scholar with their own computer and providing students and families with hotspots as needed.

1.3. ACADEMIC RESULTS

The data in the table below outlines the percentages of scholars within each grade level who performed on grade level according to the MAP assessment during winter 2020 and spring 2021. Scholars who perform on grade level according to MAP are performing at a level that indicates that they are on track for college success.

Assessment	Interim Assessment			End of Year Assessment		
	Below	On	Above	Below	On	Above
Percentage of Students:						
ELA K	29%	16%	55%	30%	16%	54%
ELA 1	46%	13%	41%	40%	29%	31%
ELA 2	43%	23%	34%	52%	15%	33%
ELA 3	54%	21%	25%	53%	19%	28%
ELA 4	58%	14%	28%	56%	21%	23%

ELA 5	64%	17%	19%	68%	24%	8%
MAT K	25%	12%	63%	40%	9%	51%
MAT 1	44%	16%	40%	51%	20%	29%
MAT 2	37%	17%	46%	55%	19%	26%
MAT 3	60%	16%	24%	61%	19%	20%
MAT 4	59%	28%	13%	79%	16%	5%
MAT 5	65%	27%	8%	81%	14%	5%

While these numbers are lower than the proficiency rates that have historically been seen at Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus, they must be understood through the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Two analyses conducted by NWEA and McKinsey found that, overall, students in grades 3-8 fell behind during the 2020-2021 school year due to the pandemic, with students of color and those from low-income families experiencing higher amounts of learning loss. In general, 3rd to 8th graders fell "six percentile points behind in reading and eight to twelve points behind in math, with younger students faring worse than their older peers." Additionally, "Black, Latino, and Native American students and students in high-poverty schools also saw bigger drops than those in more affluent schools."¹ While many scholars experienced decreases in academic performance as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, these impacts were particularly profound at schools like Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus, which serves a higher proportion of subgroups that experienced disproportionate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teachers and leaders evaluated the results of other assessments using a variety of data tools, including the Edulastic Insights tools available in the Edulastic platform. From their data analysis, remediation plans were developed to support at-risk scholars and any scholars who were otherwise struggling academically. Tutoring and additional academic supports were made available to scholars who struggled on assessments. The results were also shared with the Democracy Prep Public Schools Academics team, who adjusted curriculum based on the results. The Edulastic Insight platform allows us to analyze data by subgroup; this allows us to explicitly track subgroup progress in order to ensure that all scholars are being served equitably.

Appendix A shows visualizations of DPAC’s available SBAC data. Some important considerations:

- DPAC’s participation rate for elementary students was less than 43% for the SBAC math & ELA exam. This participation leads to an incomplete picture of student performance

Despite the challenges with overall proficiency on our SBAC exam, there were highlights with DPAC elementary’s growth medians. The Medians above a 50 indicate a higher positive response to instruction compared to their peers. The specific elementary subgroup growth medians to celebrate are indicated below:

- English Learner Math Growth Median = 60

¹ <https://www.chalkbeat.org/2021/7/28/22596904/pandemic-covid-school-learning-loss-nwea-mckinsey>

- Black ELA Growth Median = 51

Unfortunately, national data show that children in specific subgroups experienced higher levels of regression within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. As seen from the demographic data below (which represents data from the 2020-2021 school year), scholars from these subgroups embody the majority of Democracy Prep’s scholars:

- Approximately 93% of DPAC scholars were Black or Latinx.
- More than 85% of DPAC students were economically disadvantaged (as determined by FRL status)
- 11% qualified for Special Education (SPED) services
- 11% were identified as Multilingual Learners (MLL)
- Approximately 1.5% of DPAC scholars were living in temporary housing

Given Democracy Prep’s firm commitment to serving scholars who are traditionally underserved by our nation’s education system, the academic obstacles that were seen by scholars throughout the pandemic were disproportionately experienced by the scholars we serve. Where we see celebrations in our academic data, we view them as exceptional and as potential best practices to replicate.

1.4. ASSESSMENTS

Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus has a variety of data sources to ensure there is robust understanding of scholar progress.

We use the nationally normed NWEA MAP Assessment to track scholar data, along with a variety of internal assessments and aligned curricular assessments. Scholars in grades 3-5 take internal end of trimester assessments aligned to their courses and curriculum. Scholars in all grade levels take module/unit assessments to track progress on their specific curriculum. All assessments in 2020-2021 were administered digitally to ensure equitable assessment experiences for all scholars. The Democracy Prep Public Schools Academics team provided the assessments in a digitized format and most assessments were taken on the Edulastic platform. The platform allows for question and answer randomization. Teachers also monitored scholars completing assessments using the GoGuardian digital tool to view scholar screens at all times during testing. GoGuardian allowed for assessments to be administered with fidelity even in a virtual environment.

Grade Level	Test	Description of Test	Type
K-5	Exit Tickets, in-class checks for understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In-class strategic questioning ● Provides feedback to teachers about the class, enabling them to adjust their lessons in real time 	Formative
K-5	Unit Exams/Projects/Labs (Reading, Writing, Math, Science, History)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mid- and/or End-of-Unit CCSS aligned exams ● Culminating essays or projects ● Science labs 	Formative Summative

1-5	Diagnostic Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democracy Prep Public Schools-created diagnostic assessments were administered in ELA and Math to plan strategic instruction for the 2020-2021 school year 	Diagnostic
3-5	Trimester Exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curricular-aligned, cumulative assessments administered at the end of each Trimester Must earn a passing grade on Trimester 3 exam to pass the course in middle and high school 	Summative

ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

2.1. LEARNING ACCELERATION

The **Democracy Prep Learning Acceleration Plan** outlined below is grounded in the coherence of literary and mathematical curricular skills and standards across grade levels K through 12. This is a first step in prioritizing learning acceleration to address the social, economic, and racial inequities that have existed long before the pandemic.

Our Goal: We will accelerate learning so scholars end the 2021-2022 school year at or above grade level.
Our Plan: Teach the most important 85-90% of grade level content in each course. Use the other 10-15% of the year to provide timely support before, during and after lessons. Provide targeted, small group support outside of lessons using tutoring and, where possible, intersessions.

Our Learning Acceleration Plan has three instructional pillars:

1. Just in Time Supports
2. Tutoring and Response to Intervention (RTI)
3. Using Scholar Data

Our prioritized commitments will ensure greater success in achieving our tremendous academic goal for the 2021-2022 school year.

Just in Time Supports

Our first pillar encapsulates instructional expectations: *Just in Time Supports*. We are committed to providing additional time within core instruction to engage scholars in key prerequisite standards and skills from prior grades while simultaneously maintaining a majority of time spent on grade-level content.

Before a Lesson [Pre-Teaching]	
Purpose	To ensure that scholars have mastered the essential prerequisite skills or knowledge needed to access a unit
Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full lesson ● ~12 days per academic year ● Created by the DPPS Academic Team

The first type of ‘just in time’ support occurs at the start of a unit. Pre-teaching lessons focus on approximately 1-2 prerequisite skills that scholars must have before they can understand and access the unit as a whole. For example, scholars cannot write a strong essay unless they already know how to write a strong paragraph. Similarly, scholars will struggle to solve equations that contain variables on both sides of an expression if they do not have the conceptual knowledge and procedural fluency to solve basic algebraic expressions.

Teachers will use these pre-teaching lessons (which may also include pre-tests) to inform additional ‘just in time’ supports for the remainder of the unit. The data collected during pre-teaching lessons will drive instruction - specifically individualized supports and small group work.

The DPPS Academics team has intentionally paced units of study for the 2021-2022 school year to incorporate approximately 12 pre-teach days. (*Note: The number of days may vary by content and unit depending on the prerequisite standards.*)

During a Lesson [Scaffolding]	
Purpose	To provide scaffolds that help scholars access an individual lesson
Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Part of a lesson ● Varies in number [dependent on scholar/class need] ● Created by Teachers

The second type of ‘just in time’ support occurs during a lesson. This type of scaffolding provides scholars with support at the point-of-use. Traditionally, this type of intervention provides access for supporting standards and/or skills and may take the form of graphic organizers, step-by-step approach to solving multi-step problems, visual anchors, sentence starters, and many more. This may also include more direct support to compensate for missing skills.

Teachers create scaffolds for scholars in response to classroom data based on exit tickets, ‘do-now’ activities, pre-tests, and any other observational data points that inform instruction. Teachers will use these types of ‘just in time’ supports to help bridge small knowledge gaps and proactively address misconceptions.

Tutoring and Response to Intervention (RTI)

Our second pillar empowers teachers and leaders to identify the provided tools that will widen the path to great instruction for all scholars: Tutoring and Response to Intervention. We are committed to providing all scholars with tutoring support whether it is to remediate OR extend learning. Every scholar will have clearly identified academic goals that are tailored to support them in meeting or exceeding grade level expectations. As such, tutoring and RTI require intentional, on-going progress monitoring to ensure greater scholar mastery and success.

Tutoring Requirments

- All scholars have a strategic placement during academic support blocks where they're working on discrete skills.
- Teachers submit tutoring plans and receive feedback on both plans and instruction.
- Tutoring groups are revisited at least once every six weeks and data are used to move scholars between groups or make new groups.
- Universal screeners are used to create initial groups for tutoring.

DPSS will create the strong, high-quality instructional materials DPAC will use. The provided materials set an instructional framework and guidance for the foundation for tutoring and RTI at DPAC Elementary.

Intersession Instruction

For the 2021-2022 school year, we are committed to addressing unfinished learning by prioritizing learning acceleration. In addition to tutoring during the school day, we are excited to offer additional academic programming called "Intersessions."

Intersession days are extensively planned and targeted instructional days that occur outside regularly scheduled programming to support our most academically struggling scholars across K-12. Tutors will provide additional instructional support to designated scholars from 8:00am to 1:00pm during Intersession days.

Intersession Dates:

Saturday Sessions	Winter/Spring Sessions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Intersession #1: 10/9/21● Intersession #2: 10/16/21● Intersession #3: 10/23/21● Intersession #4: 11/6/21● Intersession #5: 11/13/21● Intersession #6: 2/26/22● Intersession #7: 5/21/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Winter Intersession: 1/4/22 - 1/7/22* <p><i>*1/4/22 - 1/7/22 will be in the afternoon <u>only</u></i></p>

Using Scholar Data

Our third pillar supports our instructional expectations: Using Scholar Data. We are committed to analyzing data at minimum every two weeks to ensure effective support to our scholars, families, and teachers. Scholars will get regular, actionable feedback on their progress against grade-level expectations.

Data is an essential lever in our learning acceleration plan. Data may vary from qualitative to quantitative from formal assessments to other sources of data like exit tickets or classwork assignments. We will leverage a variety of structures and protocols for data collection and analysis in goal setting and progress monitoring.

