

American Preparatory Academy

Title IV, part A Programmatic Monitoring Report March 2023

Overview

The Utah State Board of Education Title IV, part A staff monitored American Preparatory Academy's programmatic use of funds in March 2023. This report outlines the observations, evidence, and any findings or recommendations from that site visit.

American Preparatory Academy (APA) self-describes as a data-driven organization that provides rigorous courses with the mission that every child that enters an APA campus will be able to graduate with open doors to whichever higher ed path the student chooses. Part of a classical education model is the principle of continued improvement—"the work is never done!" APA schools are constantly focused on a journey of continuous improvement. They believe that change must come from a logical response to data. Choices for change are based on study and analysis of data and their program.

Goals

APA has three main goals for their use of Title IV, part A funds. Each goal has a series of action steps that align with the three Title IV, part A categories of Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities, Safe and Healthy Students, and Effective Use of Technology. The goals are outlined below.

1. Academic Coordinator at Draper 2 provides a support structure to ensure student access to grade-level core standards, including team-based problem solving, targeted interventions aligned to students' needs, and data-based decision-making. Specifically, academic coordinators:
 - Provide relevant and timely data utilized in collaborative teacher processes to ensure learning is accelerated (and learning loss mitigated) through appropriate, individualized placement of students

at their precise instructional level for reading, spelling, and math instruction.

- Provide supplemental, small-group, achievement-level instruction to students.
 - Provide professional learning and coaching support to increase content and pedagogical knowledge of teachers and instructors.
 - Assist the school's administrative director in communicating opportunities for parent involvement.
 - Provide outreach to parents and families to increase family engagement within the school.
 - Provide behavior coaching to students to address matters detrimental to academic outcomes and school culture while building relationships of trust with students and parents.
 - Provide professional learning to increase positive family and student communications/services among admin, teachers, office support staff, and families.
 - Support district-wide approaches for using technology to inform instruction, support teacher collaboration, and personalize learning by managing student performance data.
2. Student Ambassador/Builder: videos, available to teachers throughout the district, will provide these related supports:
- Coordinated instruction supporting character education and social emotional learning (SEL) by providing instruction on civics topics such as Constitution Day and character virtues.
 - APA culture-specific SEL videos to help students self-regulate, set goals, show empathy for others, establish positive relationships, etc..
 - Videos related to student empowerment to strengthen student self-advocacy and refusal skills.
 - Coordinated training for students accessible by teachers and instructors to provide relevant and timely information in the classroom on topics relevant to student academic progress and well-being.
3. Parent Empowerment: videos, available to parents and community members throughout the district, will provide these related supports:

- Disseminating relevant and timely information on topics to improve student academic achievement, such as “How to Access Your Students Grades in ALMA” or “The Many Ways to Volunteer at APA.”
- Disseminating relevant and timely information on topics to improve student safety and well-being, such as “Suicide Prevention and Intervention,” “Internet Safety,” and “Child Trafficking and Abuse.”
- Convenient and relevant parent information on topics relevant to a student’s individual academic progress and well-being when they need it, in English and in Spanish.

The majority of funds are used for the salary of the Academic Coordinator in the Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities area. They are meeting the minimum requirements for spending in each category.

Highlights

APA has created a character development curriculum known as the Builder Program. This program outlines core values of a “builder” that include self-confidence, gratitude, service, respect, honesty, and constant learning. Each month is dedicated to a specific builder theme as well to support the competencies of the character development or “Builder Theme.”

The Academic Coordinator mentors and coaches new staff on the Builder Program and supports the implementation of the program school-wide. During our observation, the Coordinator spent about 30 minutes coaching a new first year teacher on a phonics lesson. Throughout the coaching session, both the new teacher and the class of students displayed high levels of engagement as they all learned together. After the session, while interviewing the Coordinator, they expressed how in addition to the mentoring and coaching, they like to focus on the use of restorative practices and Love & Logic in the classroom. Furthermore, each week the Coordinator compiles student data on mastery towards learning goals. They complete lesson progress charts and analyze where each student is and why. This helps to determine the appropriate lessons and goals for each student. This data is used to directly reflect on the student’s wellness, behavior, and

absenteeism, which if necessary can be shared with mental health professionals in the school to make a process plan for the student.

The Academic Coordinator works closely with both teachers and students to create safe learning environments, specifically focussing on bullying and harassment prevention. Students who require additional support may work with the Academic Coordinator to find a solution and practice using “builder words” to correct the behaviors.

The majority of the Academic Coordinator’s time is spent supporting student’s academic success (well-rounded educational opportunities). The Coordinator actively integrates Social Emotional Learning practices into the school environment to foster behaviors and characteristics that align with their Builder Program. Additionally, the Coordinator uses a portion of their time to teach and reinforce recess safety.

The school’s Academic Director supports the creation of a [video series](#) that aims to promote the school’s Builder Program through teaching history, civics, safe and healthy practices, such as anti drug use, etc..

Findings and Recommendations

Based on the information shared during the monitoring visit at the APA campus, it was found that the APA is actively working toward the goals listed above. Upon the interview with the Academic Coordinator, we found that most of her time was spent improving Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities. The fiscal year (FY) 2022 application allocated 65% of funds to be spent on Safe and Healthy Students, 25% on Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities, and 10% on Effective Use of Technology. However, the actual breakdown of the grant funds spent in each category differs. We recommended a budget revision of grant spending breakdown percentages for their 2023 application. There were findings that the Academic Coordinator hired as part of the APA’s action plan to achieve their goals was more accurately spending 60% of time/funds in Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities and 30% in the Safe and Healthy Students category. Effective Use of Technology remains approximately 10% of the APA’s goal, as outlined in the goal section.

Going forward, the corrective action taken was to do a partial budget revision for the FY23 application. This action could only be partially revised due to an expenditure and reimbursement of 42% of the funds in the Safe and Health Students category prior to the monitoring visit. This resulted in a 10% gap between the work completed in the Title IV part A category of Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities and the category in which funds were spent which was Safe and Healthy Students, resulting in the FY23 budget categories to be split as 55% Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities, 42% Safe and Health Students, and 3% Effective Uses of Technology for APA.

The final recommendation is for future applications from APA to reflect more in Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities FY24 to reflect the 60% WR and 30% SH and 10% tech identified by the academic coordinator.

Next Steps

APA will continue working towards set goals and utilizing Title IV, part A funds for their academic coordinator. Future applications will more accurately reflect the responsibilities for their academic coordinator and the roles they perform, 60% Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities and 30% Safe and Healthy Students. APA will submit the required annual Evaluation Tracker which includes goals and the evidence of achieving those goals.

Data and Photos

During the site visit APA shared the results of their parent survey as can be seen here: [APA Parent Survey Results](#). This data is used to inform the goals and action plans APA will utilize as part of their Title IV, part A program.

In addition, APA has outlined the monitoring activities as seen here: [APA Title IV, part A Monitoring Activities](#). This detailed document outlines the goals and actions associated with each goal as part of their Title IV, part A plan.

[Builder Program](#) practices are displayed around the school and classrooms. Samples below.

