



*Where Students
RISE!*

Salida del Sol Academy

2015.2016 Annual Report

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Executive Overview

Salida del Sol Academy (SDSA) opened in east Greeley on September 2nd, 2014, as a new public charter school and as the first dual-language immersion school for K-8 students in Greeley, Weld School District Six (SD6), and Weld County. Salida del Sol Academy opened a new building with a new methodology and begun its second year, 2015-2016, of operation. The overarching goal was to implement our mission statement:

- *Salida del Sol Academy will provide a supportive and challenging, personalized bilingual, multicultural education for students from kindergarten through eighth grade. Our students will demonstrate pride, self-confidence, mutual respect and acquire an academic foundation necessary to become successful leaders.*

Strategies developed by SDSA are committed to developing fully bilingual and biliterate students who have the knowledge and skills necessary to become contributing citizens in our diverse society, and to compete and succeed in the 21st century global economy. Students who enter our school are expected to become fully literate in both Spanish and English, and be fully proficient in math, science, and social studies. Gómez & Gómez Dual Language Enrichment (DLE) was chosen because of demonstrated evidence based success. This program has been implemented successfully in several districts in the country. In order to be as successful as those districts, it was concluded by the SDSA Board that faithful implementation is required. In the initial year of opening, professional development included class observations, coaching and training during the school year by DLE staff, including intensive training prior to the beginning of each school year. In 2015.2016, training was provided again before the school year began. DLE staff traveled to SDSA to provide training and evaluation of implementation as well as ongoing consultation by phone and email. DLE provided formal observation during each academic year.

Significant steps achieved include:

- ✓ Increased enrollment to 700+ students in Year 2: 60% English Language Learners and 90% Free and Reduced Lunch
- ✓ Hired staff who are 100% “highly qualified” and 90% bilingual and biliterate
- ✓ Implemented the Gómez & Gómez Dual Language Enrichment (DLE) methodology as the main component in the professional development plan to maintain a sustainable learning environment that adheres to evidence-based methodology, curriculum, and governance;
- ✓ Established Padres Unidos (parent group) as an organized group governed by a set of bylaws and an elected board
- ✓ Achieved financial goals including permanent financing and fundraising;
- ✓ Created a performance management plan that includes internal assessment plan for data collection to insure student exit at the 8th grade at grade level or above.

By the Numbers

BY THE NUMBERS	
Student population	705
White	03.26%
Hispanic	96.45%
Black	0.00%
Pacific Islander / Asian	0.00%
American Indian	0.28%

- 60% of students are English Language Learners (ELL)
- 90% of students qualify for free and reduced meals
- 90% of SDSA staff are bilingual and biliterate
- 95% of parents participated in teacher/parent conferences
- 100% of teachers rated as highly qualified

Enrollment increased from 640 students in 2014.2015 to 705 in 2015.2016. The majority of students were from the surrounding neighborhood; additional students came from north Greeley and the City of Evans. We hope and expect to continue to attract students from throughout the Greeley/Evans community. There are families who wish to attend SDSA, however, the lack of transportation to our school is a major obstacle to their enrollment. SDSA recognized this barrier and secured grant funding and donations to purchase school buses. SDSA intends to provide morning and afternoon transportation which should positively impact enrollment.

Gómez & Gómez Dual Language Enrichment Methodology

The Professional Development plan has been expanded to include comprehensive and reflective training that addresses some very specific needs. Implementation of Gómez & Gómez requires staff that knows the key concepts, the application of those concepts, how to measure for effectiveness in implementing those concepts, and dynamic response to classroom teachers' needs for instructional strategies in implementing methodology and curriculum. In order to achieve that result, the use of Richard DuFour Personal Learning Community method (PLC) was determined to be a vehicle for collaboration and management of strategies based on assessments. Training in the PLC method has been implemented as part of the professional development and performance management plans. In the process of completing performance management analysis, it became evident that training in data management including interpretation of results, and use of evaluation rubrics was necessary to provide needed information. Students that are learning in a dual language environment need to be assessed with the understanding that their language development transfers into their writing development. For instance, "code switching" (using words from one language in a writing of another language) is a natural behavior that should be accounted for as positive. This resulted in Literacy Squared being identified and adopted for adaptation of an evaluative writing rubric that provided comprehensive feedback for student integration of language into writing.

Successful implementation of the professional development plan is heavily dependent upon the provision of first-rate professional development in the use of each model, as well as in creative ways to integrate and articulate results. Resources have been established through trainings in Gómez & Gómez, PLC and Literacy Squared as a priority as well as data management for administrative staff. Technology training for staff has been integrated into all trainings as this is an integral part of the delivery method for our teachers to students, as each student has an individual Chromebooks for school use.

Professional Development occurred during Monday afternoons for two hours. Analysis is now being completed as to whether day long monthly trainings would provide better in depth training. All instructional staff members will participate in a three-year long training to cultivate collaborative practices in order to develop standards based lesson plans and guided instruction based on student performance. The collaborative approach based on the PLC, will require teachers to collaborate to create curriculum maps based on standards, as well as formative assessments. During the 2nd year, teachers will collaborate to create curriculum maps based on standards as well as formative assessments. During the 3rd year, teachers will refine lessons and formative assessments and be able to implement peer-to-peer class observations that will serve them in gaining knowledge of best practices.

When is year 1, 2, 3 above?

Professional development for staff is resourced through Gómez & Gómez, the Literacy Squared program as well as offerings provided by the authorizer, League of Charter Schools, BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) and other offerings as appropriate. The SDSA Principal and Assistant Principals will provide the year-long training in the PLC process.

Parent Engagement

Padres Unidos is the parent group representing the families of SDSA. The parent group was established in November, 2015. Padres Unidos is governed by a set of bylaws with elected representatives. The first elected board for Padres Unidos:

- President – Mary Paz Corral
- Vice-President – Marisol Meza
- Treasurer – Anna Cruz
- Secretary – Ursula Haney and Karina Nieto

Padres Unidos and school leadership worked together to bring forth a number of topics educational in nature and information about the services available in our community. Parent meetings are held once a month at the school during the school year. A number of service agencies like Weld County Health Department, Northrange Behavioral Health, PASO of United Way and a number of other entities presented at these meetings. SDSA conducted a Family Literacy Night to engage parents along with their child to learn how to work together for homework assignments.

Padres Unidos also served as a fundraising entity and provided support in funding several school events. Their #1 goal for the 2015.2016 school year was to raise funds for a school marquee that will promote and display SDSA school news and events.

Marzano Research Laboratory Parent Survey:

School parents, guardians, and other stakeholders at Salida del Sol Academy were asked to respond to an online survey designed to gauge the school's initial status on the first level of the High Reliability Schools (HRS) framework. The survey had five response choices ordered from greatest disagreement to greatest agreement (numeric values noted in parentheses): strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither disagree nor agree (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). School stakeholders were asked to anonymously rate their level of agreement with statements related to each leading indicator.

The following table summarizes the overall means for each leading indicator. These eight leading indicators provide guidelines for schools wishing to work on the first level of the HRS framework and which are progressing through that level. **How many participated?**

Overall Means for Level 1 Leading Indicators

Leading Indicator	Parent/Guardian	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.1: The faculty and staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	4.19	0.05
1.2: Students, parents, and the community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	4.12	0.11
1.3: Teachers have formal roles in the decision-making process regarding school initiatives.	4.12	0.00
1.4: Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction, and the achievement of all students.	4.03	0.18
1.5: Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	3.95	0.03
1.6: Students, parents, and the community have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	3.84	0.14
1.7: The success of the whole school, as well as individuals within the school, is appropriately acknowledged.	4.00	0.04
1.8: The fiscal, operational, and technological resources of the school are managed in a way that directly supports teachers.	4.08	0.09

Note. M = arithmetic mean; SD = standard deviation; N = 92 parents took survey (33 English & 59 Spanish)

Table indicates that the parents/guardians' overall means ranged from 3.84 (leading indicator 1.6) to 4.19 (leading indicator 1.1).

Means of 4.00 or greater suggest more respondents agreed with a survey item than disagreed. Conversely, means of 2.00 or less suggest more respondents disagreed than agreed. Means close to 3.0 suggest: (1) similar numbers of respondents who agreed and disagreed with a survey item and/or (2) more respondents who neither disagreed nor agreed with a survey item. Finally, ratings of no

knowledge were treated as missing and excluded from the descriptive statistics. Survey items with lower than anticipated response counts might warrant further consideration.

Grants & Partnerships

Grant	Awarded *	Funding Provided
Bond Family Foundation	\$500.00	Science project - kindergarten grade
Staples Grant	\$1,000.00	Teacher's Closet – school supplies
Jared Polis Teacher Mini Grant	\$1,450.00	Epson Projector for Library
Bessie Minor Smith Foundation	\$2,100.00	K – 3 Spanish level readers
Success Foundation	\$4,250.00	Musical equipment
Xcel Energy Grant	\$10,000.00	Science equipment
Xcel Energy Grant	\$10,000.00	Robotics –middle school
First National Bank	\$15,000.00	Teacher's Closet – school supplies
RACQ Grant	\$39,838.00	New CNG buses – transportation
Walton Grant	\$125,000.00	Technology, security, transportation
Colorado Department of Education	\$196,500.00	Numerous items
Total:	\$405,638.00	FULFILLING OUR MISSION!

* Funds rounded to nearest dollar

Salida del Sol Academy is very fortunate to have grant writers dedicated to SDSA. Through hard work and a collaborative effort with school leadership and the school's grant committee, necessities are identified and priorities are set. SDSA has been able to fill those identified needs.

Community partners have also been an integral part of our SDSA community. In December, 2015, JBS Packing and their employees purchased Christmas presents for the entire kindergarten class. In May, 2016, Tres Margaritas sponsored the SDSA Open House by providing food. Xcel Energy and Texas Roadhouse provided employees to read to our students for Read across America Day. The generosity of these community groups was very much appreciated and SDSA is looking forward to continuing these relationships and adding additional partners.

PARCC & CMAS Update

The Colorado State Assessment system is designed to measure a student's mastery of academic content standards. In December, 2009, Colorado adopted revised academic content standards progressing from early school readiness to postsecondary competencies reflective of both workforce readiness and 21st century skills.

For a full report of SDSA's school performance accountability information required by federal law, please visit the Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) website at www.schoolview.org/performance.asp. This information is also provided as a link on SDSA's website. If you would like a hard copy of this information, contact the Executive Director at 970.347.2323.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Board, in determining the methodology to implement at SDSA, was very cognizant that in order to ensure SDSA would make progress towards its goals, it would be important to obtain, evaluate and apply meaningful data to instructional strategies. When evaluating academic and language data, it was important to consider the research related to academic English acquisition and dual language programs. English Language Learners (ELL) taught in an English only program take between seven and ten years to reach academic proficiency (Collier, 1995). In a recent study, Stanford University researchers used standardized data collected over 13 years to measure the effects of different instructional models of English language acquisition (ELA) on academic success. ELL students, in a dual language immersion program, showed test scores far below those of their peers in English immersion programs in grade 2, but by grade 7 the results reversed. The research and results of the implementation of the Gómez & Gómez methodology as put into practice in over 600 school districts across the nation show much of the same pattern, except that the results reverse sooner. Thus, measurement is paramount to SDSA achieving its goals.

In the second year of operation, the development of a Performance Management plan based on recommendations from Marzano, recommendations from League of Charter School staff, and analysis by the new administrative team was completed. The second year brought a significant change and challenge regarding administration and collection of data and the assessments used. SDSA now uses Alpine Achieve as the data management system and has purchased the assessment programs: TSGold, Aimsweb, IDEL and DIBELS. LasLinks Español was continued. Unit assessments were continued as provided in curriculum and methodology. As described above, additional refinement of evaluative rubrics are part of a three-year plan to refine this process. The Student Information System, Infinite Campus, continues to be used through lease arrangements through the authorizer. SDSA also determined that it would use the PLC and Literacy Squared program in an integrated manner with Gómez & Gómez to implement data driven instructional strategies and methods.

SDSA committed to working to coordinate multiple, complex initiatives into one system that achieves five increasing levels of reliability:

1. Safe and collaborative culture
2. Effective teaching in every classroom
3. Guaranteed and viable curriculum
4. Standards- referenced reporting
5. Competency based education.

This required devoted time and effort on the part of staff and the Board. Given that it is an ambitious plan to merge Gómez & Gómez with PLC and Literacy Squared using data from assessments, SDSA hired an onsite Assessment Facilitator to coordinate integration of assessments with teaching strategies.

Priority content areas for monitoring student progress are reading, writing, and mathematics, as well as language proficiency in both English and Spanish. Two major components drive school improvement efforts at our school:

1. The conclusions that staff members deduce when analyzing student work/data. The analysis is conducted in small groups, at the grade level meetings and during Collaborative Planning using PLC.
2. Classroom Observations that reflect the implementation of the Gómez & Gómez Dual Language framework by administrator observations and annual observation by Gómez & Gómez personnel with recommendations implemented through PLC.

The SDSA Unit Leaders Committee, composed of one team member per grade level, serves as a leadership group and voices each grade level ideas. The group is committed to work with the school administration to implement Professional Learning Communities within their own grade levels and across vertical teams. The plan for the PLC is to triangulate various sets of data, looking for patterns that reveal root causes in order to improve instruction and to focus on what is needed. The implementation of the PLC is the foundation for collaboration and School Improvement.

SUMMARY

Salida del Sol Academy continues to increase enrollment numbers as we move forward into year 3, and believe the interest level will continue to rise. The demographics of our student population is expected to remain relatively stable. Middle school grades will continue to reach capacity as lower grades move upward.

Teacher recruitment and retention is a priority. SDSA will continue to seek bilingual highly qualified teachers for vacancies. By providing support, professional development opportunities and competitive salaries, SDSA will minimize staff turnover in its goal of staff retention.

By implementing Gómez & Gómez, Literacy Squared and PLC, we are building a system that is designed to provide both literacy development and instructional strategies, which will strengthen and deepen literacy development, focused on content areas with an emphasis on academic language development.

Performance management will be ongoing for SDSA in order to finish the integration of data driven analysis with instructional strategies. Successful implementation of the methodology, instructional system, and an assessment system will be heavily dependent upon the provision of first rate professional development in the use of each model, as well as in creative ways to integrate and articulate the designs. SDSA will establish the foundation for the ongoing professional development that will occur throughout the school year.

We believe that this combination will provide the type and variety of research based and results driven instruction that will keep our students fully engaged as they develop high level literacy skills, while simultaneously building and applying content knowledge.

SDSA is looking forward to the future and will continue to strive to fulfill its mission. It is expected that the trend of increasing enrollment will continue. SDSA will remain committed to building upon its foundation with the Gómez and Gómez methodology and integrate student data into our instructional practices.