

San Diego State University

Program in Educational Leadership Dissertation Defense Announcement

Student Name: Broc Arnaiz

Committee Chair: Douglas Fisher, Department of Educational Leadership

Committee Member: Nancy Frey, Department of Educational Leadership

Committee Member: Dominique Smith, Health Sciences High

Title of Dissertation: A Community School Model and Its Effectiveness in Supporting Low-Income Students and Families: A Program Evaluation

Date of Defense: May 29th

Time of Defense: 11:00a

Location of Defense: Health Sciences High and Middle College

Abstract

This program evaluation examined the implementation and perceived impact of the Community School Model at City Heights High School. Grounded in the four pillars of community schools, including Integrated Student Supports, Expanded and Enriched Learning Opportunities, Family and Community Engagement, and Collaborative Leadership Practices, the study explored how the model influenced student experiences, academic engagement, and schoolwide systems. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected through student and teacher surveys, interviews, and document analysis, including Community School Annual Progress Reports submitted to the CDE and charter renewal data. Participants included students, teachers, school leaders, and families.

Findings indicated that the Community School Model contributed to a strong sense of belonging, increased relevance of learning, and expanded access to academic, social-emotional, and career-connected

supports. Stakeholders identified positive relationships, restorative practices, internships, dual enrollment opportunities, and collaborative systems as significant strengths of the model. Quantitative indicators, including high graduation rates and strong college and career readiness outcomes, further supported perceptions of effectiveness. However, findings also revealed ongoing challenges related to attendance, resource allocation, and sustaining consistent implementation across programs. Overall, the study demonstrated the potential of the Community School Model to create equitable student-centered learning environments in high-needs urban school contexts.