



San Jose Unified School District provides DCP with a permanent home!

San Jose Unified School District has always treated DCP as one of its own and this was never clearer than when they decided to convert Hester Elementary School for DCP's use.

The Board of Trustees and Superintendent, Don Iglesias, acted boldly in furnishing DCP with a permanent campus. District staff managed the renovation project focusing on even the smallest details to ensure the facility would meet DCP programmatic needs.

Our new facility—complete with state-of-the-art science labs, a computer lab with wireless access, a college lab for senior students and their families, and spacious classrooms—reflects the spirit of DCP's mission. On December 5, 2005 we moved into our new home and all of us take pride in having a permanent place to call our own.



A legitimate question about any charter school or any nonprofit organization is: "Does it make a difference?"

Downtown College Prep has been in existence for seven years. It was founded by two high school teachers who believed they could help underachieving students prepare to go to and thrive in college.



These seven years have been a learning experience not only for the students, but also the teachers and staff, the board, the chartering school district, and the two founders themselves.

During the first years many students were not sure they could graduate high school and go to college. Few, if any, in their families had done that.

That first graduation commencement was a great time of celebration—for the students, for their families, and for the teachers and staff. There were many smiles and tears as the senior class in their caps and gowns marched to the music of a mariachi band playing "Pomp and Circumstance."

This first class was "an existence proof" that, yes, these students could graduate and go to college. And this generated a confidence in the younger students—some of them siblings—that they could do it also. **And this confidence is spreading to their families and their neighbors.**

The children of DCP's college graduates will grow up in a family environment in which college is anticipated and expected. DCP's impact is broad and ongoing.

*Robert A. Grimm*  
Robert A. Grimm, President

Yes, DCP is making a difference.

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Our students are my best teachers. They have taught me how to defend what is right without reducing anyone's dignity; how to create change through action and leadership; and how to forgive and care for one another. The student-led protest last spring—in response to teacher dismissals—created positive and lasting change for DCP. Today, we have a broader leadership structure with a newly elected Parent Committee, an invigorated Associated Student Body, and an emergent School Site Council. We have redesigned the performance evaluation process to include student and staff input and structured and consistent feedback from managers. Together—students, parents, and staff—we have harnessed the challenges of a year ago to make our school stronger and better.

It is not just convenient that our students' attributes and behaviors during and after the protest will also help them be successful in college. It is by design. DCP's culture and values—hard work, desire, and community—become part of us. That is our strength, and it is why I am certain we will continue to grow and thrive in the year to come.

Thank you for your support and concern throughout the year.

Fondly,  
*Jennifer Andaluz*  
Jennifer Andaluz, Co-founder and Executive Director

"Last year we did a form of civil disobedience...we showed our voice by not taking the test. This year we can make our voice louder by doing even better."  
-Diego Gomez Class of '09

**What Happened**

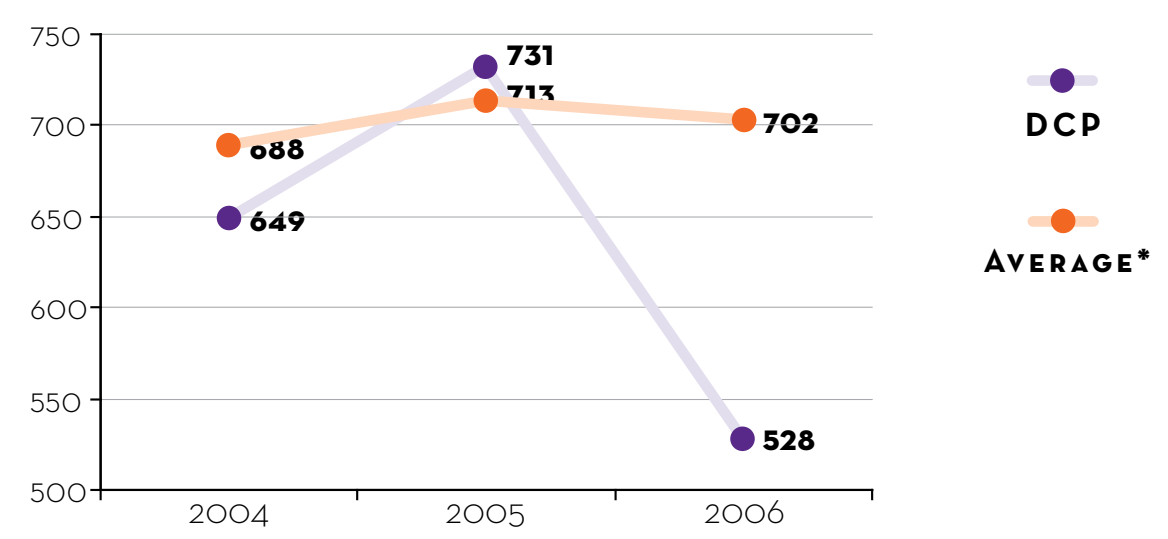
In May of 2006, upon learning that employment contracts for a few teachers would not be renewed for the following year, DCP's student body peacefully walked out of classes during STAR testing—the formal testing process for measuring school performance. "We wanted our teachers back and we didn't get them," said Alondra Juarez '07, a leading organizer of the protest.

As a result, DCP's scores plummeted by 203 points placing DCP at the bottom of all schools unlike the previous year when DCP had the highest growth in the county. Without an accurate picture of student achievement provided by the STAR tests, the process of retooling teaching practices and curriculum would be challenging.

The entire school community was jarred by the experience. Trust was compromised and the need for a clear evaluation process with broader stakeholder participation was necessary. Beginning Summer 2006, the school's stakeholders worked together to address gaps in the organization and restore trust and confidence in the school culture.

**Scores**

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDEX (DCP COMPARED TO LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL AVERAGES)



\*Cupertino High, Santa Teresa High, Wilcox High, Prospect High, Willow Glen High, James Lick High

**Impact**

Evaluation Task Force formed to redesign the performance evaluation process for teachers and staff

Anonymous course evaluations completed by students administered each semester

Elected Parent Committee formed to work with school Principal to ensure consistent communication and broader parent input into school decisions



The California Department of Education—through a rigorous grant process—grants DCP \$250,000 to disseminate its best practices to schools and districts throughout the state.

DCP's Dissemination Project has two goals: to collaborate with districts

and schools looking to

break the cycle of failure for their

underachieving students

and to increase student

access to four-year

colleges and

universities.

The materials

and training that

comprise this

project will help

high schools,

especially large,

urban, comprehensive

high schools, develop

resources to support academic

improvement for students who often fall

through the cracks. Specifically, the project will provide

course curricula and school-wide practices that have proved

successful in propelling low-achieving high school students

back on the college track.

"What impresses me most about DCP is the ethos that we're here to learn - all of us, not just the students. DCP people try things, see what works, build on knowledge to do better the next time, keep looking for ways to improve. DCP people don't waste any energy making excuses or complaining about the problems or pretending that things are OK if they're not. All the energy goes into learning to be a better principal, a better teacher, a better student, a better school."