



About DCP

Desire **C**ommunity **P**ride

Ganas Comunidad Orgullo

Mission

Downtown College Preparatory (DCP) prepares underachieving students who are the first in their family to go to college to thrive at four-year universities.

Why We Exist

As first generation college-bound students, DCP students have an opportunity to become activists in their own education instead of negative statistics. In San Jose, Latinos have the highest drop out rate and of those who do graduate—only 20% have completed courses required for University of California and/or California State University admission.

Who We Are

Founded in 2000 by a group of bold thinking teachers, families, and community members, DCP was the first charter high school in Santa Clara County and one of a handful of schools nationwide to specifically focus on preparing low-achieving first generation students for four-year college success. DCP teachers and students work diligently everyday to break the cycle of academic failure. Long term, DCP students will provide the community with positive role models that prove educational change is not only possible, but achievable.

Target Student

DCP serves urban minority students who have experienced minimal success in large public schools and do not have the basic skills necessary to handle a college preparatory curriculum.

- 97% minority of which 93% are Latino
- 69% qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch (low-income)
- 39% classified as English Language Learners
- 50% of parents are not high school graduates

How We Are Different

DCP's promise to its students and families is to provide not only a rigorous and challenging curriculum but also a small, intimate community where students receive personal, one-on-one attention. In this environment, students learn to think and compute while developing a sense of how they fit into the world and connect to others.

"I learned that whatever you want to accomplish in life, you have to commit and work hard for it. Nothing in life can come to you easily, but as long as you try, you'll see that anything is possible."

*Maggie Villalvazo
Class of 2004, now attending
Dominican University*

What Is Unique

Personal Attention: DCP is a small public charter school where all students get the help they need to succeed. The teacher student ratio is 20:1. All students are enrolled in a college prep curriculum.

Learning Environment: DCP's school day is from 8:45 am to 5:00 pm. Every afternoon, all students work on their homework with teachers and classmates. One-on-one tutoring is available through community volunteers and local college students. Students with low reading and math skills take extra courses to ensure they are prepared for college prep classes. Each student's academic progress is monitored closely.

Culture of Achievement: All students are expected to live up to the school's values of Ganas (Desire), Comunidad (Community), and Orgullo (Pride). Students wear a uniform and are taught how to act professionally. Acting with dignity and mutual respect, both on and off campus, is the expectation for DCP students.

College Ready: DCP students take three years of college prep Math and English, and at least two years of college prep History, Spanish, Science, and Art. DCP also offers Advance Placement (AP) classes in Spanish Literature, English Language, U.S. History, Spanish Language and Calculus. There is a College Guidance Lab on campus staffed by counselors who work individually with all students by advising them about the college application process, financial-aid and all aspects of college life. DCP also maintains a Scholarship Fund that is made available to DCP graduates based on need.

Family Involvement: Collaboration and communication with DCP families about grades and classroom performance is a key part to each student's success. DCP families are involved in every part of the school from teacher conferences to parent groups to activities and events. Families also take part in classes to help them prepare for their students transition to college.

Vision Becomes Reality

DCP's philosophy that change is possible through academic rigor for even the lowest achieving students in our community is now a reality. Overall performance results include:

- Two graduating classes, 100% accepted to four-year colleges
- DCP students exceed both the state and district scores in the High School Exit Exam with 95% of juniors passing both the English and Math tests.
- DCP achieves a 90-point jump in the API score—the highest high school growth in the county.
- DCP is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges
- DCP courses are approved for UC and CSU admission requirements

"I was not a good student. I was always causing trouble and not doing my work. DCP never gave up on me and helped me get into college. When I started at Monterey Bay, a light went on. I now have over a 3.0 GPA."

*Gabriel Hernandez
Class of 2004, now attending
Cal State Monterey Bay*