

CALIBER SCHOOLS

CALIBER: BETA ACADEMY

COMBINING A NO EXCUSES CHARTER WITH BLENDED AND PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

“Nothing in our model is fixed. We are going to start with these key principles and enhance and refine as evidence dictates. We will be data driven, and use data to adapt our curriculum and team as needed to keep to our ambitious targets.”

RON BELLER AND JENNIFER MOSES, CO-FOUNDERS, CALIBER SCHOOLS

KEY FEATURES:

- ✓ New School
- ✓ Rotation and Flex Blended Models
- ✓ Competency-Based Learning
- ✓ Project-Based and Experiential Learning
- ✓ Next Generation Staffing Model
- ✓ Social-Emotional Development

AT A GLANCE:

Start Date: Fall 2014
Grades Served: K-8
Location: Richmond, CA
Operator: Caliber Schools
Operator Type: Charter
Setting: Urban
Students at Start: 297
Students at Capacity: 810

MODEL TOOLBOX:

Student Information System:
Illuminate

Gradebook: Engrade

Assessment Tools and Approaches:
Linkit, iReady, MAP

Digital Content Providers: iReady, ThinkCerca, Blend Space, Scratch, Hapara, Zearn, ST Math, Newsela

Hardware: Chromebooks

The Vision: Think back to a typical first day of school. Did someone from the school visit you at home, meeting with you and your family to learn about your interests, history, strengths, and needs? Probably not. But that’s what happens at Caliber: Beta Academy, and along with an intake assessment, it is the first step in shaping the personalized learning plan that guides each student’s educational journey at the K-8 school.

Caliber: Beta Academy is reimagining education as we know it, with the belief that the innovations in its model will allow 100% of its students to graduate ready to attend and succeed in a competitive four-year college and beyond. Many youth in Richmond, California experience a very different outcome—in fact, 93% of the school’s inaugural class were performing at least one year behind grade level. This unfortunate reality is why Caliber is committed to creating a school model that will best serve the youth in this vibrant but struggling community.

The Academic Model: Delivering “Education Reimagined” means holistic changes—not small tweaks. Caliber’s academic model is designed based on the founding team’s experience in running schools, as well as nearly a year of research, school visits, and brainstorming. Through this process, they created a school that includes:

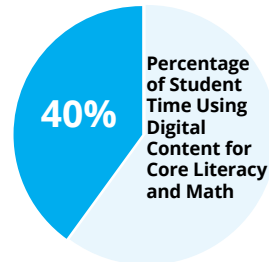
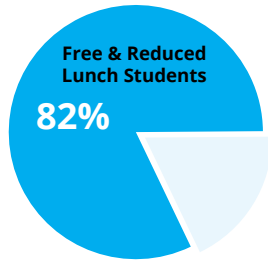
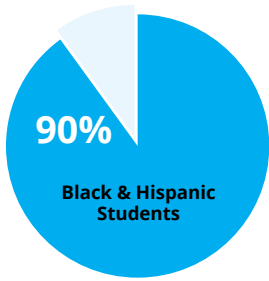
- **Personalized Learning Plans** so students, parents, and teachers understand each student’s individual needs and goals
- **Blended learning for English and math** to ensure students are always learning or practicing based on their current level and need
- **Project-based learning for science and social studies** to teach true comprehension over rote memorization
- **Explicit and integrated social and emotional curriculum** through restorative justice circles, positive behavior reinforcement, family style lunches, and more
- **Daily writing blocks** for full mastery of this critical skill
- **Daily computer coding/engineering/robotics courses** for AP-level ability of this in-demand skill.

Above all, the school’s leaders believe in constant improvement. The founders built the initial model based on experience, research, and an eight-week summer session pilot. But Caliber: Beta is a lab school and will continue to refine its model as the school team learns what works for different students in different situations.

The Organizational Model: A co-teaching model benefits both teachers and students. Each grade has a teacher team, with each teacher accountable for the full set of students. This allows joint curriculum

“I used to hate going to school...but now I wake my parents up so I can get to school earlier.”

—6TH GRADE STUDENT



BLENDED SUBJECTS:
Literacy, Math

BY THE NUMBERS:

Year 1 public revenue per pupil: \$9,828

Year 1 expenses per pupil: \$13,403

Year 4 revenue per pupil: \$10,290

Year 4 expenses per pupil: \$10,206

Years to sustainability: 4

development, peer learning among teachers, and exposure to multiple teaching styles for students. In addition, teachers receive weekly observation, feedback, and group professional development.

The school leader and two assistant principals focus primarily on instructional development and community-building while an operations coordinator manages administrative needs. This level of adult collaboration and professional learning is necessary for the intensely data-driven learning envi-




ronment, ensuring the school's constant drive for improvement.

The Operator: Caliber is committed to creating a school model that is sustainable on public funding at full enrollment. The network's first school, Caliber: Beta Academy opened with 297 students and it doubles its enrollment in the second year. Caliber plans to open six schools over six years in the Bay Area, serving about 5,000 students in two K-12 pipelines.

To prepare the organization for growth, the founders have concen-

trated on systems development and designing a leadership pipeline right from the start. As they observe student outcomes at Caliber: Beta to strengthen and improve student learning at the school, they are monitoring what works in their model to ensure that they open and continue to operate high-quality schools during every stage of growth.

EDUCATION REIMAGINED

THE CURRICULUM 	HOW CHILDREN LEARN 	ROLE OF TEACHERS 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blended English & Math - Project-based Science & Social Studies - Embedded Social/Emotional Curriculum - Daily Computer Coding/Robotics - Daily Writing Blocks 	<p>Personalized Learning Plans, achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blended Learning - Project-based Learning - Traditional Classroom Teaching - Cross Grade Tutoring - Small Group Teaching - Peer-to-Peer Learning 	<p>Supporting Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1:1 Mentoring Sessions - Modeling Behavior at Meals - Data-driven Instruction <p>Supporting Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apprenticeship Model - Co-teaching for Grade Teams - Weekly Professional Development

Caliber's slogan of "Education Reimagined" has three core pillars: 1. Reimagining the curriculum, 2. Reimagining how children learn, 3. Reimagining the role of teachers. In a personalized journey to college readiness, students develop individual learning goals with their teacher-mentors and regularly check in on their progress. They take ownership of their learning journey to reach the destination: ready to get to—and through—college. On that journey, students master core subjects like English, math, science, and social studies as well as critical skills such as computer coding, self-regulation, and mindfulness.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

School URL: <http://www.caliberbetaacademy.org>

Operator URL: <http://www.caliberschools.org/> | Contact: Ron Beller, ron@caliberschools.org

