



SITP Final Report 2014-15

Table of Contents

1. 2014-15 Program Description	2
1.1 Program Overview	2
1.2 Students Served	2
1.3 Participating Museums	3
1.4 Curriculum	3
1.5 Educational Uses of Technology at SITP	4
2. Program Impact on Students	5
2.1 Academic Impact on Rosa Park's Elementary School Students	5
2.2 Personal/Social Impact on Rosa Park's Students	5
2.3 Wilson Middle School Student Exit Survey Results	6
3. Program Impact on Parents/Primary Caregivers	7
3.1 Brief Summary of Vital Research Findings	7
3.2 Families In The Park (FITP) Survey Results	7
4. SITP Professional Development	8
4.1 Academic Goal/s of 2014-15 Year	8
4.2 Museum Educators	8
4.3 Instructional Facilitator Training	9
5. Program Goals for the 2015-16 Academic Year	9
5.1 Primary Goal	9
5.2 Recommendations from <i>Vital Research SITP Evaluation Report 2015</i> ..	9

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1. 2014-15 Program Description

1.1 Program Overview

School in the Park (SITP) is an innovative program that shifts the location of "school" from a traditional classroom setting in an inner-city school, to the resources and educational opportunities available at museums in Balboa Park. A relevant instructional environment is created as hands-on learning challenges students to become active participants in their own education. The SITP orientation to learning is driven by Sol Price's vision of a learning environment that helps students cultivate character, confidence, curiosity and competence.

SITP serves City Heights' 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students (8 weeks at each grade level) from Rosa Parks Elementary School and 6th and 7th grade (4 weeks at each grade level) students from Wilson Middle School. (For a thorough description of SITP, visit <http://schoolinthepark.net/about-sitp/>).

In the fall of 2014, the program welcomed a new SITP Director, Debbie Higdon and a new Lead Educator, Julia McMeans. The program schedule also changed to include an extended day component. An external evaluation of SITP by Vital Research evaluators was conducted throughout the course of the 2014-15 academic year. While some information from that report may be found in the SITP Final Report, the comprehensive report is entitled, *Vital Research SITP Evaluation 2015*.

1.2 Students Served

SITP serves 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students from Rosa Parks Elementary School and 6th and 7th grade student from Wilson Middle School. This population includes all students, including students with special needs.

Grade Level	Population
3rd	139
4th	163
5th	152
6th	234
7th	240
TOTAL	928

1.3 Participating Museums

Museum	Grade Levels Served					Total # of Curricular Units
	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	
San Diego Museum of Art	X	X	X	X	X	5
Junior Theatre	X	X				2
Museum of Man*	X			X	X	4
San Diego History Center*	X	X				3
San Diego Zoo*	X	X	X		X	6
Fleet Science Center*		X	X	X	X	5
Natural History Museum*		X		X	X	4
Air & Space Museum*		X	X	X	X	5
Old Globe Theatre*			X	X	X	4

- Some grade levels go to this museum more than once.

1.4 Curriculum

The SITP curriculum across all museums is responsive to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and, where appropriate, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). All museums use the SITP *Curriculum Planning Template* to ensure consistent attention to pedagogical fidelity. More complete descriptions of curriculum may be found at <http://schoolinthepark.net/curriculum/>. Below are the titles of curriculum rotations by grade level for each museum.

SITP Curriculum Rotation Descriptions	
3rd Grade	
San Diego Museum of Art	• <i>Elements of Art</i>
Junior Theatre	• <i>Telling Tall Tales</i>
Museum of Man	• <i>Who Are The Kumeyaay?</i>
San Diego History Center	• <i>History Makers: Balboa Park</i> • <i>Mapping Balboa Park</i>
San Diego Zoo	• <i>Animal Classifications</i> • <i>Inheritance and Variations of Traits</i> • <i>San Diego Habitats – Ecology & Conservation</i>
4th Grade	
San Diego Museum of Art	• <i>Silk Road</i>
Junior Theatre	• <i>Telling the California Gold Rush Story</i>
San Diego History Center	• <i>Great Depression WPA's Impact: Battling the Blues</i>
San Diego Zoo	• <i>A Sense of Survival</i>
Fleet Science Center	• <i>What is Electricity and How Do We Use It?</i>
Natural History Museum	• <i>Fossils: Indicators of Change</i>
Air & Space Museum	• <i>Energy and Forces</i>
5th Grade	

San Diego Museum of Art	• <i>Renaissance Art</i>
San Diego Zoo	• <i>Food Chain</i>
Fleet Science Center	• <i>Our Solar System</i> • <i>Forensic Science</i>
Air & Space Museum	• <i>Flight and Solar System</i> • <i>Glider Experiment – Scientific Method</i>
Old Globe Theatre	• <i>Shakespeare in the Park: Performing Macbeth</i>
6th Grade	
San Diego Museum of Art	• <i>ART-Exploring the Elements, Creating and Curating an Exhibition</i>
Museum of Man	• <i>Archaeology: Pre-History and Early Man</i> • <i>Ancient Egypt</i>
Fleet Science Center	• <i>Solar Energy</i>
Natural History Museum	• <i>Fossils & San Diego's Geologic Past</i> • <i>Human Impact</i>
Air & Space Museum	• <i>Glider Scale Models</i>
Old Globe Theatre	• <i>Shakespeare in the Park: Exploring Twelfth Night</i>
7th Grade	
San Diego Museum of Art	• <i>Japanese Art</i>
Museum of Man	• <i>The Ancient Maya</i>
San Diego Zoo	• <i>Diversity of Traits</i>
Fleet Science Center	• <i>Cells, DNA and GMO</i>
Natural History Museum	• <i>San Diego's Geologic Past</i>
Air & Space Museum	• <i>The Science and Engineering of Flying Cars</i>
Old Globe Theatre	• <i>Shakespeare in the Park: Romeo & Juliet</i>

1.5. Educational Uses of Technology at SITP

- *Newsletters*

The Families in the Park (FITP) program is designed to give parents a better understanding of the SITP experience by offering SITP site visits and providing a regular newsletter parents may access on the Rosa Parks website. Posted eight times during the school year, the FITP newsletter describes museum activities in which students are engaged, photos of parents interacting with their children in selected SITP activities, and brief descriptions of the curriculum foci for each of the 7-8 scheduled FITP visits to the park each academic year.

In addition to the regular FITP newsletter, a SITP Extended Day for Back-to-School-Night newsletter and a Spring Open House newsletter are also published to share curriculum content and museum updates with school staff and parents. These two publications are available in hard copy and online.

- *Orientation videos* (preview of all museums involved in each particular grade level)

Three newly revised short video introductions about SITP to be used as orientation before students attend their first week at SITP. All videos include the

museum educator and brief description of the activities students will study at museums.

- *Pre-Visit videos* (focus on individual museum rotations to promote bridging and motivation)
Completion of pre-visit video with new museum classroom websites for 4th Grade Air and Space Museum and 5th Grade Fleet Science Center. The successful implementation and feedback from these videos will guide development of pre-visit videos for all rotations during the 2015-16 school year.
- *Student Communication about SITP at or away from SITP*
The SITP website, Google docs, and museum websites provided opportunities for students and teachers to interact with museum content including social media links and digital media resources for teachers to use in their classrooms back at the school site before and after their visit.
- *Teacher and Museum Educator Professional Development*
Ongoing training at the school site and museum classroom to assist teachers and students with becoming proficient in technology use with Common Core learning strategies. iPads, smartphones, laptops, online resources and educational video references were integrated into SITP curriculum during the collaborative writing process with the Lead Educator and Museum Educator.

2. Program Impact on Students

2.1 Academic Impact on Rosa Parks' Students

Vital Research evaluators examined the end-of-year academic performance of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders from Rosa Parks in comparison to students at similar schools in City Heights (Euclid, Hamilton, Central). For information about student performance during the 2014-15 year, refer to the *Vital Research SITP Evaluation Report 2015* prepared for Price Philanthropies.

NOTE: It is also the practice of SITP to collect data each year on student performance as it relates specifically to SITP academic activities. This year, one important area of focus for museum educators was the development of improved ways to assess students' performance on projects/activities. The development of these more complex, authentic assessment tools continued to evolve over the course of the year. Different classes of students were exposed to a variety of assessment instruments at various stages of development. For this reason, the formal collection of performance data was suspended.

In the 2015-16 academic year, SITP will collect student performance data related to SITP academic activities.

2.2 Personal/Social Impact on Rosa Parks' Students

The Vital Research evaluators found that all students (3rd, 4th and 5th graders) rated all the SITP museums very high on interest with no significant differences

across museums. Of particular interest was the emerging trend for museums focusing on art and drama to be rated extremely high by students. For more information, see the *Vital Research SITP Evaluation Report 2015*.

2.3 Wilson Middle School Student Exit Survey Results

At the conclusion of their 2014-15 SITP experience, 65% of the Wilson Middle School 7th graders completed an exit survey sharing reflections about their 6th and 7th grade SITP experiences across 2013-14 & 2014-2015 academic years. Below are the survey results. (NOTE: Percentages may not add up to 100 as some students did not respond to all items.)

Item #1: *“As you think about your experiences within the different museums, please indicate how valuable the learning in each museum was for you.”*

Museum	Value of Learning		
	H=High	M=Moderate	L=Low
Natural History Museum	57%	29 %	5%
Fleet Science Center	33%	44%	14%
Museum of Photographic Art (MoPA)*	25%	39%	23%
Art Museum	49%	28%	8%
Museum of Man	27%	41%	20%
Old Globe Theatre	45%	34%	10%
Air & Space Museum	47%	36%	6%
Zoo	68%	16%	3%

*MoPA did not participate in SITP during the 2014-15 year so this may have an effect on student responses.

Item #2: *Occupations that might interest you...*

Science		Art	
Zoologist/Biologist	46%	Photographer	28%
Animal Trainer	34%	Artist (Painting)	49%
Archaeologist	37%	Artist (Drawing)	54%
Paleontologist	24%	Theatre	
Geologist	25%	Actor	41%
Engineer	40%	Other jobs in theatre	17%
Geneticist	18%	Museum Careers	
Pilot	24%	Curator, Archivist, Exhibit Designer	28%
		Museum Educator/Teacher	25%

Students (86%) reported that their SITP experiences gave them a better understanding of what adults in these occupations do. Close to 70% talked with

friends and family about what they learned at SITP and 88% thought that Balboa Park and the Zoo were good places to visit with family and/or friends. Teachers at Wilson Middle School reported that participating in the SITP program enhances their students' education.

3. Program Impact on Parents

3.1 Brief Summary of Vital Research Findings (For more information, see *Vital Research SITP Evaluation Report 2015.*)

Parent Response	Percentage
• My child likes to go to SITP	98%
• My child talks about SITP at home	90%
• I am satisfied with the SITP program overall	93%
• SITP helped my child get better grades in school	73%
• SITP helped my child attend school more regularly	95%
• SITP helped my child behave better	87%
• SITP helped my child read better	81%
• SITP helped my child orally communicate better	81%
• SITP helped my child feel that s/he could do better in school	90%
• SITP helped my child enjoy learning more	98%
• My child and I went to Balboa Park on our own this year	61%
• We used passes provided by SITP	44%

3.2 *Families In The Park* (FITP) Survey Results

SITP staff provides informational sessions at the park for parents and other primary caregivers 7-8 times throughout the year. The purpose of these sessions is to familiarize participants with SITP curriculum at the different museums and give them a better understanding of their children's overall experience. Responses to these informational sessions have been quite positive.

Below are this year's survey results from 35 Rosa Parks' parents or primary caregivers who attended one or more of the FITP informational sessions.

Survey Questions	% Agreeing
Have you ever been to Balboa Park and/or its museums?	80%
Do you feel that you know more about the program at <i>School in the Park</i> after this experience?	88%
After this experience today, do you think that you can talk to your son/daughter about their experience in the School in the Park program?	100%
After this experience today, would you bring your family to Balboa Park?	100%
Do you feel that the School in the Park program benefits the education of your son/daughter?	100%

4. SITP Professional Development.

4.1 Major Academic Goal/s for 2014-15

The major academic goal of the 2014-15 year at SITP was to assure that each rotation of SITP curriculum;

- 1) ... be driven by an overarching guiding question related to one or more aspects of the CCSS and/or NGSS, and
- 2) ... include multiple activities designed to give students authentic experiences with the subject matter.

Related to this goal, ways of measuring students' knowledge are also changing. Multiple choice questions are being redesigned to require deeper thinking and provisions for assessing activity performance continue to be developed. Students are expected to write, draw, label, build, design, etc. in a manner that measures their understanding. To see how these goals continue to be addressed, please see individual curricular rotation descriptions by visiting the SITP website <http://schoolinthepark.net/curriculum/>.

4.2 Museum Educators

SITP staff provides regular professional development opportunities for SITP museum educators. As can be seen in the chart below, topics are related to the identified academic goal/s for the year. These professional development sessions also provide museum educators to share ideas and strategies with one another across museums. The effectiveness of this professional development may be clearly seen in the SITP rotation curriculum where guiding questions, multiple opportunities for active student engagement, and improved assessment instruments are in evidence.

Time	Focus
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing active engagement of students • Improving teacher involvement in rotations • Problem solving around extended day schedule
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating Students with Special Needs
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean to be "Cognitively Engaged"? How can we increase the levels of cognitive engagement and active learning in our curriculum?
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on Assessment: Part 1 Creating Strong Guiding Questions
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on Assessment: Part 2 Continuing to Develop Strong Guiding Questions
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we Know Students are Learning What We Want them to Learn? Checking our assessments to see if we are assessing the main concepts
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Multiple Choice Questions that Require Deep Thinking

4.3 Instructional Facilitator Training

The role of the SITP Facilitator is crucial to optimal student learning at SITP. Instructional Facilitators; 1) serve as liaisons between the museum educators and school personnel, 2) support museum educators' instruction and supervise assigned lessons with small groups of students and 3) ensure the safety of students at the park (during museum instruction, walking to/from bus and restrooms, eating lunch, etc.).

Instructional Facilitator Training for the 2014-15 academic year is described below:

√	Trained in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) / First Aid / AED
√	At the Zoo, trained how to use positive reinforcement with students
√	All SITP Museums, given basic introduction to the museum and Museum Educators' expectations (i.e. where materials are located, where restrooms are located, general overview of the week, daily curricular activities).
√	Special Education Team - gave Facilitators and Museum Educators an overview of various disabilities and strategies for working with students with special needs.

5. Program Goals for the 2015-16 Academic Year

5.1 Primary Goal: To increase *academic conversation* skills among students and between students and their museum educators and classroom teachers.

This goal addresses Common Core State Standard expectations. But, more importantly, knowing how to have an academic conversation is, quite possibly, one of the most important skills students can attain. Nurturing this ability at SITP will mean finding opportunities within each curricular rotation for students to practice academic conversation where they elaborate & clarify, actively listen, support ideas with examples, build on or challenge partners' ideas, paraphrase, and synthesize conversation points.

While there will be other, peripheral goals, the multiple skills needed to engage in academic conversation will be a constant emphasis in the planning and implementation of SITP learning experiences.

5.2 Recommendations from Vital Research SITP Evaluation Report 2015

The Vital Research evaluation of the SITP program this year has been helpful. As the 2015-16 program begins, the following recommendations from this report will be addressed:

- Capitalize on opportunity for informal, hands-on learning
- Strengthen teacher/museum educator communication
- Clarify the role of the teacher before/during/after coming to SITP
- Plan with the extended day in mind