

CalPac Charter Schools Remove Testing Barriers with Virtual Assessments from Presence

“ Our mission is to support and encourage all students to relentlessly pursue their life goals by providing an accessible, inclusive, and personalized learning community.”

–CHRISTINE FEHER,
Superintendent, CalPac Charter Schools, Newport Beach, CA

Serving nearly 800 students from diverse backgrounds, California Pacific Charter Schools is a free online elementary, middle, and high school with locations spanning 15 counties across California in cities like Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Diego.

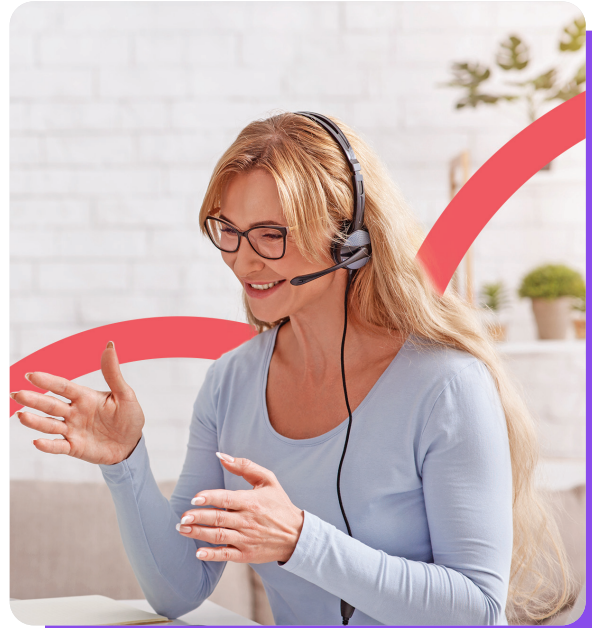
As a virtual school, CalPac has faced a number of challenges in recent years as they worked to improve in-person student testing participation rates that were hovering near 85% school-wide. During the pandemic, enrollment also grew significantly, and more special education students have onboarded with unique learning needs to be addressed. Additionally, clinicians at CalPac needed help as they worked to overcome obstacles with time and caseload management, and cut down on ‘windshield time’ while traveling back and forth to administer assessments to students throughout southern California.

The Proof is in the Platform

Christine Feher, superintendent of California Pacific Charter Schools, credits her assistant director of special education, Dr. Vangie Akridge, with the discovery of the most effective online therapy and assessment solution for them. Akridge strongly recommended they turn to Presence for help creating the best possible virtual learning environment and digital assessments for their growing body of students and overwhelmed clinicians.

“As soon as we partnered with Presence and got our staff onboarded, we began seeing immediate school-wide improvements in the scheduling, administration, and completion of student assessment testing. Specifically, the convenience of scheduling a virtual meeting to conduct our assessments minimized the preparation time needed for the evaluation sessions and eliminated travel allowing us to give our staff and family time back. Our first round of assessment administration, after transitioning to Presence virtual assessments, enhanced our testing services and greatly improved our school-wide assessment logistics; we knew we were onto something powerful. This is just what our students and staff needed to create access for all,” said Akridge.

After implementing Presence’s online therapy platform, Kanga, and training their team, CalPac clinicians witnessed immediate improvements in time and caseload management; increased involvement within the parent community; and most importantly, positive outcomes in student testing engagement. In fact, the charter school now boasts a 98% student participation rate in virtual assessments due to the elimination of a number of testing barriers that Kanga helped them remove.



“ It really makes you realize how essential Presence has been to their growth and to opening up new opportunities for their future.”

—DR. VANGIE AKRIDGE,

Assistant Director of Special Education,
California Pacific Charter Schools, Newport
Beach, CA



Presence Empowers CalPac Clinicians

Speaking to the vast content library and flexibility of the Kanga platform, CalPac speech language pathologist Sarah Simkin found the solution kept her well-prepared to perform her job even better.

“There are certain days where I don’t have time to pre-plan treatment. Having the option for accessing pre-programmed material in the library or having the ability to create virtual files has been really helpful so that I can go into the file quickly and grab what I need. It allows for more efficiency too with therapy and treatment, so that I am able to be flexible with students who show up or not,” said Simkin.

Improved Student & Parent Engagement

When describing the difference between virtual and in-person assessment testing, Simkin reported better student attendance rates with virtual assessment administration versus in-person testing. She also noticed with virtual testing, parents take on a much more active role being present, offering support, and being engaged with their child’s teletherapy and testing.

“Preparing students at home to test virtually with Presence meant I could provide a pretext to the parents such as, make sure your student is in a quiet room; make sure they’ve been fed beforehand, so they’re not testing while hungry; or make sure the student has their water right there.” said Simkin.

Due to busy lives, full time jobs, and pressing family needs, this level of parent involvement can be more challenging to procure because many school meetings occur during their working hours. But with Kanga, clinicians are able to schedule IEP meetings or sessions more easily around the parents’ schedules. Parents can now remotely join the sessions or attend meetings from their office or work computer or find a more private setting and attend on their mobile phone.

Dr. Akridge is excited about the student engagement improvements and has also been moved by the positive parent community response to their use of Presence.

“It’s been very inspiring to see how student engagement has improved with Presence and the offering of teletherapy. Because of the robust selection of games, activities, and tools provided in the platform, our clinicians are seeing students grow their confidence, engagement, and skills in areas such as self-advocacy and self-esteem. Even parents are more engaged in the work we are doing with their children. We get positive feedback from excited parents all the time expressing how they see their child has improved communicating their feelings, regulating their emotions, and socially interacting,” remarked Akridge.



Ready for a Future of Growth

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- Bulk upload caseload information for success during the school year and beyond with pre-built caseload templates
- Follow simple step-by-step processes to populate student information based on active caseloads
- Engage with an easy-to-use interface built to amplify convenience for clinicians



The future looks bright for California Pacific Charter Schools as they focus on growing their school population, meeting the learning needs of their diverse body of students, and partnering with Presence to support their noble mission to 'encourage all students to relentlessly pursue their life goals by providing an accessible, inclusive, and personalized learning community.'

"It really makes you realize how essential Presence has been to their growth and to opening up new opportunities for their future," said Akridge.

Learn More

Explore our [FREE](#) edition of the award-winning platform made for clinicians, by clinicians. Try Kanga today!

