

SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT
ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS,
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FOR

Hercules

Hercules, CA 94547

West Contra Costa Unified School District

February 26th - March 1st

Visiting Committee Members

Mr. Michael Weibert - Chair
Math Teacher, Riverdale High School

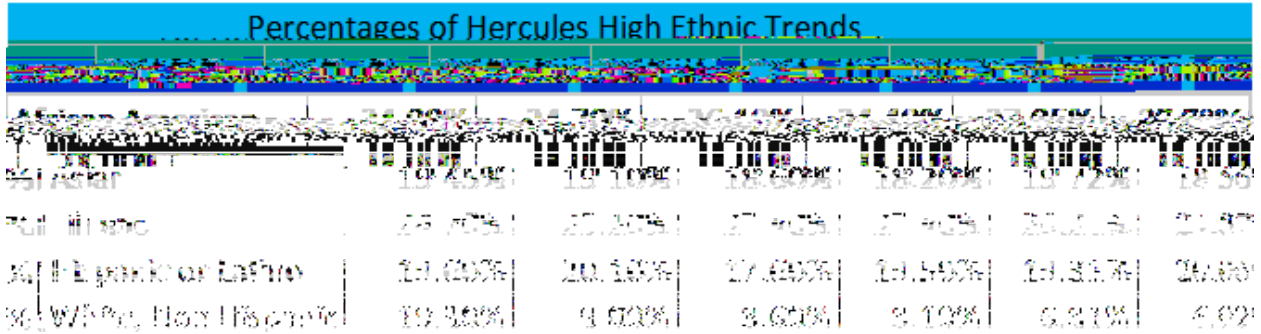
Ms. Sarah Bone
English Teacher, Folsom High School

Mr. Stephen Emmi
Assistant Principal, Galileo Academy

Mr. Thomas Fletcher
Assistant Principal, Livermore High School

Ms. Millicent Kessler
Assistant Principal, Retired

Ms. Michelle Lau
Math Teacher, Irvington High School



Certificated Staff by Ethnicity	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Percent of Total
American Indian or Alaska	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.04%
Asian	4	2	0	3	6	2	12.24%
Black or African American	3	2	4	5	6	8	12.24%

The percentage of students with economic need has increased over the last six years based on free or reduced lunch data.

Academic Year	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
School Enrollment	985	1006	1015	935	984
Soci-Economic Enrollment	343	416	430	386	412
Percentage of Total Enrollment	34.8%	41.3%	42.3%	41.3%	41.9%

Student enrollment in AP for 2016-2017 are following the current trend that classes also mirror the general population of students except for African Americans. While this has not been specified as a critical area of need it is recognized by the VC that HHS knows that it is a problem and has made the effort to create programs to assist in making African American students become more involved and successful academically. The staff and administration of HHS now needs to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs.

Name of Course	TOTAL ENROLLED	Male	Female	Asian	Filipino	Hispanic	Black	White
AP Bio	34	12	22	15	9	5	5	
AP Calculus BC	11	5	6	1	1	1	1	3
AP Computer Science A	33	11	22	15	6	3	3	10
AP Environmental Science	73	33	40	19	19	11	5	4
AP Government & Politics Unit	65	29	36	20	24	10	10	14
AP Language & Composition	151	61	90	61	71	24	24	51

AP pass rates for HHS are at an all time low of 18.95%. This represents a continual decline since a high of 42% in 2011. Focus group meetings with staff speak to this decline as a result of HHS changing to open AP enrollment three years ago. This gives the benefit of anyone being willing to give any AP class a try but also includes students that are unable to pass the test, lowering the overall success rate. Additionally, the counseling staff also informed the VC during focus groups that some students will take multiple tests even if they have not enrolled in the course.

were made to the leadership team to make corrections to the Action Plan and they were done so quickly. Additional comments will then be discussed in chapter five of the report.

Chapter II: Progress Report

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Since the last full self-study visit in April of 2011 that resulted in a six year accreditation with a 2-day midterm visit, there have been many changes and developments that have occurred at Hercules High. Originally the school was run as a 6th - 12th grade site. A new principal was hired in 2012. The self study states that while there was some initial joy in the new admin, the continuing lack of communication between the staff and administration in regards to many procedures still existed as well as the animosity between the middle and high school staff grew to unrepairable levels. In the spring of 2014, Hercules was granted a separation into two different schools with two different administrations and a WASC report required only by the 9th - 12th staff. During the midterm visit of 2014 the WASC committee had numerous concerns and granted a one year probationary accreditation. This, along with the other factors already mentioned, resulted in a vote of no confidence by the disgruntled staff which resulted in a new administration being brought in. April of 2015's two day visit left the WASC committee feeling that the new administration had shown enough improvements to result in a two year term. This made it so that they would match up again with what would have been their standard six-year accreditation cycle visit in 2017.

As the split with the Middle School created two new administrations it also led to programs being put in place that focused only on the Hercules High students. Hercules High formed a college and career center, an Early Academic Outreach Program, Destination College Advising Corps, Rising Scholars Project, Link Crew and other programs created for student achievement. Additional professional collaboration and training was made available for staff through district funds. Finally, within the last few weeks, the district has funded a one-to-one technology program at HHS and all students now have a laptop computer they use in the classroom and are allowed to take home.

The full study of 2011 left Hercules High with nine critical areas of need. The full revisit of 2014 recognized that very few of the critical areas were being met and tried to refocus the group with nine areas that were either a continuation or adaptation of the first nine. This visiting committee recognizes that the school has had a large amount of turmoil over the past six years and has seen improvements made by the current administration and staff. The writing below is in response to the original nine areas of need. The current VC recognizes the need to streamline all of the Critical Areas of Need so as not to overwhelm the staff. Most of the nine needs from 2014 deal with the lack of data use both to analyze the results and then use it to adjust instruction.

Critical Area # 1: Face to face communication needs to be improved in several areas: Prinam

Under the new administration, new collaborative bodies were enacted to promote conversation between staff and administration. Meetings occur between departments which can then carry ideas to department chair meetings. From there, many staff members are involved in weekly management meetings and the Instructional Leadership Team (created in 2014) that focus on schoolwide needs. There is a Student Senate on campus where student representatives meet with administration monthly to provide feedback on school matters. A Parent Teacher Organization was formed in 2015 to create communication and support between the school, parents and the community.

Critical Area # 2: Collaboration is the cornerstone of the school plan. For the collaboration to be effective, it was felt that active participation by the administration in training and implementation was critical as well as ongoing commitment to staff development in the collaboration process.

The union and district worked in 2014 to create an environment that allows for staff development time with an agreed upon weekly early release Wednesday. Success of these meetings had the staff agree to a MOU through June of 2017. The meetings discussed under Critical Area #1 all apply here as they are attended by staff and administration. There is also mention of district staff attending various meetings at HHS to see the effectiveness of staff meetings and see what questions and concerns staff has for them. In conversations with the staff and administration the VC feels that there has been improvements made in this area.

Critical Area # 3: There was a lack of technology available to students and a need for a plan that addressed outdated equipment and resource availability.

Multiple steps have been taken by HHS as well as the district to provide access to current technology and use it to teach effectively. The start of 2014 school year had all teachers receiving a new laptop, document camera, and projector. Wifi was installed campus wide for all staff and student work. Computer labs were created and then carts made available for class use. Training was made available for staff to be able to know how to use the technology on their own and then use it for use in the classroom. A Technology Liaison position was created by the district to be available for all support and growth for the district technology. Finally, this year is where HHS is made a huge leap by going one-to-one with laptops for all students as of second semester. All of these advancements in technology show a great structural growth and commitment by the district with both student access and use in the classroom.

Critical Area # 4: There needed to be a school wide systematic implementation for implementing instructional strategies, developing common formative assessments and analyzing data to improve student learning. (2014 CAN #1)

The self study report states that the Instructional Leadership Team has created school wide writing lessons and a staff rubric to calibrate scoring. The VC did not see evidence of staff using this rubric as well as students not knowing that such a rubric exists. Discussions with administration state that it was something that was implemented by the ILT in the 2014/15 year and showed good data driven information but was shelved due to other, more pressing matters. Staff meetings exist for both departments and all staff together to analyze data and improve

instructional strategies. Classroom visits as well as conversations with teachers show an increase of variety in instructional strategies that are instructional based. Students have just begun the one to one tablet initiative so it will take time to see if the new strategies are effective or not.

Staff members have begun to create common benchmarks that are more in line with what is taking place in the

Chapter III: Self-Study Process

Graduates from Hercules High School will be:

1. Students will be critical thinkers who:

1.1 have mastered fundamentals of language, history, math, science, foreign language, and the arts, and use them effectively to enrich their daily lives

1.2 demonstrate the ability to collect, analyze, and organize resources and information

1.3 effectively evaluate and analyze data from multiple sources to develop solutions to problems

1.4 use log_

teaching, learning, student success and/or academic p

Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

CATEGORY A. ORGANIZATION: VISION AND PURPOSE, GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, STAFF, AND RESOURCES

A1. Vision and Purpose Criterion

To what extent does the school have a clearly stated vision and mission (purpose) based on its student needs, current educational research, current educational research, the district LCAP, and the belief that all students can achieve at high academic levels?

To what extent is the school's purpose supported by the governing board and the district LCAP and further defined by schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards?

Hercules High School's Mission statement is clear and concise. It states "That all students ^{and} successfully demonstrate academic excellence in all disciplines that enable them to be meaningful and responsible contributors to local, national and global communities." The school continuously monitors student data to evaluate the progress of attaining the school's vision. Data is shared regularly with the school's stakeholders (i.e. staff, school site council, parents, etc.) to ^{annually} determine and inform the community of the student's achievement, ^{on the community}

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WCCUSD invites the feedback from st

The SSC is made up of site administrators, teachers, parents and students. They develop, implement and monitor the effectiveness of the SPSA. They meet monthly to discuss student academic data, go over department SMART goals and report to the Educational Services Department. The SSC supports the SLOs as well as the individual department's SMART goals through the allocation of funds to support activities.

HHS has created a site-based shared decision making process to help support the implementation of practices and programs that support student learning.

The Hercules High School website provides information containing board policies, resources, roles and responsibilities of staff. HHS also provide a teacher handbook containing rules, policies, procedures, grading guidelines, etc. They also provide a staff handbook which includes roles, decision makes processes, etc. The handbook is discussed at the site PD day, and additional issues are communicated through email and monthly faculty meetings.

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WCCUSD provides release time (via a sub), reimbursement for conferences attended, material^{sup} provided and technological support for the staff members. The district will advertise PD opportunities via their online calendar. HHS will also support PD at the site level. Staff are encouraged to attend all district level PD as well as sign up for other professional opportunities. They all are encouraged to visit each other's classrooms and observe their colleagues.

The ILT oversees the PD for the s\$he s\$he uoand

textbook would be checked out.

WCCUSD provides PD opportunities to the staff. They are shared through the district calendar. The ILT provides site level PD as determined through review of the student academic performance data. AP teachers get summer training. The staff receives SBAC training as well as New Teacher training for the new staff members.

The existing SPSA is reviewed and updated yearly, the SSC is well organized and effective, needs SMART goals have been used in the past, and the LCAP and LCFF are up and functional. There is nothing mentioned about the effectiveness of these processes.

CATEGORY A: ORGANIZATION: VISION AND PURPOSE, GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, STAFF, AND RESOURCES

Areas of strength for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership, Staff, and Resources:

- The mission, vision and SLOs are available to everyone and readily accessible.
- The HHS staff are conscientious and willing to work.
- The SSC, ILT and department chairs are professional, hard-working and well organized.
- The district supports the ILT and dept chairs and allows the HHS site to make their own choices as to their focus for PD.

Key issues for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership, Staff, and Resources:

- Data needs to be analyzed and intentionally used to increase student achievement.
- Increase buy-in from the entire academic community, by effectively using the existing collaboration time.
- Develop a measure of evidence that supports the

A progressive academic intervention process is in place for 9th and 10th grade students who receive one or more below “C” grade. This academic intervention begins with a teacher recommendation for after school tutoring. If additional progress is required, then the students is referred to SST to see what other more specific supports are needed.

The English department utilizes district-wide, grade level, semester-based modules that align with the Common Core State Standards. The math department utilizes district-wide pacing guides that are also aligned with the Common Core State Standards. The math department also uses bs g

The district pays all fees for AP Tests for all students who register for an AP course.

The academic counselors conduct informational sessions each school year for , fh

Ms. Abata

Ms. Abata

CATEGORY C. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: INSTRUCTION

C1. Challenging and Relevant Learning Experiences Criterion

To what extent are all students are involved in challenging and relevant learning experiences to achieve the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

All students at Hercules HS, including English learners, have access to instruction based on California's academic content andC

Students are using technology to support their learning in a variety of ways. All students now have access to school issued tablets. Teachers are developing strategies for incorporating them into their instruction. Many classes were observed using the tablets in a variety of ways--as digital textbooks, research tools, and for student presentation projects.

The work done by the school to ensure postsecondary career readiness is emerging. The report indicates the school is in the planning stages of establishing career pathways that will be offered as advanced electives. They report that a survey was given to students in fall 2016 pertaining to potential pathway courses and that a Career Day is planned based on the results. The district is working to implement new CTE pathways (computer science and health careers) for 2017-18.

The self-study report makes reference to a district community service requirement, but there is little detail on how this is used to connect student learning to community or career activities.

A Career Center has been supported by the district since 2014. A Community College Counselor is available once a week. A UC Berkeley Early Outreach Fellow works with academic counselors to increase the rate of college-going students.

The district has a partnership with Young Scholars Program which seeks to increase college matriculation and degree attainment by young men of color. Hercules HS participates in the program through on-site counseling and enrichment experiences.

Hercules HS offers three CTE courses through the Regional Occupation Program. All are A-G compliant including AP Environmental Science and AP Computer Science Principles. About 230 students are enrolled for 2016-17.

The school cites co-curricular clubs as a major avenue of real world experiences which include the service club Interact, mock trial, MESA, and a Robotics club.

CATEGORY C: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: INSTRUCTION

Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction:

- Teachers are enthusiastic about using technology-based instructional tools
- Many teachers use a variety of instructional strategies
- Teachers are encouraged to present Teacher-to-Teacher instructional strategies

Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction:

- Consistent implementation of defined Common Core instructional practices
- Systematic implementation of researched-based strategies
- Systematic, explicit cycle of inquiry including analysis of effectiveness of instructional strategies

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit ~~the~~ supports the ~~SAC~~ strengths and key issues

Finally, HHS reports that counselors review the transcripts of all 10th through 12th grade students each quarter, and refer failing students to the administration team for a parent conference. These counselor-led conferences, called Local Review conferences, include the counselor helping HHS students to discuss and update their four-year plan which is completed in the 9th grade year. However, upon further questioning and observation, HHS has not fully implemented a working four year plan model to date. The counseling department has changed their approach to the four-year plan as they have struggled to find a plan that works for their staff and population. Four-year plans, while being created each year, are not being updated or monitored throughout the course of the student's academic career as yet. There is a need for consistency going forward.

D2. Using Assessment to Monitor at a Asv Engst ssest sMtngrngs^{ts}a

D3. Using Assessment to Monitor and Modify the Program Schoolwide Criterion

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allocations.” However, through observation and interviews with the staff, students and district personnel, the VC was able to observe the following.

By using school-generated data, the district analyzes the potential of students who would do well and pass the AP exam, adding courses that seem appropriate for the school. This is how the AP Psychology class was added to HHS. Additionally, the school, with the partnership of the district, uses Local Partnership Action Teams in which teachers meet with local college profes Arofes Aro

CATEGORY E. SCHOOL CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

E1. Parent and Community Engagement Criterion

To what extent does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to encourage family, business, industry, and community involvement, especially with the learning/teaching process?

HHS has employed various parent engagement strategies over the last few years that have included letters and flyers sent to guardians, The

E2. School Environment Criterion

To what extent is the school a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning?

To what extent is the culture of the school characterized by trust, professionalism, high expectations for all students, and a focus on continuous school improvements

reports it is currently using tools such as student and family mediations, student/teacher mediations and alternative writing assignments for tardiness and time management. In discussing school wide`in a

There is a new teacher cohort that meets monthly to support new staff and orient them to HHS's policies and procedures. Teacher leadership meetings at HHS include the following: ILT, Management Team, Safety Team and Department Chair. The ILT seems to be a select group of teachers who volunteer to lead in various ways throughout the school. It was shared with the WASC VC that feedback from the larger teacher community is brought to the ILT meeting which is then discussed, organized and brought back to the staff. The SSC meets monthly and includes teachers, parents, students and administration. In speaking with various teacher groups throughout the visit it is clear that communication among the staff and between the staff and administration has greatly improved over the last three years. In discussions with the teachers most reported that they feel respected and heard by the current administration.

E3. Personal and Academic Support Criterion

To what extent do all students receive appropriate academic support and intervention to help ensure school, college, and career success.

To what extent do students with special talents and/or needs access to a system of personal support services, activities, and opportunities at the school, and how are they enhanced by business, industry, and the community?

All HHS students complete a four-year plan with their academic counselor that has been revised annually in an effort to meet student needs and long term goals. HHS has also worked to increase the capacity of their College and Career Center by adding an additional counselor and creating a program that seeks to outreach to students during their 9th grade year. Academic counselors at HHS work to educate students about graduation and A-G requirements beginning in 9th grade. HHS's COST (Coordination of Services Team) meets once a week to address the needs of students who may require a higher level of support (1:1 counseling, support group, etc.). The COST team, which meets every Tuesday at 10:30 is comprised of the two Assistant Principals, the School Psychologist, two School Resource Officers, the two academic counselors and the Health Center Coordinator. Online credit recovery is available to students through Cyber-High. HHS has a transition program for 9th graders called "Link Crew" that orients students and families to HHS. IEP, 504 and ELD students receive individualized academic support through various programs at HHS. Several teachers shared with the WASC team that they support ELD students by using tools such as sentence frames and by providing scaffolding of concepts/vocabulary. Teachers also stated that counselors and case managers work with IEP students to provide support through a "Tutorial" support class. Students who are "not ready for college" according to EAP data are given the opportunity to take a class (ERWC) to allow them to demonstrate their proficiency to CSU's.

HHS provides targeted students services in the form of 1:1 services to EL, SpEd, FY and 504 students. HHS has developed an Academic Intervention Program to support 9th and 10th grade students who are on the D and F lim as sent t to engage the students and families. Included as part of this support program are tutoring services, college preparation workshops and college tours. HHS has committed to improve its technology based learning and has implemented the 1

to 1 tablet initiative during the 16-17 school year. HHS has also developed a relationship with Contra Costa Community College where students are able to take classes under the dual-enrollment program. Additionally a College Counselor from CCCC works one day every week out of the HHS College and Career Center to provide support and transition services to seniors in the form of orientation and placement testing for CCCC.

HHS currently has several programs in place to provide support around students' academic success that include EAOP (Early Academic Outreach Program), Upward Bound, Rising Scholars, Read 180, Link Crew, HHS Health Center, Cyber High, Academic Intervention Program, and the Homework Center. The EAOP targets HHS's 1st generation, minority, underachieving students with supports in the form of Saturday School at UC Berkeley and additional college counseling. EAOP is currently serving cohorts of 45 students in grades 9-11. HHS has a COST team that meets once a week to address students' academic and emotional needs based on staff referrals. SST's are conducted by the two Assistant Principals to discuss and implement strategies for individual students in an effort to improve academics and/or overall well-being.

HHS has made a concerted effort to diversify its AP program and provide equity and access to AP courses for all students. Data has been used to analyze requests as well as to recruit underrepresented students into the AP and honors program. In visiting AP classrooms the WASC VC was able to see that the classes were comprised of diverse student populations and were representative of the overall demographic makeup of the school community.

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