SELF STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FOR

SANTA TERESA HIGH SCHOOL

6150 Snell Avenue
San Jose, CA 95123

East Side Union High School District

March 2 - 5, 2014

Visiting Committee Members
Doug Jones, Chairperson
Assistant Superintendent, Fresno Unified School District - Retired
Dr. Ted Barone
Principal, Albany High School, Albany Unified School District
Cecilia Distefano
Teacher, Kennedy High School, West Contra Costa Unified School District
Dr. Seamus Eddy
Assistant Principal, Today High School, Lodi Unified School District
Jenna Valponi
Teacher, Ripon High School, Ripon Unified School District
Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

Briefly summarize the most critical information from the student/community profile that impacts the school. Include the following:

Demographics

- Santa Teresa High School serves 2248 students in grades 9-12 in a suburban neighborhood in San Jose, California. It is one of eleven comprehensive high schools in the East Side Union High School District. The Santa Teresa community is comprised of diverse, middle-income families who have been, historically, very supportive of the school. 30% of parents possess a college or graduate degree (decline of 11% since 2008). Student enrollment has remained stable since the last full WASC visit in 2008. At that time, white students comprised 41% of the student body, Hispanic students comprised 36%, and Asian students comprised 16%. Today, those percentages are 33, 37, and 17. The most significant demographic change since the last visit is the 28% increase in English Language Learners—the predominant first language is Spanish followed by Vietnamese. English is the second language of 35% of Santa Teresa High School students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Santa Teresa Enrollment by Ethnicity (Number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (Not Hispanic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- For the past three years, 16% of students at Santa Teresa qualified for Free and Reduced lunch. That represents a 3% increase since the last visit.
● 10% of students at the school are identified as Special Needs. The Special Education Department serves students with Autism, Special Day Class students, Visually Impaired students, and Severely Emotionally Disturbed students. 63% of students served by the Resource Specialist Program (RSP) are mainstreamed into “regular” classes.

● The current teaching staff at Santa Teresa has an average of 14.1 years of experience. There are six first year teachers on staff and two second year teachers. 100% of teachers are fully credentialed and 38% hold Master’s Degrees.

Facilities
● Santa Teresa students, staff, and community enjoy an attractive and safe campus. Since the last visit, the school benefitted by a successful bond measure which provided laptops for all certificated staff, an updated telecommunication system, a new multi-purpose room, and an updated gymnasium and locker room. Prior to these bond expenditures, the school’s football stadium was replaced and the theater was completely renovated.

● Contrasted with these facilities upgrades, the budget cuts over the past two years have resulted in a reduction of 18 teachers, two counselors (from four to two), the librarian position, and the book clerk position. The school year was decreased to 175 days, and five furlough days were implemented for the staff. The administrative staff consists of the principal and two assistant principals, all new in their positions in the last two years. While
the school has done their best to keep these reductions from impacting student learning, there are still obvious needs in the area of student support, monitoring of instruction, and class size, to name a few.

**Student Performance Data**

- Santa Teresa students have shown a 30-point growth on the Academic Performance Index (API) since the last visit, the school’s statewide ranking dropped from 7 to 6. Their similar schools ranking is 3. API results reveal an achievement gap between Hispanic and Socio-economic disadvantaged students and their white peers. The Self Study reports that this achievement gap is the focus of continued staff development and analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>API Base</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>776</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+17</td>
<td>+13</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number students tested</td>
<td>1598</td>
<td>1698</td>
<td>1688</td>
<td>1655</td>
<td>1582</td>
<td>1670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Rank</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar Schools Rank</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The school has not met their Adequate Yearly Progress targets in the past six years. Standardized test scores reveal a significant achievement gap between Hispanic students and other subgroups. In addition to staff development, the school has undertaken a number of programs and instructional practices that they believe will provide appropriate support to their Hispanic population and begin to close the gap.
- Although the achievement gap is significant, Hispanic students have shown significant gains in English Language Arts (ELA) and math. Overall, Santa Teresa students are showing limited gains in math.
Pass rates on the California High School Exit Exam have consistently improved in math. In 2012-13, 93% of students passed CAHSEE math. The ELA pass rate was 93% in 2011-12.
The school has significantly increased its a-g approved courses since the last full visit as well as the number of Advanced Placement (A.P.) courses. As part of the “default curriculum,” more students are taking Biology, English 1a, and Geometry as freshmen. A similar gap between Hispanic and white students exists in A-G completion.

Along with the increase in A-G approved courses and the number of students enrolled in those courses, the Self Study reflects a concern about the “F” rate in those courses, especially in math, where only 62% of students passed their math courses in 2012-13. This is a significant concern for all stakeholders in terms of students completing A-G requirements and attaining a diploma.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAHSEE EXIT EXAMINATION RESULTS (MATHEMATICS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Tested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Passing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAHSEE EXIT EXAMINATION RESULTS (ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Tested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADUATES COMPLETING UC/CSU REQUIREMENTS BY ETHNICITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White not Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple/No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12 Enrollment</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>477</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11+12 Enrollment</td>
<td>1,112</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>1,174</td>
<td>1,098</td>
<td>1,049</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Exam Takers</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>444</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Score =1</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>167</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Score =2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>232</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Score =3</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>198</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Score =4</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Score =5</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Test Takers Who Scores 3 or Higher</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
● The school snapshot below provides, among other things, a graphic view of what the Self Study and stakeholders have discussed: student success rate in mathematics is significantly below the state average—especially compared to the relative success of students in other subject areas.

● The percentage of students meeting a-g requirements is slightly below the state average. In light of the new district policy that all students be enrolled in an a-g curriculum, the issue appears to be more related to proficiency and support rather than access.
School Safety / Student Behavior

- According to student perception data and discipline records, Santa Teresa is a safe school. The overall suspension rate has dropped significantly in the last six years, from 535 total suspensions to 211. The school attributes this, in part, to systemic efforts to curb suspensions through mediation, referrals to the Student Family Resource Center, and the implementation of Saturday School. While students report feeling relatively safe from bullying and violence, they do express a concern that alcohol and drug use by their peers occur frequently—most often off campus during non school hours. The Student Family Center (SFC) is staffed by 0.6 FTE coordinator, the district Social Worker, and several social work interns. Students access these services through private or group sessions. A full time nurse shares the office space with SFC staff.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Suspensions Violence/Drugs</th>
<th>Expulsions Violence/Drugs</th>
<th>Total Suspensions</th>
<th>Total Expulsions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter II: Progress Report

Since the last Self Study:

- **Comments on the school’s major changes and follow-up process.**
  
  - Significant changes have taken place at Santa Teresa HS since the last full visit. The current principal is the third person in the position in the last six years. While enrollment has decreased by 200 students, Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff have been reduced by 18. The number of counselors has been reduced from four to two, and the positions of librarian and book clerk have been eliminated. Phoenix High School, a small necessary school, has been placed on the campus and added as an additional responsibility for the administration and staff.
  
  - The ethnic makeup of the student body has shifted since the last visit to reflect more Hispanic and Asian students and fewer white students.
  
  - A bond measure was passed which contributed much needed upgrades to facilities and to the technology infrastructure on campus.
  
  - The number of Advanced Placement course offerings has increased, as has the diversity of enrollment of in A.P. courses.
  
  - The school community has suffered a number of tragic events involving students and staff since the last full visit. This has greatly impacted the students and staff. The school and community have provided additional resources to address students’ personal needs. The Visiting Committee noted the high degree of caring and concern on the part of the STHS staff and student body.

- **Discuss how the school through its action plan has accomplished each of the critical areas for follow-up, including the impact on student learning.**

Since the last full visit in 2008, there is evidence throughout the Self Study showing how the STHS staff and stakeholders have been addressing the Critical Areas for Follow Up through their Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). Though significant progress has been made, the school continues to address these issues. Those Critical Areas (and Visiting Committee comments on the school’s progress) are:

1. *The instructional staff and administration establish and employ a systematic use of formative student performance assessment strategies that will measure the effects of the school’s programs and services, guide professional development, modify instruction, and result in improved achievement.*

   - STHS has established a priority to improve its system for collecting, analyzing and disseminating student data. The Leadership structure is sensitive to these issues and is facilitating the examination of current assessment systems and the development of new approaches, as is evidenced by their work with Higher Order Thinking Skills and Depth of Knowledge.

   - The multi-phased rollout of HOT projects and Instructional Rounds is increasing the capacity for the development of a well-designed assessment system that will facilitate student progress towards the Common Core State Standards.
2. **The instructional staff should build upon their work-to-date on standards-based instruction by focusing on the following:**
   a. The essential standards being covered in each academic area.
   b. The standards covered are those standards appropriate to the grade level of the students (calibration). For example, 9th grade standards are covered for 9th grade students.
   c. Assessing every student to ensure that they are achieving the standards (at a high level of quality) and diagnosing which standards each student is experiencing difficulties with.
   d. Further staff development on the data management system so that all teachers can use data in order to know how students are achieving on the standards.
   e. Ensure that benchmark assessments are administered to all students three times a year and using the results to inform instruction.
      - The new principal, administrative team, and strong teacher leadership through the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), Department Chairs and Professional Development Committee, have guided the school’s efforts around standards-based instruction.

3. **Increase access to rigorous and relevant curriculum to ALL students that include a focus on higher order thinking skills (i.e. Bloom’s taxonomy) and metacognitive strategies. This critical area for follow up includes increasing access to advanced classes for underrepresented student groups.**
   - The school has clearly been focused on closing the achievement gap since the last visit. One result of this has been the great strides have been made in the performance levels of Latino students.
   - The school has increased access to Advanced Placement offerings, increased the number of offerings, and created a more inclusive enrollment policy for those courses.
   - The multi-phased rollout of HOT projects is an example of the school directly addressing this recommendation.

4. **The instructional staff should reference both content standards and ESLRs when developing syllabi and lesson plans**
   - Common syllabi and lesson planning are still a work in progress, the Visiting Committee saw evidence of progress in this area, especially in the area of the reference to students’ understanding of the content standards and clearly stated objectives connected to the lesson posted in classrooms.
Chapter III: Self Study Process

The school’s Expected Schoolwide Learner Outcomes are reflected in the acronym G.R.A.S.P. - helping STHS students get a “grasp” on their future.

Saints are:

**Goal-oriented**, reflecting on
  - where they have been, where they are now, and where they are going
  - short term
  - long term

**Responsible**
  - informed
  - conscientious (reflection)
  - moral (thinking beyond the self)
  - timely

**Academically sound** in
  - reading, writing, and speaking
  - historical and cultural appreciation
  - life and environmental appreciation
  - calculations and logic
  - technology and art appreciation

**Socially adept**, able to
  - communicate (through listening, writing, speaking, and other media)
  - respect others’ differences (age, gender, ethnicity, and culture)
  - participate actively
  - encourage and critique
  - compromise

**Problem-solvers** who
  - Think critically (analyze, synthesize, hypothesize, create…)
  - Research and,
  - Yes, apply knowledge to solve simple and complex real-life problems

• **Comment on the school’s Self Study process with respect to the expected outcomes of the Self Study.**
  1. The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement

• The Self Study reflects a high degree collaboration with all staff and stakeholders throughout the process; classroom observations, Focus Area Group meetings, and conversations with students and staff confirmed that
collaboration is a real strength at STHS. The Self Study Coordinator provided the Visiting Committee Chairperson and, subsequently, the entire Visiting Committee, a live link of the report via Google Drive. The live document provided evidence of input from several stakeholders in the form of questions, comments, and written responses to the prompts in Chapter IV.

2. The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards (note the selected schoolwide learner outcomes examined by the school)

   - The Self Study reports that the school staff and Site Council examined the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs) in depth in 2006 with the key question being, “What skills make people successful?” The SLOs have remained the same since then. While there has been a recent “rededication” to the SLOs by staff and students, there is little evidence of measuring student progress on the SLOs or that they are an integral part of teaching and learning at the school. There are plans to begin that process in the near future.

3. The gathering and analyzing of data about students and student achievement

   - (See #4 below)

4. The assessment of the entire school program and its impact on student learning in relation to schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards and WASC/CDE criteria

   - As stated above, there is little data in the report regarding student progress on the SLOs. As evidenced in the School Profile, there is significant data via Illuminate and other sources that informs all stakeholders of student progress related to academic standards and the WASC/CDE criteria.
   - Stakeholders utilized the available data to identify the impact of the total school program on student learning and the critical learner needs. While Latino students have made significant improvement on standardized tests over the past three years, there exists a significant gap between their achievement and their Caucasian peers. Economically Disadvantaged continue to show little progress on standardized tests.

5. The alignment of a long-range action plan to the school’s areas of need; the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the plan.

   - In reviewing the school’s long range action plan--linked directly to the school’s Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA)--the Visiting Committee feels that it is appropriately aligned to the school’s greatest areas of identified needs:
     ○ Improving proficiency in English Language Arts
     ○ Improving proficiency in mathematics
○ Improving safety on campus

● There are many action steps involved in carrying out these plans. The school has many initiatives in progress, most of which are tied to these three areas. With the current administrative structure of three administrators and two counselors, the Visiting Committee is concerned about the capacity of the school to successfully complete the action steps in a timely manner. As is part of the school’s culture, however, strong teacher leadership will help in the planning, monitoring, and implementation process, and we are confident that the school’s long range plan will address these critical student needs within an appropriate timeline.

Chapter IV: Quality of the School’s Program

Part A: What Currently Exists

Based on the school’s Self Study and Visiting Committee findings, for each criterion (in the following categories):

A. Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership and Staff, and Resources
B. Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum
C. Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction
D. Standards-based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability
E. School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

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

A1. Organization Criterion

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

To what extent is the school’s purpose supported by the governing board and the central administration and further by schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards?

STHS’s Mission and Vision statements have remained unchanged in the past 7 years. While the school did access input on whether any changes were needed (through a staff survey), and it was decided that both elements are “still relevant and appropriate”, an opportunity was missed to refresh community thinking about the program. A lack of “concern or criticism” from the community is identified as the reason for remaining with the status quo. However, comments from the staff survey suggest that there is room for revision, for tightening up and updating the Schoolwide Learning Outcomes in particular. A broad-based process of review and revision may be useful for building agreements and commitment to change among the various stakeholders. There is some thinking that the new vision at the District level should serve as a measuring stick for a revision of the school’s Mission and Vision.

Despite the general agreement with the Mission and Vision, there is little evidence that they are a conscious aspect of the day-to-day teaching and learning activities. The school’s administration
is developing a plan for an annual review of the SLOs and the Professional Development Committee has committed to developing strategies and procedures for integrating them into classroom activities.

The school has instituted a system of teacher self-reflection about their grading as an indicator of student learning. A bi-annual “GRASP Report”, which is ostensibly tied to the SLOs, does ask teachers to examine the final semester grades given and reflect upon the implications for instruction and student learning. The model could be made even more useful with the integration of a broader array of site-based data about progress on key academic standards, a type of standards-based report card.

A2. Governance Criterion

To what extent does the governing board have policies and bylaws that are aligned with the school’s purpose and support the achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards based on data-driven instructional decisions for the school?

To what extent does the governing board have delegate implementation of these policies to the professional staff?

To what extent does the governing board monitor regularly results and approve the single schoolwide action plan and its relationship to the Local Educational Agency (LEA) plan?

The governing board of the East Side Union High School District meets regularly and posts agendas and minutes in a timely fashion.

There are a variety of ways that parents and community members can learn about and provide input into policies and procedures of the school district and school, including attendance at Board meetings, membership in the School Site Council, and participation in parent support groups, specifically the Latino Parent Coalition, the African-American Student Alliance, and athletic and music booster groups.

Formal participation in decision-making by parents and students is limited to the statutory requirements of the School Site Council (although the SSC approves the site budget, a role no longer required by statute). The agendas of those meetings indicate that it serves more of a monitoring function than a leadership role in the school. Agendas and minutes of the various meetings are not posted on the website, thus limiting awareness and participation by the various communities.

While the STHS website has pages for each of the different parent support groups, agendas and minutes of meetings are not published. There is little evidence of regular communication by the support groups to the community. In conversations with parents, it appears that communication within the various groups is essential to their success, i.e. those groups that have effective communication systems tend to have greater and more active parent involvement whereas those that are struggling to engage parents are also struggling with their communication systems. Improvements to the school-wide communication system could help these struggling groups.

A3. Leadership and Staff Criterion

To what extent based on student achievement data, does the school leadership and staff make decisions and initiate activities that focus on all students achieving the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards?
To what extent does the school leadership and staff annually monitor and refine the single schoolwide action plan based on analysis of data to ensure alignment with student needs?

The staff is broadly included in the leadership of the school through the ITL, Department Chairs and Professional Development committees. There is a long-standing culture and system of distributed leadership and collaboration, which provides many opportunities for staff leadership at an instructional level. In particular, the Professional Development Committee serves to build capacity for leadership within the faculty by helping teachers with systems knowledge and increasing buy-in. The questions that are guiding professional development, such as “What am I doing to reduce D & F rates?” serve to break down the traditional isolation of teachers in their classroom and contribute to the collaborative climate.

While the current administration has provided a strong and clear vision for progress within the school, the relative lack of process to revitalize the school vision and mission means that the coherence now evident may be challenged with the inevitable change in administration (hopefully not a near future event). The Self Study reports that surveys of teachers did not indicate a need to revise the vision and mission, and another viewpoint expressed is that there wasn’t the energy or time to undertake a careful review that would include all of the stakeholders. An opportunity was missed to reflect, reprioritize, and re-energize an inclusive, future-oriented mission and vision to serve as the guidepost for a broad-based action plan.

The school has plans developing for school-based accountability systems that connect funding requests and curriculum endeavors to the Mission, SLOs and SPSA, increasing alignment and coherence within the school program. There is interest in a greater focus on student achievement data as a basis for decision-making. Data sources identified include standardized tests, discipline rates, and grades. There is no evidence of a plan to develop achievement data collection systems based on progress on identified learning progressions towards proficiency on local or State standards.

A4. Leadership and Staff Criterion

To what extent does a qualified staff facilitates achievement of the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes through a system of preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development?

The District Human Resources department posts vacancies through the online job site EdJoin. There is no evidence of efforts to recruit teachers of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Site administrators and teacher leaders (Department Chairs) conduct candidate interviews. The interview process includes a sample lesson in front of real students, when possible. Recommendations for hire are presented to the HR Department for final credential and qualification verifications.

Teaches have input into their teaching assignments on a voluntary basis although final decisions are made by Administration based on benefits to the students.

The school is working on improving the internal communication system to facilitate understanding of policies and procedures by staff. As of now, communication is fairly traditional, i.e. through meetings, memos, and “open-doors”.

STHS is fully engaged in moving towards a comprehensive professional and collegial program.
It is an impressive effort. Teachers have recently begun to participate in the practice of “Instructional Rounds”; the GRASP reports mentioned previously are very positive tools for self-reflection; the sharing of practices through “Shadow Day” and “Best Practices” professional development programming are strong evidence that staff members recognize and want to share the expertise that exists within the school.

The extent of communication to families about student academic progress and events or issues being debated at the school has a fair amount of room for improvement. The School Loop tool is underutilized and is thus frustrating to families who are trying to support their students to be more successful. At the same time, the School Loop tool has its limitations. Agreements among the staff about the use of the online grading or some other system for reporting student progress towards proficiency on SLOs and intervals for reporting such progress would be very helpful as a support to all students.

A5. Leadership and Staff Criterion

To what extent are leadership and staff involved in ongoing research or data-based correlated professional development that focuses on identified student learning needs?

The evaluation system in the ESUHSD is fairly standard (and useful) as the California Standards for the Teaching Profession are the basis for review. Where STHS departs from the norm is its engagement with the faculty in establishing the professional and collegial community described in the previous section. The Professional Development committee agendas, collaboration calendars, HOT (Higher Order Thinking) projects, and data from Instructional Rounds are evidence of a coherent and thoughtful professional development strategy.

Where this effort falls short, however, is in the measurement of its impact on student learning. The priority until now has been placed on establishing a culture and systems for teacher-led professional development. The school recognizes that the development of such a culture is only part of the equation. Measuring its success is the next very big step to take.

Further development of common formative assessments, rubrics for describing different levels of proficiency, and the previously mentioned focus on understanding learning progressions all facilitate valid and useful data generation to inform instruction.

A6. Resources Criterion

To what extent are the human, material, physical, and financial resources sufficient and utilized effectively and appropriately in accordance with the legal intent of the program(s) to support students in accomplishing the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

A significant amount of money has been spent in recent years to upgrade school buildings, facilities, and the technology resource base (aka computing devices and systems). However, spending on instructional resources, most notably teaching and support staff and instructional days have been cut dramatically. New counseling offices were built, although resources allocated to hire actual counselors are nowhere near adequate to serve the needs of such a large and diverse student body.
The school’s leadership capacity is hampered by the dearth of expenditures on human resources. Support systems have been severely compromised, including guidance counseling, library, attendance, mental health, and college and career services. Discussions with site and district leaders confirm that the school will benefit from the improving state budget which will provide for increased support for the school’s basic operational needs, such as quality IEP reports, test administration, accountability systems, etc. as well as the time for the leadership team to get into classrooms and supervise teachers in their curriculum and instructional development.

The school has done an admirable job managing limited site-based resources to take advantage of the technological changes, in particular. The teacher-led Professional Development programming described earlier facilitates the use of technologies in some very exciting ways, including student creativity, learning feedback strategies, and a trend towards one-to-one computing device programming. In addition, the administrative and teacher leaders at the school consistently go above and beyond to student and classroom needs. They are focused on maximizing what resources they have and exhibit a culture of support and improvement.

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

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

1. The strong teacher leadership through the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), Department Chairs and Professional Development Committee. Many opportunities are provided to increase capacity for effective leadership in a coherent, school-wide fashion.
2. The trust and professionalism of the school’s administration towards the staff and students, which facilitates a safe and positive learning environment.
3. Sharing of professional and collegial resources through such innovative efforts as Instructional Rounds, GRASP reports, “Shadow Day” and “Best Practices.”
4. Expenditures on facilities and technology are helping to support student learning and putting modern instructional tools in the hands of teachers and students.

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

1. The school’s Vision and Mission has remained unchanged in 7 years. The Visiting Committee feels the time is right for stakeholders to consider a broad-based process of review and revision of the school’s Vision and Mission, which will help build coherence and commitment to long-term change among stakeholders.
2. Improved communication within the various groups and among the broader school community would facilitate deeper engagement of the learning community. The administration and teacher leaders should ensure the school’s website is a conduit of information for all stakeholders by posting agendas and minutes of regularly scheduled meetings related to school improvement, professional development, and action planning.
3. As learned in conversations with parents and some teachers, the School Loop tool is underutilized and often a source of frustration to families who are trying to support their students. The administration and teaching staff should develop baseline expectations for
communication via School Loop and communicate those expectations to parents and students.

4. Resources for staffing are severely deficient. Despite heroic efforts, there is only so much the staff can do to differentiate instruction, provide interventions, monitor the quality of teaching, and meet legal and statutory requirements with only 3 administrators, two counselors and 175 student contacts for full time teachers. Given increased funding opportunities through this year’s state budget, the district leadership should work collaboratively with the Santa Teresa administration to restore key teaching, counseling, administrative, and support positions, as well as explore opportunities for teachers to participate in quasi-leadership roles within the school.

Important evidence from the Self Study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- Self Study document
- Dialogue with focus groups and key stakeholders
- Formal and informal discussions with students and parents
- Student achievement data, including standardized test scores and grades
- Extended dialogue with Leadership Team
- Classroom observations
- Discussions with the site and district administration

CATEGORY B. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: CURRICULUM

B1. Curriculum Criterion

To what extent do all students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-based curriculum that supports the achievement of the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

To what extent through standards-based learning (what is taught and how it is taught), are the schoolwide learner outcomes accomplished?

In the time that the new principal been in his position, two years, all staff have been involved in Professional Development that encourages the use of critical thinking (HOT) skills and 77% of teachers report that they also explicitly teach and scaffold the skills students need to complete the projects. Discussions with student representatives reveal their belief that real-world projects are mostly limited to the AP and other advanced subjects, although the Visiting Committee saw evidence in other areas. In addition, students and staff feel that the curriculum lacks a-g approved career-vocational course options.

Academic Standards for Each Area: The school has defined academic standards for each subject area, course, and/or program, and where, applicable, expectations within the courses that meet the UC “a-g” requirements.

As reported in Santa Teresa High’s Self Study, the school is in compliance with district
regulations that each course be aligned with state standards and that 93% of all courses (except Physical Education and Special Education courses) meet UC a-g requirements. Expectations for courses are clearly defined in course descriptions and syllabi. In addition, there is a push, led by the Instructional Team Leaders, to get all teachers to use a common syllabus format by 2014-2015 to correspond with Common Core implementation.

**Congruence: There is congruence between the actual concepts and skills taught, the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes.**

Many classes integrate collaborative group learning activities. Some classes engage students in real-world projects that teach problem-solving as well as how to manage time, prioritize and collaborate with peers. The staff reports a high degree of involvement in the WASC focus groups and, generally, teachers agree that the collaboration to produce HOT projects was worthwhile. However, in speaking to individual teachers, it is not clear that all teachers see the importance of stressing this type of professional development, as several teachers commented that they had “already been teaching critical thinking skills and engaging students” before the collaboration. In fact, in a school survey, 42% of teachers do not feel ready to transition to the Common Core (with its emphasis on critical thinking skills); only 13% said they felt ready.

**Student Work — Engagement in Learning: The school’s examination of representative samples of student work and snapshots of student engagement in learning demonstrate the implementation of a standards-based curriculum and the schoolwide learner outcomes.**

The Visiting Committee observed an extremely spirited and involved student body at STHS. GRASP, the acronym for the schoolwide learner outcomes, has been prominently painted by students on a wall. In speaking with students, it is evident that they are familiar with what the acronym means, though some seem to view it negatively, perhaps confusing it with the so-called “GRASP” report of D and F students.

Santa Teresa’s strength in culture translates into extracurricular participation. In addition to the “Lip Dub” project that involved the whole school, students are invited to participate in projects such as the water bottle awareness project (sponsored by AP Environmental Science), a Renaissance Fair, Healthy Choices weeks, and an annual “AcademiCon”—a conference that broadens students’ perspectives and prepares them for the professional world.

**Accessibility of All Students to Curriculum: A rigorous, relevant, and coherent curriculum to all students is accessible to all students through all courses/programs offered. The school examines the demographics and situation of students throughout the class offerings. The school’s instructional practices and other activities facilitate access and success for special needs students.**

The Santa Teresa Self Study report acknowledges there is an achievement gap affecting minority students, especially as the school’s demographic population changes. The staff has been grappling with the problem and has taken measures to begin to resolve it. During the Instruction Focus Group meeting, one teacher reported that the Self Study process and reflection led her to take more personal interest in individuals doing poorly. Each student may need a different
approach, for example coaching, more personal rapport, or calling home. Many of her students began to have more success. One teacher specifically credited her HOT project for engaging a student so much that he has improved from an F student to an A student. Other teachers added similar accounts of reversing D and F trends.

On a school level, there was the decision to support low achieving students by setting up a biology and geometry class that is co-taught by two teachers. It has proven to be a model of supporting students, and has been so successful there are now three sections of the class.

**Integration among Disciplines:** There is integration among disciplines at the school and where applicable, integration of outsourced curriculum into the program so that curricular integrity, reliability, and security are maintained.

Professional development that now targets HOT projects also envisions making structural and procedural adjustments to better allow for the implementation of cross-curricular and project-based learning. But there is some integration of cross-curricular and interdisciplinary skills, and this is becoming a more frequent occurrence. An example is the American Studies program, which integrates US History with English 3 in a block format. It also has a service learning component, which places students in community organizations once a week to increase the relevance of their studies.

Other disciplines take on cross-curricular projects, such as a unit on calories in biology and PE, and a unit in English that connects with U.S. history, psychology, and sociology. World Language students go on field trips and participate in a variety of real world experiences where they are expected to utilize their skills in the language they are studying. Science labs engage students with solving real world problems such as DNA and fingerprinting. Students in visual arts participate in community-based art projects both on campus and in the greater San Jose area. Students in journalism practice skills beyond the campus and conduct investigations within the community.

**Curricular Development, Evaluation, and Revisions:** The school assesses its curriculum review and evaluation processes for each program area, including graduation requirements, credits, grading policies, and homework policy, to ensure student needs are met through a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum. This includes the degree to which there is involvement of key stakeholders (governing board members, teachers, parents, and students).

The head counselor and the assistant principal audit student grades to adjust course offerings, then build the master schedule based on student need. Counselors complete grade and graduation inventories in the spring and fall of each year to verify the graduation and a-g requirements for each student. Teachers monitor student progress and notify parents of any D and F grades halfway through each grading period. Grades are posted every six weeks. Every grading period, teachers receive a GRASP report for their each grading period which lists student grades and progress. In 2013, the ITL focused on the development of a common syllabus format to streamline curriculum expectations, grading policies and grade determinations. The common syllabus will be piloted in the 2014-2015 school year.
**Policies — Rigorous, Relevant, Coherent Curriculum: The school assesses the curriculum and its rigor, relevancy, and coherency after examination of policies regarding course completion, credits, grading policies, homework, etc.**

Due to budget cuts that have eliminated many teaching and administrative positions, the administrative staff is severely tasked. In spite of this, over 80 teachers last year and some 40 teachers this year have been formally evaluated by the administration in their classrooms. But it is apparent, through Visiting Committee classroom observations and discussions with the administration that there remains a need for additional monitoring of instruction. The Self Study reports that approximately one third of the staff would benefit from additional monitoring and support.

**Articulation and Follow-up Studies: The school articulates regularly with feeder schools and local colleges and universities. The school uses follow-up studies of graduates and others to learn about the effectiveness of the curricular program.**

The Self Study reports regular articulation with feeder schools and local colleges and universities, including assemblies with 8th graders, a Freshman night once a year, and a Freshman orientation in the fall. The SPED department, the Multimedia department, and the English department do their own presentations to incoming freshmen. The English department hosts a summer reading program. In addition, in the summer of 2013 a special effort started in the form of a Summer Bridge program to assist struggling 8th grade students with the transition to high school; it is a five week program targeting English, math, and science skills.

The Self Study and conversations with teacher leaders indicate the district, school, and English Department have long been troubled by feedback from San Jose State University regarding the number of students who take remedial courses at the university. This has led to ongoing conversations about writing standards and how they relate to the pacing guides, especially in English 1 and 2. The conversations led to the adoption of the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) to help assure more student readiness for college level writing. In fact, ERWC has replaced English 4 as the default English course 12 graders. The department is currently participating in a WESTED study comparing the success of seniors enrolled in ERWC to those who aren’t.

**B2. Curriculum Criterion**

*To what extent do all students have equal access to the school’s entire program and assistance with a personal learning plan to prepare them for the pursuit of their academic, personal, and school-to-career goals?*

Within the constraints of the master schedule, students have opportunities to make appropriate choices and pursue a full range of realistic college/career and/or other educational options. The school provides for career exploration, preparation for postsecondary education, and pre-technical training for all students.
In spite of a wide range of classes in the arts—nine music classes and a developed drama program, as well as graphic arts--there is not a full range of real world career and vocational options for students on the Santa Teresa campus. This issue was discussed in the Self Study and in Focus Area Group meetings. Several students are supported to attend the Central County Occupational Center to pursue an exploratory, vocational path. However, for this purpose, students have to go off campus, which limits student access and participation.

Parents, students, and staff collaborate in developing and monitoring a student's personal learning plan, based upon a student's learning style and college/career or other educational goals. This includes the evaluation of whether online instruction matches the student’s learning style.

Santa Teresa offers numerous presentations for parents seeking to understand better how to guide their children’s educational choices. Parents and students have Naviance accounts and access to School Loop. Counselors have an open door policy. However, as noted above, with an 1100:1 ration of students to counseling staff, students report that they do not have as much access to personal guidance as they would like. In the 12th grade, Naviance has a variety of resources for choosing colleges, applying to colleges and financial aid.

The school implements processes for monitoring and making appropriate changes in students' personal learning plans (e.g., classes and programs) and regularly evaluates them.

Naviance helps students to monitor their own progress, and helps counselors review and approve all student schedules. Students who want to participate in Advanced Placement classes no longer need teacher approval, per a recently implemented district policy.

B3. Curriculum Criterion

To what extent are students able to meet all the requirements of graduation upon completion of the high school program?

With a large increase of AP classes, and a district and administrative emphasis on project-based learning, students feel that they have ample access to rigorous, standards-based curriculum, and that the curriculum and teachers prepare them adequately to continue their education in colleges and universities. However, students and staff report a need to provide additional resources for students who want to pursue different post secondary options. Even college-bound students, as represented by members of the Robotics after-school club, report that the lack of vocational courses limits their educational focus.

CATEGORY B: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: CURRICULUM

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

1. Students have a wide range of choices regarding class selection and are able to self-select their courses based on personal interest and ability
2. Teacher leaders and other stakeholders are involved in high-quality co-curricular projects,
such as the collaboration between leadership and media classes, which supplements the journalism class with a media component.

3. The school offers a large selection of rigorous and relevant courses that meet a-g requirements to support diverse student interests and preferences.

4. Counselors utilize a variety of productive outreach strategies, such as Naviance, to help students be successful and prepared for post secondary pursuits.

5. Although concerns still remain regarding the achievement gap, great strides have been made in the performance levels of Latino students.

Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum:

1. While the Visiting Committee recognizes the successful efforts to close the achievement gap as referenced in #4 of the Strengths above, there remains a need for the school staff and administration to continue their reflection and problem-solving to support underachieving ethnic minorities and other underachieving students on an individual basis.

2. There is a critical need for the district and site administration to secure resources to provide additional PPS credentialed counseling support.

3. In discussions with students, teachers, and parents, there is a need to provide students with more post-high school options other than college and university. As the state and district budget cuts are restored over the next six years, site and district administrators should collaborate with students, parents, and teachers to implement a process for adding additional career oriented elective courses.

4. The administration and Professional Development Committee need to continue their efforts to provide training and development of curriculum aligned to the new common core standards.

5. The staff needs to continue to have conversations regarding rigor, relevance, coherence, and the balance between providing students access to challenging courses and ensuring that they are prepared to succeed in those courses.

Important evidence from the Self Study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- Self Study document
- Dialogue with focus groups and key stakeholders
- Formal and informal discussions with students and parents
- Review of course outlines and syllabi
- Student achievement data, including standardized test scores and grades
- A-G completion data
- Student work that provided insight regarding the use of critical thinking skills, application of learning, and collaborative projects, both individual and groups
- Summary comments by staff that explain analysis of representative student work
- Extended dialogue with Leadership Team
- Classroom observations
- Displays of student work
CATEGORY C. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: INSTRUCTION

C1. Instruction Criterion

To what extent are all students involved in challenging learning experiences to achieve the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

The Visiting Committee observed that many teachers provide challenging learning experiences for students through the high level of academic rigor in their classes. However, inconsistencies in instruction that affect student engagement and achievement exist. Student learner outcomes are supported by a strong school spirit facilitated through the ASB, student clubs and athletics.

Based on discussions with Focus Area Groups, teacher leaders, and administrators the trend towards instruction that supports critical thinking, more authentic learning, and project-based learning would be dramatically facilitated by a return to some form of a block schedule. The current six or seven period day with its 55 minute periods is an obstacle to the kind of instruction that enables students to engage in collaborative exploration and critical analysis of a topic.

In addition, there is a desire among teachers and students for more cross-disciplinary instruction that could provide connections and real-world experiences for students that are more engaging and would facilitate synthesis and analysis at significantly higher levels. The establishment of small learning communities, particularly those with a Career Technology Education focus, would serve to increase personal connections and sense of community for students.

C2. Instruction Criterion

To what extent do all teachers use a variety of strategies and resources, including technology and experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom that actively engage students, emphasize higher order thinking skills, and help them succeed at high levels?

The Visiting Committee observed strengths and inconsistencies among teachers incorporating higher order level teaching that engages all students. Many teachers effectively utilized enhanced instruction, including educational technology, into their daily lessons. There is a high level of teacher collaboration that is a valuable resource for teachers to improve their instruction.

Interviews with teachers and other stakeholders indicate that there is a need for continued improvement across departments to improve student engagement. The Visiting Committee observed a high level of support for students outside of the classroom in extracurricular and co-curricular activities.

The previously mentioned staffing reductions and the segmented school structure presents a significant challenge for meeting the personalized learning needs of students. Many schools have found that the effective use of an Advisory period allows for a specialized focus on executive functioning skills, extra tutorials, and school-wide themes.

CATEGORY C: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: INSTRUCTION

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

1. Technology resources (laptops, smartboards, Apple TV, etc.) are available to enhance instruction, and there is evidence that those resources are beginning to be utilized
effectively in many classrooms.
2. In conversations with students and parents, there is a high degree of caring and support for students in both their academic and personal endeavors.
3. The collaborative work conducted throughout departments is moving towards project-based instruction.
4. The high degree of teacher leadership promotes best instructional practices, including Hot Projects.

**Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction:**

1. The district and site administration should examine ways to provide more resources (i.e. time) to monitor, guide and support instruction to ensure a consistent high level of instruction throughout all classes.
2. Conversations with students revealed they fail subjects because they don’t like them, and they take responsibility for the results; however, the Visiting Committee feels that the administration and Professional Development Committee need to explore strategies and best practices around the concept of “student engagement” as a possible solution to reduce the large percentage of D’s and F’s.
3. The administration and teaching staff should investigate alternative schedules, particularly a return to block scheduling, which would facilitate instruction that more deeply promotes collaborative exploration and critical analysis of a topic.
4. The administration and teaching staff should continue to investigate smaller learning communities, particularly those with a Career Technology Education focus. Small learning communities increase personal connections and sense of community for students and help them understand the purpose of their learning in a way that is difficult in the traditional, segmented school structure.
5. The school administration and teacher leadership should explore adding an additional support class, such as an advisory period, which would allow for a specialized focus on executive functioning skills, extra tutorials, and school-wide themes.

**Important evidence from the Self Study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Self Study document
- Dialogue with focus groups and key stakeholders
- Formal and informal discussions with students and parents
- Student achievement data, including standardized test scores and grades
- A-G completion data
- Student work that provided insight regarding the use of critical thinking skills, application of learning, and collaborative projects, both individual and groups
- Summary comments by staff that explain analysis of representative student work
- Extended dialogue with Leadership Team
- Classroom observations
- Displays of student work
CATEGORY D. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

D1. Assessment and Accountability Criterion

*To what extent does the school use a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, analyze, and report student performance data to the school staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders of the school community?*

STHS collects and reports achievement data using a variety of mostly traditional practices including School Accountability Report Cards, standardized testing data (e.g. CST, AP, CAHSEE/Mock CAHSEE, etc.), and report card system with progress report and semester grade reports. The school has adopted the School Loop grade book as an option for teachers, but it is not used uniformly. Grade reporting to students and parents is enhanced if they have subscribed to Naviance.

The GRASP Report is an innovative mechanism that is prepared by the administration for teachers and students. For teachers, it is a report of their grades as compared to overall STHS grades and those in their own department. Students receive a report that includes a broader set of data including current grades, attendance data, graduation progress, and course options they are qualified for. These are designed for reflection by both teachers and students.

The faculty is struggling to achieve common understandings of how grades given in different classes reflect actual student progression towards course goals. The biggest challenge is finding a balance between value of teacher academic freedom and that of providing an equitable measurement system. One example of this is the debate about how to reduce “D & F” rates, particularly among African-American and Latino students. An encouraging development is the schoolwide focus on HOTs projects – a multi-phased rollout of lessons designed to address higher order thinking skills - and the analytical sections of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge. These efforts are leading to greater collaboration and shared language with respect to instructional strategies and assessments. In addition, the multi-phased initiative to implement “instructional rounds” with its emphasis on teacher peer observation and sharing of pedagogical resources promises to encourage the communication needed to find the balance mentioned previously.

Some departments have been developing common rubrics and benchmark assessments in an attempt to norm the evaluation of students. For example, in English and Math, District-level benchmark assessments are given every six weeks and results are recorded into Data Director. However, significant disagreements about assessment and grading remain, such as how much of a grade should reflect competency and how much compliance.

An important area for focus, particularly since it is emphasized strongly in the Common Core State Standards, is the use of formative assessment to inform instruction. The ability to effectively assess student progress towards a set of standards requires a fairly sophisticated understanding of the skill/knowledge developmental steps needed to get there (aka learning progressions). This understanding contributes to effective strategies for intervention and differentiation. Continuing development of rubrics that describe the stages of learning in a particular standard will help with this process.
D2. Assessment and Accountability Criterion

To what extent do teachers employ a variety of strategies to evaluate student learning?

To what extent do students and teachers use assessment results to enhance the educational progress of every student?

The advent of Common Core is causing a reprioritization of the effort to come to agreement on common assessment strategies. HOT Projects (Higher Order Thinking) are being developed as part of this effort. Teachers have agreed to design three different project-oriented assessments during the 2013-14 school year and reflect on the implications of these projects for understanding student progress towards standards. There are challenges, particularly to justify these projects with the pacing requirements of the District curriculum guides. In addition, insufficient time has been allocated in collaborative meetings to analyze the results of these various assessment efforts.

The faculty and administration are interested in the quality of the student academic experience and seek it out through the “Students Teaching Teachers” program twice per year. Students report to teachers during a professional development session about their learning preferences and experiences. The Professional Development Committee is currently developing other strategies to solicit student feedback on instructional effectiveness.

While the previously mentioned focus on D&F students has engendered important discussions about grading policies, the systemic shift to a standardized grading policy and the way student growth is monitored has yet to happen. While the student and teacher GRASP reports are good ideas in that they bring together a variety of data about a student into one place, the data itself is fairly traditional and standardized. While this is probably fine for higher achieving students, it is insufficient for the struggling and at-risk populations who need actionable data to target interventions and differentiation strategies.

The thinly staffed counseling department makes a heroic effort to meet with Juniors and Seniors each year to evaluate student progress towards graduation, college eligibility and career preparation. While the staff is working hard and using tools such as Naviance to supplement their efforts, the meager allocation of 2.0 counselors FTE for a population of 2248 is wholly insufficient to meet student needs.

D3. Assessment and Accountability Criterion

To what extent does the school, with the support of the district and community, have an assessment and monitoring system to determine student progress toward achievement of the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

Several stakeholder groups monitor student achievement on a variety of indicators. The Leadership Team and Instructional Team Leader Meetings are charged with reviewing student data and using those data as a basis for decision-making. The School Site Council is kept abreast of developments to help inform the Site Planning process. In addition, the Professional Development Committee and individual work done by teachers through the PD process provides an effective opportunity for teachers to make progress on these issues as members of a professional community.

Student progress is reported through the GRASP report process, examination of standardized test
data, and evaluation of the Single Plan for Student Achievement. The use of the data warehousing program, Data Director, is limited primarily to the English and Math Departments, mostly for common benchmark assessments (although there are several teachers using it in their individual classrooms separately from departmental or District standardization).

D4. **Assessment and Accountability Criterion**

*To what extent does the assessment of student achievement in relation to the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes drive the school’s program, its regular evaluation and improvement, and the allocation and usage of resources?*

There are three significant school-wide efforts to examine student achievement data and reflect on its implications for changing instruction.

The lessons from the D&F All Staff Collaboration are that there is a discrepancy between pass rates on standardized tests and pass rates on associated courses; that a disproportionate number of African-American and Latino students were represented on the D&F list; and that most D&F grades were due to disengagement and lack of work completion.

The Professional Development Committee is leading focused professional development on Higher Order Thinking skills and the development of projects that increase student engagement without decreasing rigor.

The PD Committee is leading a refocus of the conversation of HOTS to the action-based verbiage of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge system.

**CATEGORY D: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability:**

1. STHS has established a priority to improve its system for collecting, analyzing and disseminating student data. The Leadership structure is sensitive to these issues and is facilitating the examination of current assessment systems and the development of new approaches, as is evidenced by their work with Higher Order Thinking Skills and Depth of Knowledge.

2. Some departments have been developing common rubrics and benchmark assessments in an attempt to norm the evaluation of students.

3. The multi-phased rollout of HOT projects and Instructional Rounds is increasing the capacity for the development of a well-designed assessment system that will facilitate student progress towards the Common Core State Standards.

**Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability:**

1. There is a need for the site and district administration to provide resources for the development a more systematic way to collect, evaluate, and report on student progression towards proficiency on an increasingly complex set of curriculum standards, most notably the Common Core State Standards.

2. The faculty should continue their efforts to achieve common understandings of how grades given in different classes reflect actual student progression towards course goals.
3. Teachers and administration should work collaboratively to facilitate ongoing development of new formative assessment processes and clarify the value of formative assessments linked to schoolwide learner outcomes.

4. The unevenness of instructional quality hampers progress towards the goals described above. The district and site administration and the Professional Development Committee should allocate more resources (i.e. time, funding) to instructional supervision, including peer supervision models that would help moderate this inconsistency.

**Important evidence about student learning from the Self Study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Self Study document
- Observing instruction
- Dialogue with focus groups and key stakeholders
- Report of student achievement data, including standardized test scores and student grades
- Student work that provided insight regarding the use of critical thinking skills, application of learning, and collaborative projects, both individual and groups
- Summary comments by staff that explain analysis of representative student work
- Extended dialogue with Leadership Team
- Classroom observations
- Dialogue with focus groups and key stakeholders
- Displays of student work

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

**E1. School Culture and Student Support Criterion**

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

Santa Teresa High School utilizes several electronic resources to establish communication with parents including School Loop, where staff members can upload course materials and information, and grades. According to the Self Study, ⅓ of the staff is using School Loop to inform students and parents. STHS also uses Teleparent to send information to parents via home telephone. The program allows staff to send information in the student’s home language. A small percentage of the staff uses Teleparent to communicate with families regarding students who are failing classes. Parents stated that some parents using cellular phones are unable to receive Teleparent messages. Naviance is an online program students may use to make decisions regarding courses and college and career pathways. Students and parents may also obtain information through the school website and the STHS News Channel on YouTube. Information is mailed to home addresses, including student progress reports, which are sent home every six weeks. Information is also displayed on the marquee located at the front of the school. STHS hosts a number of events for students and parents to gain information about the
school, athletics, and academics. In addition to the School Site Council, there are six parent organizations and two special projects groups, which work to support and represent students of the school.

AcademiCon is an on-campus conference in which students attend breakout sessions conducted by community members and professionals. Students learn about different career and college opportunities available for them. At the school Student Family Center, interns from area colleges and universities work with students to ensure mental and social well being. Center staff conducts support groups for students, bring in guest speakers, and help students locate services they need. The counseling department runs workshops aimed to prepare students for applying to college. The STHS Discipline/Safety team also refers students to local services and/or the counseling center for help.

Many courses and clubs partner with community groups and businesses to conduct community outreach and/or require students to participate in community service as a part of the course curriculum.

STHS provides several opportunities for parents to learn about the school and the resources available to parents and students, and to become active participants in the school community; however, parents and other stakeholders report that school information systems need to be coordinated and expectations for school to home communication be clearly spelled out. STHS’s development of community partnerships to educate students is impressive and encourages students to become active members of society.

STHS has several programs, which have potential to have a greater impact on student achievement if used more effectively such as GRASP, Naviance, and TIPS. Self Study evidence indicates that many students are unaware of the resources available to them through the Student Family Center; however, interactions with students show that students do know of the services the Student Family Center provides and cited the center as a major source of support after a student committed suicide this year.

E2. School Culture and Student Support 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 improvement?

Student and staff responses to the school safety report closely align, with the majority of both groups reporting that violence is not increasing or occurring often, nor is it an area of major concern. The majority of both groups also agree that the school discipline policy is clearly stated, straightforward, effective, and strictly enforced. In addition, the two agreed that the school’s zero tolerance policy towards violence is understood and effectively carried out. During interviews, teachers expressed concern about the amount of time it takes administrators to handle discipline problems that occur within the classroom due to a lack of staffing.

According to survey results in the Self Study, a majority of students have not experienced bullying, though a notable percentage stated that bullying is a problem on campus. More students reported being bullied at school than through the internet. A low percentage of students reported
being involved in a physical altercation at school. The vast majority of students stated they feel safe at school while walking to and from school. While a large number of students reported that there is a gang problem in the community, the majority of students stated that there is not a gang problem within the school.

In the Self Study surveys, a majority of students claimed that there is a drug problem within the community and school. However, a small number reported using drugs and/or alcohol while on campus. Most students reported seeing peers abusing alcohol and/or drugs outside of school. According to discipline records, there was a notable decrease in the number of offences with substance abuse and/or possession of drugs and controlled substances during the 2012-2013 school year. Similarly, there was a decrease during the 2012-2013 school year for suspensions due to acts of violence, bullying, harassment, and possession of weapons. The number of referrals for disruption, defiance, classroom disturbance, insubordination, vulgarities, and disrespect for staff has also decreased. Teachers and staff indicated that much of this is due to the way advisors are now handling conflict within the school. Advisors are utilizing mediation to settle disputes among students and are being proactive and solving problems before they escalate. Mediation is also used when problems occur between students and teachers. Advisors make an effort to keep students in the classroom and on campus, only resorting to suspension when absolutely necessary. Some teachers indicated frustration with discipline problems being handled in a timely manner due to administration being short-staffed. Teachers also stressed the importance of establishing positive relationships with students in order to reduce discipline problems and better manage classrooms; interviews with students confirmed this occurs in the majority of the classes.

Attendance has steadily increased over the past five years, with the past two years exceeding attendance targets.

Student interviews supplied in the Self Study report indicate that students feel that the STHS staff is caring and committed to students. This proved to be true through committee interactions with students and observations within the majority of classrooms. During WASC committee interviews, parents expressed frustration and concern about teachers who were difficult to communicate with either because teachers did not return emails or use School Loop. Parents showed concern for those parents who do not have the ability or skills to communicate with teachers. The parents did note that there are many great teachers at STHS and communication difficulties are mostly an exception, not the norm.

Interviews with teachers during focus group conversations indicate that there is a high degree of trust between the teachers and the administrative staff. Teachers are encouraged to explore and identify professional development needed in order to improve their teaching practice.

E3. School Culture and Student Support Criterion

To what extent do all students receive appropriate support along with an individualized learning plan to help ensure academic success?

The STHS Student Family Center provides counseling services and connects students with area health resources. The Students Family services hosts a health fair that also connects students with local health resources and sends information through School Loop about community events.
to support various causes. Though the Self Study indicates that students are not fully aware of the services the Student Family Center offers, interviews with students showed that students do know of the resources and support available to them through the center.

The STHS Counseling Center provides students with workshops to inform them of career and educational opportunities available to them. Workshop topics reach a wide range of students, from those not on track for graduation to those who are preparing to go to a four-year university. The Counseling Center promotes its Naviance program through these workshops as well, instructing students how to efficiently use the program.

Students with an IEP or a 504 Plan have a case manager who oversees accommodations, modifications, and goals. At least once a year, the IEP or 504 plan is reviewed with the involvement of the parent/guardian, student, case manager, and at least one teacher. Administration readily admits that IEP’s are not up to date or standard due to the lack of personnel needed to manage these cases. The administration recognizes this as an area they urgently wish to improve, regardless of staffing issues. According to a parent of two students on 504 plans, STHS coordinators are very organized, great communicators, and simply put, “…the best.”

Safety and Discipline Advisors are limited in how much contact they have with students due to their 1100:1 student/advisor ratio. The Leadership team meets weekly to discuss at-risk students. Though limited by the number of students they see, the leadership team is implementing a policy in which they make contact with students newly enrolled to STHS.

An Economic Impact Aid (EIA) Coordinator position has been developed this year to implement the “+5 Program”. This is a program designed to help at-risk sophomores improve their academic standings. Teachers cited the “+5 program” as having a large impact on at-risk students’ achievement within the classroom, particularly with students of the Latino population.

STHS took a proactive approach by creating the Summer Bridge program to help incoming freshmen identified as at-risk. These students took mini-courses in English 1, Algebra 1, and Biology to prepare them for the demands of high school courses and give them an opportunity to move into a-g aligned courses as opposed to remedial classes.

GRASP reports are given to students biannually to review grades, recommend courses, and reflect on progress made. Though the Self Study highlights GRASP reports as an important tool for student reflection, student interviews indicate that students are unclear of the purpose and relevance of the reports. There is also a lack of clarity of the purpose of GRASP reports among teachers, some believing it is a tool used to judge performance. Others did state that GRASP reports have been useful in encouraging conversations amongst teachers about grading policies and pedagogy.

Naviance is used to help students select courses for the coming year. Students who may sign up for Advanced Placement courses by showing competency through PSAT scores or prerequisite grades earned.

Students in need of tutoring may refer to the tutoring map, which shows when teachers are available to help students and whether or not teachers are willing to help all students or only those enrolled in the courses they teach.

STHS has courses in Biology and Geometry that are co-taught by a content area teacher and special education teacher. These courses allow students with IEP’s or 504 plans to receive the
extra attention they need in order to succeed in a College Preparatory course. Teachers participating in the co-taught classrooms had positive remarks about the program and directly attribute this to improvement in rigor, achievement, and classroom behavior.

Students interested in working in technical fields may participate in Metropolitan Education District’s Silicon Valley Career Technical Education program. Students attend STHS classes for half of the school day and receive technical training through SVCTE for the remainder of the day. STHS provides students with a number of electives to choose from, many of which are a-g approved.

E4. School Culture and Student Support Criterion

To what extent do students have access to a system of personal support services, activities, and opportunities at the school and within the community?

The extent to which students have access to a system of support, activities, and opportunities within the school and community was best stated by a student who said in regards to what STHS has to offer, “If you want to go above and beyond and pursue your passion, you have the opportunity to do that.” Another student added, “There’s something for everyone.”

STHS has seventy-one clubs, including sports, for students to be involved in. There are a number of school-wide activities and awareness events for students to attend and participate in. Media and Leadership teachers have students utilize various forms of media to ensure that fellow students know of the many events and activities happening on campus. The clubs, activities, and events connect students with their peers and school fostering a strong sense of comradery and school pride. These also provide students with opportunities to connect with and become active participants in their community.

Students have access to several support services to help students both personally and academically. In spite of survey results to the contrary, students interviewed by the Visiting Committee are very aware of these resources available to them. Students communicated that many teachers are readily available to support them with their educational and personal needs.

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

Areas of strength for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth:

1. STHS has created an environment which effectively utilizes available resources among teachers, students, the community, and other stakeholders in order to support students.
2. The school is safe, which is recognized by staff, parents, and students.
3. Staff members are committed to supporting students in a variety of ways. One example of this is the use of Restorative Justice to reduce disciplinary problems and suspensions.
4. There is a culture of trust between teachers and administration, and teacher leadership is encouraged and effectively used. In addition, a dynamic and broad based student leadership program helps to foster a high degree of school spirit and positive campus culture at STHS.
5. The diversity and individuality of students is embraced, encouraged, and celebrated.

**Key issues for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth:**

1. The administration and faculty should develop strategies to help students better understand the relevance of the GRASP reports and reflect upon their results.
2. The administration and staff should continue measures to raise awareness of and prevent bullying in and outside of school.
3. Administration and staff should continue to pursue measures to address the problem of student drug and alcohol abuse outside of the school.
4. The administration and staff should explore alternative scheduling options, such as an advisory period, to better establish and support relationships with students.

**Important evidence about student learning from the Self Study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Self Study document
- Formal and informal discussions with students and parents
- Discussions with the counseling and support staff
- Observing instruction
- Dialogue with focus groups and key stakeholders
- Reports of student achievement data
- Extended dialogue with Leadership Team
- Classroom observations
- Dialogue with focus groups and key stakeholders
- Displays of student work
Part B: Schoolwide Strengths and Critical Areas for Follow-up

General Comments:

- The Self Study, classroom observations, a review of data, and meetings with stakeholders confirmed that Santa Teresa High School has a clear focus on student learning and student success. Focus Area Group meetings confirmed that the school’s stakeholders spent a great deal of time reviewing the entire school’s program in relation to the WASC/CDE criteria in preparation for the Self Study and current WASC visit. The Visiting Committee is confident that this collaborative effort will continue after the visit and will drive the school’s improvement initiatives. Santa Teresa High School students enjoy outstanding support from their teachers, administrators, and classified staff. They also enjoy a very positive school climate and a variety of co-curricular and extracurricular offerings that keep school spirit high and students involved with the school. Students have benefitted from recent upgrades to facilities and from the addition of technological resources that will continue to enhance their learning. The school’s administration and staff have worked hard to maintain a quality learning environment in spite of significant budget cuts over recent years. The Visiting Committee is hopeful that new funding sources will provide much needed support as the school addresses the identified school areas for improvement and their Action Plan.

Schoolwide Areas of Strength

1. The strong teacher leadership through the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), Department Chairs and Professional Development Committee. Many opportunities are provided to increase capacity for effective leadership in a coherent, school-wide fashion.
2. Although concerns still remain regarding the achievement gap, great strides have been made in the performance levels of Latino students.
3. Technology resources (laptops, smartboards, Apple TV, etc.) are available to enhance instruction, and there is evidence that those resources are beginning to be utilized effectively in many classrooms to enhance instruction.
4. In conversations with students and parents, there is a high degree of caring and support for students in both their academic and personal endeavors.
5. The multi-phased rollout of HOT projects and Instructional Rounds is increasing the capacity for the development of a well-designed assessment system that will facilitate student progress towards the Common Core State Standards.
6. STHS has created an environment, which effectively utilizes available resources among teachers, students, the community, and other stakeholders in order to support students.
7. There is a culture of trust between teachers and administration and teacher leadership is encouraged and effectively used. In addition, a dynamic and broad based student leadership program helps to foster a high degree of school spirit and positive campus culture at STHS.
Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up

The Visiting Committee concurs with the school’s identified critical areas for follow-up identified in the Self Study and outlined in the schoolwide action plan. In addition, the Visiting Committee has identified areas that need to be strengthened:

1. As learned in conversations with parents and some teachers, School Loop tool is underutilized and often a source of frustration to families who are trying to support their students. The administration and teaching staff should develop baseline expectations for communication via School Loop and communicate those expectations to parents and students.

2. Resources for staffing are severely deficient. Despite heroic efforts, there is only so much the staff can do to differentiate instruction, provide interventions, monitor the quality of teaching, and meet legal and statutory requirements with only three administrators, two counselors and 175 student contacts for full time teachers. Given increased funding opportunities through this year’s state budget, the district leadership should work collaboratively with the Santa Teresa administration to restore key teaching, counseling, administrative, and support positions.

3. The administration and Professional Development Committee should continue professional development efforts regarding rigor, relevance, coherence, and the balance between providing students access to challenging courses and ensuring that they are prepared to succeed in those courses.

4. Interviews with students revealed they fail subjects because they don’t like them, and they take responsibility for the results; however, the Visiting Committee feels that the administration and Professional Development Committee need to explore strategies and best practices around the concept of “student engagement” as a possible solution to reduce the large percentage of D’s and F’s.

5. There is a need for the site and district administration to provide resources for the development a more systematic way to collect, evaluate, and report on student progression towards proficiency on an increasingly complex set of curriculum standards, most notably the Common Core State Standards.

6. The unevenness of instructional quality hampers progress towards the goals described above. The site and district administration should allocate more resources (i.e. time, funding) to instructional supervision, including peer supervision models that would help moderate this inconsistency.
Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement (1–2 pages)

● Brief summary of the schoolwide action plan

● The school’s action plan is directly linked to its Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). The three action plan areas are:
  ○ Improving proficiency in English Language Arts
  ○ Improving proficiency in mathematics
  ○ Improving safety on campus

● Chapter V of the Self Study provides detailed steps involved in carrying out each action item, including specific goals, benchmarks, timelines, and persons responsible. The Visiting Committee feels that it is appropriately aligned to the school’s greatest areas of identified needs.

● Comments on the following school improvement issues and the soundness of the follow-up process:

  The Visiting Committee agrees with the school’s stakeholders that the achievement gap and the number of students not successfully completing A-G requirements continue to be significant issues. The Visiting Committee is concerned that past budget reductions could be an impediment to addressing these areas for improvement; however, discussions with district leaders confirm that their financial resources are improving and that programs and positions will be restored as the state budget continues to improve. Furthermore, the school’s administrative and teacher leadership have demonstrated their dedication to improving student learning under difficult budgetary circumstances, and they have incorporated previous Visiting Committee recommendations into their ongoing school improvement efforts and their Single Plan for Student Achievement. One significant outcome of these efforts has been the marked improvement of Latino students over the past three years. In addition, the school’s culture promotes positive relationships, problem solving and student involvement; students are spirited and involved in their learning. Teachers are knowledgeable, professional, and collaborate regularly to improve student learning. Students feel their teachers care about their learning and their personal well-being.

  The school approached the Self Study process seriously. Stakeholders understand the improvement process, and the Visiting Committee strongly feels that they are dedicated to carrying out their action plan to improve learning for all students. The Visiting Committee feels confident that the school has the capacity to carry out and monitor the action plan.