

PROBATIONARY VISIT

VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

FOR

South Tahoe High School

1735 Lake Tahoe Blvd.

South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

Lake Tahoe Unified School District

March 19 - 20 2018

Visiting Committee Members

Constance Oliver

Retired teacher Linden High School

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I. Introduction

Include the following:

- General comments about the school, its setting, and the school's analysis of student achievement data.

South Tahoe High School is a four-year comprehensive high school for Lake Tahoe Unified School District. Enrollment of 1013 is 51% white, 39% Latino 4.5% Filipino. 58% of the students are classified as low socioeconomic status. 12.3% are English learners. Special Education students are 11.5%.

STHS is an National AVID Demonstration School with several CTE opportunities for the students.

A significant number of families are employed in the gaming industry with lower than average incomes and higher than average cost of homes. Seasonal work and competition from Indian gaming has led to a high turnover of students' families. Families feel that their students are safe at school and that they have opportunities to pursue career and/or high education.

The school is on a hybrid 4x4 schedule which allows for exploration of interests and opportunity to make up classes that are failed. A-G designated classes are standard for students although new CTE courses are being developed to accommodate the students who plan to matriculate into career. In addition some math sections are designed as yearlong with one semester credit for the subject and the other semester an elective credit. This allows students who need additional support to complete the course at a slower pace. As students come from the middle school with enhanced integrated math skills these class will be phase out and other means of support will be implemented.

Senior Project is a graduation requirement of all students. This capstone experience allows students to explore a topic of interest and includes written, oral and physical completion of a task. Community is involved as mentors and evaluators.

A major change is the hiring of a principal who has had extensive training in Common Core Implementation, developing parent involvement and long range professional development for teachers. Her initial activity was to pull together the Viking Vision 2020 group that includes all stakeholders. Through meetings throughout the year she has been able to vastly improve the participation of parents including Latino parents, booster support and community involvement.

Science has done the research to begin a STEAM class for the intro ninth grade science alternative.

Include a description of any significant changes and/or developments, i.e., program additions since the last full visit, changes in student enrollment, staffing changes.

- Describe the impact these changes and/or developments have had on the school and/or specific curricular programs.

The new leadership has created an ethos of collaboration among the faculty, district personnel, middle school and parents. Get Focused-Stay Focused curriculum is used in the 9th grade health class to complete a 10-year personal plan. This plan is reviewed each year with the student's counselor with parent input.

Changes in the way professional development is planned and implemented is having a positive impact on what happens in the classroom. The VC repeatedly witnessed innovative uses of technology, activity-based instruction and updated curriculum. Throughout classroom observations the VC witnessed high levels of student engagement. Teachers repeatedly reported that the district and the school's administration were providing new opportunities for professional growth with a well articulated plan for the continued redesign of courses and training on more contemporary instructional strategies like Project Based Learning.

Another notable change is the significant change in the number of parents who are actively engaged in school improvement efforts. Attendance at Viking Vision 2020 meetings, ELAC meetings and Boosters participation have all witnessed significant increases since the 2016 WASC visit. More importantly, are

the high levels of meaningful participation by a variety of stakeholders. Meetings include opportunities for valuable parental input that the school's administration has clearly adopted and included in school improvement plans.

A positive school culture was repeatedly observed throughout the visit across all stakeholder groups. Parents report feeling more welcomed to participate in meaningful ways. All VC members met with students who reported feeling very positive about their opportunities for learning as well as high levels of connectedness to their teachers and principal. Teachers spoke very highly of the opportunities they've been given by the district and their principal to update the curriculum and to receive training in innovative teaching strategies. The momentum for positive and substantive change was a pleasure to observe.

- Briefly comment on the school's follow-up process. Include a description of the committee that has been responsible for overseeing the progress of the school's action plan and the preparation for the visit.

In response to the 2016 Visiting Committee report, South Tahoe High School gathered its stakeholders to oversee the progress of the school's action plan and prepare for the current probationary visit. The South Tahoe High School stakeholders involved have been its families, students, local administration, Board of Trustees and staff. Under the direct leadership of newly appointed Ms. Carline Sinkler, along with the WASC coordinator, Mr. Frank Kovac, South Tahoe High School developed a clear plan to address the critical areas for follow-up from the 2016 report. Ms. Sinkler formulated and gained consensus with stakeholders a set of principles that would serve as the framework for school improvement. With the mission of ensuring equity, innovation, and a commitment to both student-centered and professional learning for staff, Ms. Sinkler has led the community to develop a clear and succinct vision for education at South Tahoe High School. The resulting, "Viking Vision 2020" serves as a concise blueprint for school improvement which will lead to increased student achievement. The South Tahoe learning community identified six qualities critical to student success at South Tahoe High School: Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Curiosity, Communication, Character, and Healthy Independence. These qualities are defined in the Viking Graduate Profile.

Another significant change at South Tahoe High School, in regards to the follow-up process since 2016, has been the development of a comprehensive Professional Development plan that supports learning among staff members. Teachers participate in learning communities that address Common Core State Standards strategies, Next Generation Science Standards, Project-Based Learning, AVID strategies, and other student-centered learning communities. The South Tahoe High School science department has also worked to develop a plan for implementing the Next Generation Science Standards. They have developed a draft of new science course requirements and have drafted a three-year strategy to implement them.

- Describe the process used to prepare the progress report.

The process of introspection for South Tahoe High School began in April of 2017 when District administrators, Mr. Bob Grant and Ms. Maria Luquin, invited key department and school district leaders to a series of Task Force meetings to chart their path forward. With the recommendations from the WASC Visiting Committee report in hand the STHS Focus on Learning Task Force began a renewed effort understanding that there were major issues that the school had not identified in their 2016 FOL report. Beginning in June 2017 Principal Sinkler went to work communicating with stakeholder groups which included staff meetings, parent/family meetings, student representative meetings, and then collectively with all groups at monthly "Viking Vision 2020" community meetings. Significant refinements have been made to South Tahoe High School's Schoolwide Action Plan which was updated in response to the March 2016 WASC Visiting Committee report. Revisions that followed in the Spring of 2016 indicate more specificity related to the funding and timelines and included a new section on community involvement. In the Fall of 2017, a community-wide process focused on student-centered learning, updating SLOs (Graduate Profile) and identifying school goals and key actions resulted in significant refinements to the

plan. To achieve coherence, the 2018 Schoolwide Action Plan is explicitly linked to Viking Vision 2020, LTUSD LCAP goals, and the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA).

II. Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up/Schoolwide Action Plan

- Provide an analytical summary about the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section referencing the critical areas for follow-up addressed through each section.
- Note the evidence supporting the progress made and the impact made on student achievement.

The school's Probationary Progress Report contained seven Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-up. The first three of these areas for follow-up were identified by the school in the 2016 self-study report. The remaining four areas were recommended by the 2016 visiting committee. They are listed below with each followed by actions taken by the school as well as an analytical summary of progress for each critical area.

STHS Identified Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up (2016)

1. Increase literacy and skills in Common Core State Standards among South Tahoe High School teachers.

The school appears to be making significant strides in this area. First, the process involves the collaboration of staff and administration in examining and analyzing student achievement data in order to get to the bottom of the root causes of achievement gaps and make a plan for ameliorating the gaps. In addition, courses in the areas of English and math have been revised or are in the process of revision in order to meet the Common Core State Standards. Science and social studies teaching staff are participating in curriculum development opportunities with the social studies department involved in piloting a new curriculum that meets the standards. In the way of instruction development and delivery, significant numbers of staff have attended Project Based Learning (PBL) professional development. PBL pedagogical strategies are student-centered and focused on developing high levels of critical thinking and analytical skills.

Improvements in student performance on the SBAC assessment is notable and provides evidence that the school is addressing the needs of its students. Using the 14/15 school year as a baseline, overall performance has increased dramatically in both English and math. It should be noted that significant performance improvement was also evident for socio-economically disadvantaged students. While significant sub-group discrepancies continue to exist, it is clear that there is improvement in student achievement with a clear process in place for identifying and addressing curricular and instructional deficiencies.

2. Provide courses that meet the needs of all subgroups.

The school's Get Focused, Stay Focused curriculum provides structures for numerous pathways for success in high school and beyond. This 9th grade core class is given dual credit with LTCC and is visited each school year in core subjects. The school's development and implementation of a strong CTE program is ensuring that students who are not immediately college bound post graduation are prepared to enter the workforce. The school also boasts a strong relationship with Lake Tahoe Community College (LTCC) to ensure opportunities for high level academics for those students ready for that level of education prior to graduation and in preparation for college. Students also have access to career and technical education courses through LTCC.

The Viking Vision 2020, whose focus is on access and equity in education goals, acknowledges the need to provide an array of courses to meet the needs of all students including struggling and credit deficient students. The plan identifies *integrated support systems* like tutoring, scaffolding and improved coordination of appropriately leveled ELD classes.

3. Formalize, publish and implement a comprehensive South Tahoe High School and South Tahoe Middle School Code of Student Conduct (COSC).

The school's Student Code of Conduct materials have seen significant improvement through the collaboration of staff, students, and the administrative team. Students reported that they felt their voice is heard and respected by the staff and administration. The attendance data provided by the school shows a significant decrease in the number of tardies consistent with the implementation of new tardy monitoring systems outlined in the updated COSC. In addition, the updated COSC outlines systems in place for struggling students whether their struggles be academic or personal in nature. The school is beginning to implement a Response to Intervention programs for students academic and personal crisis areas. Also outlined in the COSC is information for students' referral to a number of community based resources should they have need for a service the school could not provide.

Evidence of these changes:

- A published, board adopted policy
- Conference with students who are now aware of the code
- Data in the report that shows a decrease in tardies and other infractions.
- Increase in counseling appointments for personal and behavior issues.
- Listing of resources available to students and families

Visiting Committee (2016) Identified Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up

1. Parent involvement in the school decision making process, including LCAP and the site plan.

This critical area for follow-up is now included in the school's Schoolwide Action Plan. The growth target is an increase of 5% parent participation groups each year. The team observed significant growth in this area since the initial visit in 2016.

Evidence of progress came in many forms. They are as follows:

- Viking Vision 2020 - Most notable of the progress in this area comes in the form of the Viking Vision 2020 Plan. Parents, staff, administration, students and other community stakeholders are involved in a process by which the school is focused on short- long-term goals for schoolwide improvement measures which include the development of a student profile of a STHS graduate. The committee reviewed and can verify a robust and healthy process for the development of strong pathways for student success that capitalize on strong CTE and college pathways. Also evidenced are the use of parent and student surveys to gather data that will further inform the process.
- School Site Council (SSC) - Meetings at SSC meetings now included members of the ELAC committee. There is ongoing integration of the development of the Viking Vision 2020 Plan and Single Plan for Student Achievement.
- ELAC - Attendance has increased, including participation by the principal and intervention counselor. Both administration and staff reports that increased participation and high quality engagement is creating meaningful change for ELD students. Strategies for increasing

attendance include moving meetings to the community center as well as providing Spanish translation.

- Boosters - These groups have seen significant increase in communication contact and have set a goal to increase contacts in their communication networks by 10%. The team witnessed booster community involvement on several occasions.
2. A comprehensive plan for Common Core and NGSS implementation.

The English department has adopted literature including novels, graphic novels and online resources, that were developed with Common Core standards. This is the second year of implementation. Inservice and collaboration time was devoted to the initial introduction. Teachers continue to meet, share experiences, strategies, and common assessments. In conversations teachers are noting that there is increased student involvement and more authentic outputs from the students.

The science department continues to review curricular material that might be adopted in their courses. They have begun to include projects in the course work evaluated with rubrics. In addition, by reviewing the struggles of the students in the ninth grade Biology classes, the department chair explored the STEM option and after attending the STEAM conference she outlined a new course using STEAM guidelines. This new integrated science course will be offered as an alternative to the Biology class for students whose reading level indicates they are not ready for Biology curriculum. Credit will be given for physical science. The course has already been given A-G approval. It is planned that this STEAM I class will be continued into STEAM II which will emphasize the life science curriculum and will satisfy the science graduation requirement.

Math has adopted a textbook for Math I and has a well developed course outline with common assessments and benchmark tests. Math II is in the implementation stage and the previous math classes are being phased out. Math III will be developed this summer and eventually the Honors Precalculus will be phased out.

The Social Studies department has piloted a CCSS based textbook in World History class. Other teachers are beginning to incorporate project based learning while waiting for the roll out of the Social Studies framework.

Evidence of these changes:

- Classroom visits and teacher conversations
- Course of study binders for each class
- Authentic student work with evaluations
- Department companion plans that project action items for the next 2 years.

3. A professional development plan that increases collaboration, planning time and consistent staff development within and across departments.

It appears that a more robust plan for professional development began to be developed soon after the WASC report of 2016. Teachers and administrative staff credit the support of the Lake Tahoe Unified School District with providing the support and resources for teachers to work together on the development of CCSS aligned teaching practices/frameworks, curriculum development and inquiry driven learning. Consistent with the previous WASC team's recommendation, the school's teaching staff and administration worked collaboratively to shift the focus of professional development learning more towards pedagogies for student-driven learning and calibrated, meaningful assessments. Teachers reported that they were now supported with time and resources towards the revision of course outlines to

be in alignment with CCSS. The math department, for example, has made the shift from traditional delivery of math sequences to new Integrated Math I and II courses that include CCSS aligned text materials, activity based instruction and use of technology tools. One math teacher reported that Integrated Math III is in the works.

Additional evidence of professional development plans and implementation:

- Draft science plans and course sequence
 - Science and social studies curriculum committee work
 - WestEd Engagement strategies training
 - AP course training
 - Project Based Learning Training with plans to fully develop a future training/implementation program
 - Participation in district wide PD planning committee
 - Work with the local labor union to negotiate paid professional development and collaboration time
4. The communication channel between the district curriculum department and the school site should be strengthened so that there is effective articulation between school sites.

District Educational Services provides curricular and program support through the district CTE/VAPA coordinator, English/AVID coordinator, and Technology and Curriculum coordinator in addition to fiscal support and guidance from the Superintendent's office and Chief Business and Operations Officer. The district has supported WestEd facilitated articulation and standards collaboration between middle and high school English and Math departments. The district English Learner/AVID coordinator provides continuity from Elementary to Secondary through a progression of AVID strategies, coordination of AVID conference participation, developing a Two-Way Bilingual Immersion (TWBI) pathway culminating in Seals of Biliteracy. The Viking Vision meetings bring the community together across school sites with middle, high school and LTCC (college) staff attending.

Evidence of these changes:

- Teacher and administration conversations
 - WestEd facilitated STHS/STMS articulation meetings with standards study/progression - English and Math
 - AVID conferences attended by staff across the district
 - CTE - curriculum, standards and budget support for sustainability and development of programs
 - Two-Way Bilingual Immersion pathway, K-12
 - Science curriculum committee
 - Social Science Curriculum committee
 - LCAP and SPSA goals and funding
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- If any critical areas for follow-up were not included in the school's action plan, indicate what actions have been taken to address these issue(s) and include supporting evidence.

The school and the school district have addressed each of the action items listed in their report and in the VC report. The staff attitude that recommendations are not punitive, but are, instead, "opportunities for growth," has led to greater cooperation among the stakeholders (community members, parents, district staff, teachers and students).

- Note: The school's schoolwide action plan should have incorporated all the critical areas of follow-up or major recommendations that were stated in the last self-study visiting committee report.

The school-wide action lists activities and accomplishments up to the year 2018. Many of the actions have been included in the Viking Vision 2020 development through a community-wide process to clarify the schools vision of student-centered learning. Goals have been articulated and the action items identified to accomplish them.

The VC notes that these goals are timed out to Spring 2018. The team recommends that the school revisit the action plans and extend the timelines to at least 2020 or 2024.

III. Commendations and Recommendations

- Commendations:
- Comment on significant progress the school has made in responding to the critical areas for follow-up and in carrying out the related action plan.

South Tahoe High School should be commended for the steps taken to increase parent and community involvement. Viking Vision 2020 community meetings have sparked involvement in a variety of settings and serve as a monthly convening of community members, parents, teachers, and students. There has been a dramatic increase in family engagement from the Latino community with regular attendance at SSC, Viking Vision community meetings and an increase in ELAC (Cafecitos) participation.

South Tahoe High School has also made significant strides in formalizing, publishing, testing and implementing a comprehensive high school and middle school Code of Student Conduct. The school involved all stakeholder groups in the process of developing the Code of Student Conduct and revision is an ongoing process.

In addition, the district office has worked diligently with the school administration and staff to ensure the development and implementation of strong professional development and professional learning plans that have been instrumental as the school has more fully transitioned to CCSS.

- Recommendations:

Viewing the evidence provided by the school it is obvious that the school made a sincere effort to begin the process of addressing the recommendations both from their own report and from the VC committee report. Significant changes are evident and the school is to be commended for the efforts they have made. Parents reflect on the improved school environment as a positive change. Students report that they are happier at school and have a greater understand of what is expected from them through the Viking Graduate Profile, Common Code of Student Conduct and Get Focused, Stay Focused curriculum.

- Comment on any critical areas for follow-up/action plan sections that have not yet been completely addressed, if applicable.
- Identify any new areas of concerns, if applicable.

The VC encourages all stakeholders to continue their solid and substantive work on Viking Vision 2020 especially with respect to the development and articulation of the graduate profile. The school's new leadership, in a very short period of time, has led community stakeholders and made meaningful progress towards identifying what skills and attributes a STHS student might possess. The team encourages the leadership to continue this work assisting each stakeholder group in articulating the actual tasks they will perform to help students achieve the tenets of this profile. In addition, the team recommends that the school's leadership articulate the evaluative and reflective processes that will move students forwards in achieving the skills and attributes of a Viking graduate.

The VC also recommends that the school's leadership include more detailed plans for future work regarding the Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-up that cover long range planning through the full term of accreditation. For example, outlines of long range plans for Viking Vision 2020 and professional

development could contain additional timelines for future plans regarding PBL integration and new curriculum development and implementation.