

Chapter II: Progress Report

The school's major changes since the last accreditation self-study are four in number. They are:

- the division of the school to split off into a new high school in the district.
- a new school administration
- a plan to implement small learning communities, and
- the addition of an English Language Learner Support Teacher to the staff.

Opening of a third comprehensive high school in the district four years ago resulted in the loss of approximately 1,000 students and about 30 teachers from Eisenhower High School. The adjustments to school structure required for such significant downsizing has been difficult for many with a decrease in course offerings for students and the number of clubs and student activities available on campus. For the last three years, the current administration has made progress in hiring more athletic coaches and rebuilding the school's band and choir programs. While the perception of institutional memory is one of low participation, the athletics and performing arts programs are slowly recovering. It is also noteworthy that since the split, general student behavior on campus and student respect for multicultural diversity have improved immensely.

In the 2005-2006 school year the principal and three of four assistant principals were new to the campus. The change in administration led to the implementation of numerous instructional programs aimed at improving student achievement. During the past three years, the overall tone of the campus environment has become more positive, proactive, and productive under the new leadership.

The Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) model for school structure was adopted in 2004 by the school district. The Smaller Learning Communities model has a goal of improving student success on a large campus by stimulating smaller, close-knit communities with greater connections between students and their school resulting in improved academic achievement and student attendance with a simultaneous decrease in discipline problems. Small Learning Communities were implemented in the form of grade level Houses for freshman and sophomores with the plan to develop twelve career-pathways for juniors and seniors synonymous with the Industry Sectors of the California Career Technical Education Standards. With assistance from the new Small Learning Communities Coordinator, plans are underway to move all freshmen and sophomores into career pathway houses next year, incorporate Freshman Seminar concept into introduction classes in each career pathway, and phase in the junior and senior career pathway programs over the two succeeding years.

Freshman Houses consist of three year teachers (Freshman Seminar, English, and Science) who share the same students and a common conference period to allow teachers to collaborate on instruction, student needs, student success stories, assessments, and planning. The Freshman Seminar class was developed to assist the 9th grade students adjusting to life at high school by providing them with study skills, tutoring, homework help, social events, and academic projects collaboratively assigned by House teachers. Current Sophomore Houses are smaller and consist of English and World History teachers only, who share the same students and a common conference period. One of the most beneficial changes that resulted from the transition to Smaller Learning Communities has been the increase in collaboration among house teachers. Sharing common students allows house teachers to discuss student behavior, attendance, progress, and improvement. Teachers have also been able to share best teaching practices and learn from each

other's different teaching styles. Beginning next year sophomore houses will be replaced by career pathway's that students selected during their freshman year.

An English Language Learner Support Teacher was added to the staff in 2003-2004 to improve instruction for English Language Learners. The EL Support Teacher collaborates with all teachers who have English Language Development (ELD) classes or Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) classes through monthly meetings to discuss best teaching practices and provide Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training. The EL Support Teacher also conducts classroom observations of ELD and SEI classes providing feedback and recommendations to the teachers observed. All teachers are given student performance data and CELDT levels of their EL students. Teachers are encouraged to use this information to differentiate instruction and encourage EL students to succeed. Other changes included the development of an ELD 3 Support Classes, the adoption of the standards-based *HighPoint* textbooks for all ELD classes, and the transition of ELD1 and ELD2 classes from one period to two-hour blocks. A program to offer consistent tutoring for EL students has also been developed and implemented.

The 2002 action plan included steps to (1) improve student performance by aligning instruction with content standards and ELSRs; (2) improving communication among all stakeholders; (3) improving student performance by developing and implementing a consistent assessment system for long term and short term accountability; (4) improving reading scores by improving vocabulary and reading comprehension skills in all areas; (5) implementing a consistent set of school rules that is followed by all.

Today all classes taught are standards-based and follow the timelines and curriculum outlines established by the pacing guides developed at the district level. Textbook adoption is also standards aligned. Teacher lesson plans and daily objectives are designed to assist students in mastering the content area standards. Teachers regularly post the California state standards relevant to the daily lesson or unit plan. They are developing Professional Learning Cohorts in which to discuss best teaching practices. From 2002-2007, these changes have resulted in a growth in the AYP average percent Proficient and Advanced on both the English/Language Arts and Mathematics sections of the CSTs. English/Language Arts grew by 10.3% and Mathematics grew by 12.4%. The school identifies a need to continue working on alignment of the curriculum to ELSRs and consistency in accountability and assessment.

All administrators currently have an open-door policy for all staff and students and have adopted a district slogan, "District personnel will provide services in a helpful and respectful manner." A new telephone message relay program, Connect Ed, has made it possible for the school's principal to quickly send mass messages regarding upcoming school events, important news, schedule changes, and safety issues to every student household. E-school, an Internet based student records and attendance management program was adopted providing teachers instant access to multiple up-to-date phone numbers for each student's parents/guardians. The software was to supplant the older practice of looking up outdated phone numbers on emergency information cards. Teachers, counselors, and parents report significant functional errors with the program that produce erroneous transcripts and a need for school-to-home messages in both English and Spanish. Some trained teachers utilize another Internet based program, eChalk, that allows parents/guardians and students to communicate through email with teachers, review student grades posted online, and print out homework or class work that might have been missed during the normal school day. Plans are being made to increase the number of Eisenhower teachers who regularly use the site to post important information pertaining to their classes.

Since the last full self-study, benchmark assessments have been developed for English, Math, Social Science, and Science classes and are administered quarterly in accordance with new district pacing guides. Benchmark assessment results are posted on DataDirector, another Internet-based program, that allows teachers, instructional leaders, and the school's administration to access and analyze each student's entire standardized testing history. Teachers use these assessment data to modify instruction as needed in preparing students for the California Standards tests. Currently there is not 100% teacher satisfaction with the validity and relevance of the chosen benchmark tests. Benchmark assessments for Language Arts and Math are developed by an external assessment company, ALS, and are felt by some teachers to not be in alignment with the district's pacing guides. The Benchmark assessments for Science and Social Science were developed by a committee of Rialto Unified School District teachers and may be in need of revision.

Using II/USP funds, professional development was provided to teachers based on Marzano's strategies for increasing effectiveness of instructional time. "Word of the Week" and "Word of the Day" programs were begun to promote student comprehension of key academic vocabulary with greater teacher participation anticipated next year. A Schoolwide Literacy Plan was implemented to provide consistency across the curriculum in the development of reading and writing skills. A full time Literacy Coach and a full time English Learner Support Teacher offer teachers assistance incorporating the Schoolwide Literacy Plan in their lessons through on-site staff development, assisting teachers in building an interactive classroom environment focused on the content and the learning strategies embedded in the reading/language arts program, interpreting/analyzing ongoing data, serving as a resource for teachers, and assisting in setting goals for improved instruction. The district adopted the Renaissance Learning Accelerated Reader program. Thirty minutes of silent, sustained reading occurs everyday. Students read books within their Zone of Approximate Development (ZPD) and take quizzes as they finish reading each book. The school is working toward the district target of 95% of students meeting their Accelerated Reader goals.

Eisenhower's new administration has introduced a structured, progressive discipline plan to be implemented firmly, fairly, and consistently. In the fall of 2005, a demerit system was adopted by the new administration which assigns demerits to students for various disciplinary infractions. Once a student receives twelve demerits, the student is suspended. The demerit system also has a positive component which allows students to lose two demerits every week that they are not referred to the office. The system is easy to follow and enables students to take responsibility for their own behavior. School rules are re-evaluated annually and modified if necessary. There is disagreement about the consistency with which the discipline policy is applied.