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## **Chapter II: Progress Report Summarize progress on each section of the current schoolwide action plan that incorporated all schoolwide critical areas of follow-up from the last full self-study and all intervening visits**

This chapter summarizes Vanden High School's progress toward the revised WASC Action Plans we adopted in 2011, including our goals and the visiting committee's recommendations.

### **Significant Developments**

#### **Changes in the Organization**

Vanden High School last undertook a WASC Self-Study in 2010-2011. The school received a six-year accreditation, with a three year interim visit and follow-up progress report in 2014. Vanden High School has now completed the full six years of its 2011 plan.

Since the last full WASC visit, our site has experienced significant turnover in our administrative leadership. After our principal was reassigned in November of 2011, our site was managed by an interim principal for the remainder of the school year. Our assistant principals and teacher leaders worked diligently to maintain site focus and stability. We began the 2012-2013 school year with yet another principal through 2015.

We also experienced personnel changes in our assistant principal cadre; one assistant principal was reassigned as principal at another site and a new assistant principal left after one year. We welcomed the additions of Kristin Shields and Gerald Salcido, who came from our teaching and counseling staff and Kirk Parrott from Golden West Middle School as our assistant principals. Our current principal Bill Sarty took over at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year, after spending several years as our assistant principal, athletic director, and social science teacher.

In addition to turnover in administrative leadership, we also experienced a significant turnover in our teaching and support staff, with one quarter of our teachers new to our campus.

Teacher shortages have seriously impacted our teaching staff. Twenty-two teachers are currently working a 120 percent teaching contract. This has restricted the implementation of new programs and student interventions and limited what we can ask of teachers outside of their extended duty day. We are fortunate that teachers who do not have an extra class have stepped in to help. This year our school is operating with all hands on deck.

Travis Unified School District has also seen significant turnover in leadership roles since 2011. Several key positions have changed hands since the original self-study and mid-cycle visit.

- Superintendent
- Chief Business Officer
- Technology Director
- Special Education Director
- Director of Food Services, Transportation, and Maintenance and Operation

Our superintendent Kate Wren Gavlak retired in February 2017, and was succeeded by interim superintendent Pam Conklin.

Our current administrative team has fostered an environment of trust, teamwork, and continual professional learning. Despite these personnel changes since the last full visit and mid-cycle, our staff has remained committed to excellence, providing outstanding programs, and rigorous learning opportunities for our students.

The 2016-2017 WASC Self-Study has been a catalyst for growth and stability as new and veteran staff across the campus came together regularly to discuss what is important for our students now and for the next six years.

### Curriculum Changes

The most significant development impacting curriculum since the last full visit has been the full implementation of the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Vanden teachers continue to align curriculum and instruction to meet the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), with help from professional learning days and informal collaboration.

Additionally, the state has ceased administering most California Standardized Tests (CSTs) as well as the high school exit exam (CAHSEE), eliminating these tools as instruments of measuring student academic performance.

During 2014-2015 school year, departments were asked to align curriculum to ensure equity in learning experiences across grade level and to develop uniform grading policies. Many departments, including math and English, extensively realigned their curriculum to meet the new standards.

The district provided training in the development of the Professional Learning Community model. Over the last two years, this model has been adopted by the English and math departments to facilitate the analysis of data and development of a uniform scope and sequence.

## **Program Enhancements and Initiatives**

### **Communication**

In 2013-2014 school year, the school website was reorganized and it continues to serve as an important information hub for Vanden students and their families. Teachers received training at that time and each teacher maintains a web page with contact information and links to class information.

Vanden also communicates on social media such as Facebook, Edmodo, and Twitter. Some staff use the text app Remind 101 to communicate directly with students. Our school secretary updates the daily and weekly bulletins and Bill Sarty provides a weekly Connect Ed phone call on Sunday evenings and more often if there is more pressing information. On Wednesday's representatives from ASB relay important information over the classroom intercom. It is the primary communication tool for our students within the school day.

### **Additional CTE Pathways**

The CTE department introduced Medical Science I in 2015 and Medical Science II in 2016. The Medical Science program is housed in the refurbished M building and their instructor is working on community internships, field trips, and student certifications, including CPR.

CTE also added two sections of Video Production classes in 2016 and a second level course will follow in Fall 2017. This popular course is currently filming student-led productions for school-wide use.

Another new addition is our Biotechnology course in fall of 2016. With over \$250,000 in grants awarded through a Specialized Student Project (SSP) grant, Vanden was able to plan and implement this high tech course which is articulated with Solano Community College. Starting next year, seniors who took Biotechnology I will be eligible to enroll in higher level Biotechnology courses at Solano Community College.

Lastly, our traditional wood shop and CAD classes have been revamped and starting next year we will be offering a four-year engineering sequence where student will be exposed to the latest manufacturing equipment in our growing Makers Lab.

## Improved Learning Spaces

New or updated learning spaces have been added at Vanden. The M building was renovated to accommodate medical science classes. The Student Commons is now available to students before school and lunch (when staff is available) and after school it serves as our tutoring center. The space can be reserved for teacher use as an extended classroom during the school day as well.

The center areas of the E, R, Q buildings have been renovated to accommodate teachers who share rooms. It provides a space for teacher collaboration and work area.

## Tutoring Center

The Tutoring Center is a valuable resource for students. It was created in the fall of 2016 to provide a place to receive academic support by students who require support in almost any subject. Staffed by teachers and peer tutors, the center is open daily after school and is a relaxed, low pressure environment where students can interact with teachers and obtain homework help or reteaching.

## Library

Enrollment growth and changing curriculum led the library to enact a number of changes. TUSD Human Resources approved the addition of an additional hour for the library technician which allows the library to be open until 3:10 p.m., Monday through Thursday. The library has become a popular place with its collaborative spaces and quiet study areas.

The library also provided textbook checkout before school started. Students were able to pick up their schedules and their textbooks and class time was no longer used to checkout materials. This also provided more time for the school librarian to provide library orientation to all freshmen English classes.

With the building of the library space, the district provided \$120,000 for collection improvement resulting in a significant increase in library resources. The collection, to support the CCSS emphasis on non-fiction, was doubled to provide resources for research and projects. The library expanded its database collection to include the ABC-CLIO in addition to the Gale Databases, both of which have text-to-speech components that make them accessible to a wide range of students. The library staff continues to work with teachers to improve students' reading and research knowledge and web evaluation.

## Progress Report

The WASC Action Plan in 2011 had five goal statements.

**Goal 1:** Student academic achievement in core curricula will improve to meet all API growth targets, including school-wide subgroups such as African Americans and socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

**Goal 2:** Develop and implement a strategic intervention program for failing 9th grade students before their credit deficiency becomes critical.

**Goal 3:** Address test apathy among 11th graders and increase their performance on CSTs. Increase all student proficiency on CSTs and CAHSEE to meet and exceed AYP expectations.

**Goal 4:** Address Academic Dishonesty by decreasing the number of cheating incidents.

**Goal 5:** Increase professional development for faculty and staff to improve their capacity to use Data Director and available technology to disaggregate and analyze data more efficiently.

The Single Plan for Student Achievement goals were revised in 2014. The updates reflect the adoption of the California Common Core State Standards, CAASP testing and the cessation of CSTs and CAHSEE testing. Academic achievement, student success, test apathy, academic dishonesty, and ongoing professional development remained the focus of the SPSA.

### Significant Developments

The areas of critical need identified in 2014 by the WASC visiting committee were:

1. Continue professional development to achieve the alignment of lesson plans to Common Core Standards curriculum, benchmark assessments, instructional practices and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes in order to narrow the achievement gap among subgroups and achieve equitable learning outcomes for all students.
2. Continue staff development to implement strategies to increase standards-based curriculum and instruction to improve academic achievement of all students in English Language Arts as measured by the Common Core Standards.
3. Continue staff development to implement strategies to increase standard based curriculum and instruction to improve academic achievement of all students in mathematics as measured by the Common Core Standards.

4. Continue to increase the capacity of faculty and staff to collect, disaggregate and analyze student performance data (including classroom data) in order to make informed instructional decisions in the implementation of rigorous Common Core Standards-based curriculum, instruction, assessment and accountability strategies in the classrooms.

The four major components of the school's 2010 action plan were:

1. Address the achievement gap observable through data related to API, CSTs and A-G eligibility rates.
2. F rate for freshmen (23%) Develop Intervention Program to address freshman success.
3. Motivating students to try their best on high stakes tests.
4. Cheating policies need to be addressed.
5. Increase student, teacher and class access to current technology with Professional Development about its uses.

### **Professional Development**

Since the 2014, mid-term review, all departments have continued to work to increase alignment of curriculum, benchmark assessments, and instructional practices. In 2014, the departments developed uniform grading scales and class expectations to ensure an equitable learning experience across the department.

In 2015, TUSD developed a Professional Learning Community Facilitator Training Program that provided individuals in the English and math departments training on how to successfully organize and facilitate PLCs. For the last two years, both math and English departments have been granted release time each quarter to meet in PLCs for the purpose of aligning and developing common assignments and assessments.

The district has granted permission for PLC time to be made available for all departments during the 2016-17 school year. We hope this will continue our progress toward alignment and provide opportunity for data analysis and collaboration. The district has also provided Kagan training in behavior management and instructional strategies and training in Aeries for all new Vanden teachers and returning teachers who were were interested in developing their teaching practice.

The Visual and Performing Arts Department has worked to ensure that those teaching like classes such as Art I have a shared scope and sequence, assignments, and assessments. Those who teach the same subject within the science department meet weekly to discuss curriculum and the results of common assessments. The history social science department has created a scope and sequence for World History and American History with shared benchmark assessments.

### Improving Student Achievement in English

In both the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years, TUSD has provided training through the Area 3 Writing Project and PLC time to develop curriculum maps, to create assignments, and to align instructional practices that increase student achievement. With the adoption of the new English textbook series *California Collections* during the 2015-16 school year, the department has collaborated and revised the scope and sequence for each grade level and has received training from the publisher on ways to effectively implement the new resources and supporting materials.

During the summer of 2016, the majority of the English department attended Advanced Placement (AP) and Pre-Advanced Placement training to support teachers in the development of AP strategies across the department and to prepare all English students for college preparatory curriculum.

Student performance on the English Language Arts section Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 76 percent of students meeting or exceeding standards in 2015 to 78 percent in 2016. We have also seen a significant increase in student achievement on the English Language Arts portion of the EAP with 68 percent of 11th graders demonstrating college readiness or conditional readiness in 2015 increasing from 58 percent in 2015.

Our English Learners have demonstrated growth in their English language development, with over half of our EL student population making growth last year on the 2016 CELDT. We have seen increased achievement by our African American student population, rising from 68 to 72 percent from 2015 to 2016. However, our Latino students are achieving at a markedly lower rate, at least 10 points behind the school average.

### Improving Student Achievement in Math

Similarly, the math department has made considerable strides in aligning Algebra I and Geometry curriculum and has developed common benchmark assessments and assignments. TUSD supported professional development over the last three by providing Kagan training for the math department to increase their knowledge of instructional strategies that improve student engagement.

We see student achievement rise markedly in mathematics on the Smarter Balanced assessment. In 2015, 31 percent of students met or exceeded state standards and that score increased to 41 percent in 2016. Math teachers continue to collaborate in grade level PLCs and examine data to improve curriculum and strategies. Several teachers from the math department received EAP training by CSU representatives in order to support the development of curriculum that improves students' college readiness. Our critical sub-groups continue to fall behind in overall student achievement and the math department continues to work to identify ways to increase achievement and engagement.

## Analysis of Student Data

Vanden staff continues to implement regular processes to regularly analyze student data. Each fall, teachers are provided Smarter Balanced assessment data in English and math administered to 11th graders and the results the 10th grade life science exam for analysis.

The math department has made significant progress in developing routines that allows teachers to regularly analyze student data to drive instruction in Algebra and Geometry . They meet in math level PLCs to analyze SBAC and interim test results to analyze and to evaluate curriculum sequencing and reteaching. The English department has developed benchmark assessments for 9th grade and uses the data to revise instructional strategies and assignments as well as the grade level scope and sequence.

We have found that while the SBAC data gives us an overall snapshot of our students progress, the test results do not provide useful benchmark skills data. As a result, both the math and English department continues to include the development of benchmark assignments as part of their PLC goals.

History Social Science administers benchmark test and individual teachers use the data to develop instruction and meet by grade level to analyze test validity.

The Foreign Language Department administers the WebCAPE Language Placement Exam to all foreign language students at the end of each school year and the National Latin Exam. They use the results to reflect on teaching practice and uses grade data for language level placement. Similarly, CTE uses annual Smarter Balanced data to support and reinforce skills students need to demonstrate proficiency on the exam such as computational skills in Auto and reading comprehension and fluency in Business. Individual physical education teachers use the annual 9th grade Fitnessgram scores to develop curriculum and assignments.

Staff who teach Advanced Placement (AP) classes meet annually with administration to analyze AP test results, course requirements, materials, and course prerequisites. With funds allocated to provide the history and science departments release time to work in PLCs, the opportunities for analysis can be conducted with greater depth with increased frequency.

Lastly, the availability of Aeries Analytics during the 2016-17 school year, allows teachers greater opportunity to analyze student performance, attendance, and adhere to IEP/504 requirements. Teacher and department surveys indicate that more training is needed to increase their capacity for analyzing data and a desire for information that provides a more holistic picture of the students areas for achievement, growth, and creativity.

## **1. Achievement Gap**

Vanden staff continues to work toward closing the achievement gap. We have seen an increase in our African American student achievement; however, our Latino student achievement remains a focus area. Over the last two years, TUSD has worked to increase teacher time with individual students and small groups by lowering class sizes in English I and Algebra I.

During the 2016-17 school year, several programs have been created or enhanced. Math lab classes have been added to increase the learning time and improve services to students performing below expected levels. Vanden now offers 220 minutes per week of language support for our ELL students and laptops computers are provided to support their learning.

The implementation of the Vanden Tutoring program, operating four days a week (M-Th) after 6th and 7th period provides flexible scheduling to assist students who struggle in subjects across the curriculum. The Tutoring Center is staffed by teachers and National Honor Society volunteers who receive community service hours for tutoring.

In addition, TUSD recently added a site social worker to our staff to provide social emotional support for our students and their families as well as a military family counselor who works with military dependent's social emotional well-being.

TUSD has developed a Middle Grades Transition Task Force that will study best practices for middle grades students and make recommendations about how middle and high school programs can be improved to support student success and close the achievement gap.

## **2. D/F - Rate**

Since the mid-cycle visit, Vanden has increased opportunities for credit recovery and grade remediation. At the time of the mid-cycle, a program called Freshmen Choices was instituted, a program where students who were struggling with behavior, skill development, and apathy were placed in smaller classes with a shared teaching cohort. These students were also provided an additional period per day that was considered study hall class which also gave the students the opportunity to learn study skills and have opportunities for remediation. In our analysis of the program's success, it was determined that having the same students travel throughout the day together was not effective and only exacerbated discipline issues and contributed to negative classroom climates. During the 2016-2017 school year, these students were no longer placed in classes together. Instead, there was a plan to begin a mentorship program where several teachers would be assigned a caseload of struggling students that they would meet with once a week to keep tabs on both academic and social development. The program had to be postponed for a year due to staffing considerations (22 teachers on 120% contracts). All 9th graders who have failed a required class are offered summer school; we offer two sessions of summer school, with one

semester offered for each session. We also offer Cyber-High classes during the school year and summer, with priority given to seniors who are preparing for graduation. The district is committed to maintaining smaller class sizes in 9th grade English and math classes.

### **3. Student Motivation**

With the transition to SBAC testing and the elimination of the California High School Exit Exam, it was necessary to reevaluate how we communicate the necessity and importance of standardized testing. We continue to invite representatives of California State University Maritime to share information on the EAP exam and how students, by electing to take this portion of the test, can benefit. While we still emphasize to our students the importance of their SBAC test, we have chosen to focus our efforts on school climate, making Vanden welcoming and supportive and develop school spirit. Our Associated Student Body organization has developed a calendar and program that focuses on awareness campaigns throughout the school year and providing lunchtime activities that bring the student body together.

Our LUCE club takes our Latino students on college tours annually and brings in speakers from our local business community to discuss the benefits of education and pathways to employment. During the 2016-17 school year, LUCE created a partnership with the Solano Ivy League Project, a program to encourage economically disadvantaged students to apply to the most Ivy League colleges. The program selects promising 10th and 11th grade students and takes them on college visits to the east coast.

Our Student 2 Student program and Black Student Union has also been involved in college outreach and information, providing bus tours of local colleges such as California State University East Bay and UC Merced. Student 2 Student encourages participation in its programs by students who have recently transferred to Vanden due to a military move or retirement as a means to develop friendships and opportunity to learn about what the Fairfield and Vacaville areas have to offer.

### **4. Cheating Policies**

Since the mid-cycle visit, Vanden Leadership Team, along with site staff, developed an academic code of conduct which clearly identifies and articulates what actions will be handled as academic dishonesty. This code of conduct and the consequences for violation are leveled by the severity and are explained to each student at the beginning of the school year by school administrators and are outlined in the student handbook. In addition, the school librarian conducts lessons in research strategies that includes information on plagiarism and proper source citation to all incoming 9th graders in their English classes.

During the 2016-17 school year, school resources were allocated toward the purchase of Turnitin.com, a software that scans written assignments for originality. This allows for teachers of all disciplines to identify students who use sources improperly and to use the lessons to reinforce skills of paraphrasing, summary, and proper source citation and encourage integrity. While academic dishonesty has not been eliminated, policies and practices are in place to support students and teachers.

## **5. Student, Teacher, Class Access to Technology**

In 2014, TUSD underwent a technology systems upgrade and our bandwidth access increased significantly. District internet filter policies were revised to allow teachers password access to online resources such as youtube.com. Teachers at that time, also received new desktop computers and math and science grants provided for the installation of smartboards in math classes and laptops carts for science. Since then, site administration organized a Technology Committee to identify and prioritized technology needs across campus. Working in partnership with the district technology director, site administration was able to ensure that each classroom has a digital projector and a document camera and is configured for easy teacher use. In addition, administrative staff created a technology team comprised of teachers who are the first responders when there are technology issues in the classrooms. Each teacher is assigned to a building(s) and helps teachers with computer help and Aeries or Microsoft 365 assistance. If the technology team member is unable to help, district technology staff are requested through a Helpdesk program. This system has alleviated many of the technology issues that have plagued our site for many years and teachers can now focus on developing ways to use technology to supplement their curriculum.

The new library also provides increased student access to technology. Computers and a printer are available to students before school, at lunch, and after school. The new computer lab and two additional laptop carts allow teachers greater access to digital instruction and activities.

