

**Downtown High School  
WASC Midterm Review  
2013**

**Progress Report**

## **I. Introduction and Basic Student/Community Profile Data**

### ***General Description***

Downtown Continuation High School (DHS) is one of two continuation schools in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) charged with serving students whose success has been limited in the district's comprehensive high schools. The school, located in a residential section of the Potrero Hill District, offers a small, personalized environment and a staff dedicated to serving students with a variety of needs, ability levels, academic talents, deficiencies, and aspirations. Furthermore, as a continuation school that is permitted to calculate units toward graduation based upon hours of study, we are able to offer more credits per semester than a comprehensive high school. All of these characteristics enable us to offer a viable alternative to struggling students throughout SFUSD.

A majority of DHS students are referred by the Pupil Services Department due to habitual truancy and/or because they lack sufficient credits to graduate on time. Student assignments to DHS also include disciplinary or safety issues that necessitate a transfer. All of the students at DHS have been placed with us because they have been largely unable to fulfill the expectations of their former traditional, academic or charter high schools. DHS represents a second chance for students to succeed and, often, their last chance to graduate from high school. It is our job to meet the needs of these severely at-risk students by offering an educational experience that enables them to re-engage with school, find meaning in learning, achieve academic success, and graduate.

DHS utilizes a school-wide project-based model as our primary instructional delivery system. In pairs, DHS teachers are responsible for developing interdisciplinary, thematic, project-based units that are semester-long and self-contained; students participate in one project all day, every day, for a semester at a time. This semester, for example, students were able to choose from projects focusing on such topics as entrepreneurship, music, acting, and the environment. Projects integrate language arts,

social studies, science, math, and one elective such as art, music, or drama so that students have the opportunity to fulfill necessary graduation requirements.

It is our belief that, in order for our particular student population to succeed, we must challenge each student to grow academically, while at the same time caring for every individual's emotional well-being. We have found that our integrated, project-based curriculum in small, closely-knit teams—with an emphasis on real-world connections, hands-on activities, and relevant field experiences—yields increased attendance and facilitates improved academic success.

### ***School-wide Student Goals***

The Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLRs) at Downtown High School have remained the same since our last full self-study. Downtown High School students will think critically, communicate effectively, contribute socially, and work collaboratively.

### ***Student Demographics***

DHS draws its student population from all over San Francisco, but primarily the southeast sector of the city, including parts of the Potrero Hill neighborhood where we are now located. Specifically, a large number of our students come from the Mission and Excelsior districts, both predominantly working-class Latino neighborhoods. A significant percentage of our students live in Bayview Hunters Point, a largely African American neighborhood with the lowest median family income, highest unemployment rate, and greatest concentration of public housing in the city. Because DHS serves clientele from a wide area of San Francisco, we are not a community or neighborhood school, and pre-existing tensions among various groups outside of school—between gangs, neighborhoods, or housing projects—sometimes make their way onto campus.

Students entering continuation education must be at least sixteen years of age or must have completed two years of high school. Three years ago, new leadership at the district created systems to improve the process of referring students to alternative schools. The new systems focus on low-credit juniors, incorporate referral forms that provide more background information about the students, and provide a more streamlined process to transfer between alternative schools.

DHS has the capacity to serve 274 students based on a student-to-teacher ratio of 25:1 for each of our ten general education teachers, and 12:1 for our two Special Education teachers. Our faculty also includes a Resource Specialist Program teacher, but his caseload of twenty-eight students is integrated within, not on top of, our existing student body. On the day of the California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) count for 2012, Downtown's total student enrollment was 261. Because our enrollment typically increases later in the school year, as schools identify students who need an alternative, the district has kept us fully funded even when our counts on CBEDS day are below capacity.

Upwards of 90% of our students are low-income students of color and, typically, more than 60% are designated by the district as Educationally Disadvantaged Youth (EDY) based on qualification for free or reduced lunch, residence in public housing facilities, receipt of public assistance, parent education level, or standardized test scores below the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile. However, district data collection procedures are unclear to us on site. We would estimate our number of EDY students to be far greater than the district's numbers each year, based on test scores alone. It is one of our goals to work with the district to better understand their data sources and computations.

The chart below highlights Downtown's racial and ethnic representation in comparison to the district's secondary school enrollment. The disproportionately high numbers of African American and Latino students at Downtown High School, as compared with the school district at large, present us with the unique challenge of meeting the needs of the demographic groupings that the SFUSD most struggles to serve. For example, our percentage of African American students is three times that of SFUSD high schools, our

percentage of Latinos is more than twice the average, and our percentage of Chinese students is just slightly more one-tenth of other district high schools. While the district works to implement large-scale initiatives designed to close the achievement gap, our school is entirely shaped—and driven—by the fact that this chasm has yet to be bridged.

<b>Ethnicity/Other Indices</b>	<b>SFUSD Overall</b>	<b>SFUSD Secondary Schools</b>	<b>Downtown High School</b>
African American	9.6%	8.3%	25.0%
American Indian	0.6%	0.5%	0.0%
Chinese	32.0%	40.4%	4.4%
Filipino	5.5%	6.5%	5.2%
Japanese	1.1%	0.9%	0.0%
Korean	0.8%	0.7%	0.0%
Latino	24.7%	21.2%	53.6%
Other Non-white	9.3%	10.1%	9.5%
Other White	12.8%	8.1%	2.4%
Declined to State	3.7%	3.3%	0.4%
Male/Female	51.6%/48.4%	51.6%/48.4%	60.5%/39.5%
ELL	25.2%	17.4%	30.7%
Special Education	10.7%	10.8%	15.7%
EDY	Unavailable	66.64%	65.08%

*Data as of CBEDS Information Day—October 3, 2012*

### ***Faculty and Staff Demographics***

Downtown High School employs eighteen certificated staff consisting of:

- 1—Principal
- 1—Assistant Principal
- 1—Counselor
- 12—Classroom Teachers
- 1—Resource Specialist Program (RSP) Teacher
- 1—Wellness Coordinator
- 1—School Nurse (part-time)
- 1—Librarian (part-time)

\*Note: This year, the assistant principal, two classroom teachers, the Wellness Coordinator, the nurse, and librarian are new to the school, while the principal is new to her position.

Average Years of Service—SFUSD: 12

Average Age of Staff: 41

Advanced Degrees: 35%

Additional Credentials: 42% of classroom teachers

We employ twelve classified staff members, but currently have a substitute paraprofessional as one of our permanent paraprofessionals is on medical leave. Both have been included since both are members of the school community. Classified staff is comprised of:

5—Paraprofessionals (one on leave, one substitute)

2—Secretaries

2—Custodians

2—Security Guards

1—Community Health Outreach Worker (CHOW)

1—Cafeteria Manager

\*Note: One paraprofessional, the substitute paraprofessional, one custodian, the CHOW, and cafeteria manager are new to the school, and one security guard is new to his position.

We also have two categories of “other” staff, consisting of eight people total. Our after school program staff is comprised of:

1—Coordinator

1—Assistant Coordinator

1—Safety and Support

\*Note: The Assistant Coordinator is new to the school, Safety and Support is new to his position.

In addition, we have five members of our school community who function as part-time staff (all new to DHS) but are employed by outside agencies or are interns:

2—Mental Health Providers (one through the Wellness Center and one provided by the district for Special Education Services)

2—Counseling Interns (one mental health provider and one foster youth counselor, both through the Wellness Center)

1—Academic Counseling Intern

At DHS, we work to have a staff that, to the greatest extent possible, reflects the diversity of our students. We consciously outreach to staff members from underrepresented ethnic groups when we have open positions. Experience working with low-income youth of color is a priority in our hiring. It is because of conscious effort that our staff is more diverse than district norms.

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Certificated (19)</b>	<b>Classified (13)</b>	<b>Other (8)</b>	<b>Total (40)</b>	<b>SFUSD</b>
African American	3/15.8%	3/23.1%	1/12.5%	7/17.5%	9%
Chinese	1/5.3%	3/23.1%	0/0%	4/10%	17%
Filipino	2/10.5%	3/23.1%	1/12.5%	6/15%	Other Asian 7%
Korean	1/5.3%	0/0%	0/0%	1/2.5%	
Japanese	0/0%	0/0%	1/12.5%	1/2.5%	
Latino	5/26.3%	1/7.7%	3/37.5%	9/22.5%	15%
White	7/36.8%	2/15.4%	1/12.5%	10/25%	37%
Pacific Islander	0/0%	1/7.7%	0/0%	1/2.5%	Other 15%
Other Non-White	0/0%	0/0%	1/12.5%	1/2.5%	
Male/Female	47.4%/52.6%	53.8/46.2%	37.5%/62.5%	47.5%/52.5%	

### ***Student Achievement Data and Analysis***

*Testing:* While all state and district mandated tests are administered at Downtown High School, our students have traditionally performed very poorly on standardized tests. The overwhelming majority of our students do not buy into STAR testing; they make little or no effort once they know the tests do not affect the number of credits they earn or their progress toward graduation. Furthermore, students like ours—who have many educational gaps due to truancy or learning difficulties—find the tests extremely disempowering and therefore exert minimal energy on test taking. Finally, the reality is that many of our students have been unsuccessful in comprehensive high schools

because they lack basic academic skills, as evidenced by the charts below showing the low numbers of students who are at basic, let alone proficient, levels on California Standard Tests in English and Math.

In spite of a variety of efforts throughout the years around test preparation and incentives, there is no true pattern of growth or decline in our test scores. Rather, the scores reveal varying levels of disenfranchisement and we have, as a school community, decided to invest time and energy into building certain literacy and math skills into our curriculum across projects, rather than specific test preparation efforts.

STAR Results	School			District		
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Subject						
English-Lang Arts	3%	2%	2%	55%	56%	59%
Mathematics	0%	1%	0%	54%	54%	56%
Science	5%	0%	2%	59%	60%	61%
History/Social Science	4%	0%	5%	49%	52%	53%

*This table displays the percent of students achieving at the Proficient or Advanced level (meeting or exceeding state standards).*

Standardized test data at DHS is also problematic because, at a continuation school, the length of time students are with us can range from three weeks to three years. As a result, our percentage of matched scores is typically below 10% and it is therefore difficult to use data from STAR testing to demonstrate longitudinal growth. Many of the students who study with us for three semesters become seniors by credits (170 or more) and are therefore exempt from STAR testing. We are left with very small numbers of students whose tests are measured. The state itself recognized the inherent flaws in evaluating continuation schools through standardized test scores by passing the 1999 Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA). Downtown High School participated in the Alternative Schools Assessment Method (ASAM) that was instituted by the California Department of Education during the 2001-2002 school year. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints beginning in 2009-2010, ASAM schools are now held accountable under the Academic Performance Index (API) but do not receive API ranks.

<b>Academic Performance Index (API)</b>			
API Data	09-10	10-11	11-12
API Basic Score	421	403	391
Actual Growth	-18	-12	58
API Growth Score	403	391	449

\* These rankings are based on previous year's data

This school year, the alternative school principals in SFUSD are charged with developing a model to measure student growth. This cohort of principals meets as a professional learning community once a month to look at existing and developing practices at each site. It is the group's goal to develop a model of assessment that all of the alternative schools can implement.

The California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) is the one standardized test that most of our students take seriously. Every year, there are several students who graduate on stage, but have not passed one or both portions of the test. These students receive a certificate of completion instead of a diploma. We have implemented a variety of strategies to support students such as weekend CAHSEE prep classes at the community college, district CAHSEE prep classes during the summer followed by the summer administration of the test, online test prep in the after school program, and "boot camp" (intensive personalized tutoring) with teachers in the two weeks prior to the test. The strategy with a notable impact is boot camp; students who worked diligently with teachers on specific skills had a higher incidence of passing the test. We need to revisit our support structures to improve student outcomes.

Attendance: Given that the majority of our students were referred to continuation education due to chronic truancy, attendance has always been our greatest challenge. Unfortunately, our Student Information System (SIS) is not able to produce attendance reports that calculate seat time and disaggregate the data for analysis. Over the past three years, data collection has been an ongoing challenge as we have worked to build a culture of positive reinforcement with the incentive of a monthly barbecue for those students who achieve the minimum expectation of 80% attendance. We currently rely

on teachers to provide the data for their projects. The number of students qualifying for the attendance barbecue has been approximately 40%, with fluctuations depending on the time of year (attendance is better at the beginning of each semester, for example). On a positive note, our district is implementing a new information system in 2013-2014. We are very excited to be a test site this spring and to be included in the first cohort of schools to pilot online attendance in the fall.

*Discipline:* Three years ago, the school suspension rate was significantly higher (2009-2010) because the principal took charge of discipline when the dean position was closed. He was intentional in his practice in order to set a baseline for subsequent years. Currently, the School Board has adopted the implementation of restorative practices in order to reduce the over representation of students of color, African American students in particular, in disciplinary action. This year, our new assistant principal, who has a restorative mindset and is in charge of discipline, has been working with the counselor and principal to develop our first formal school discipline policy. The restorative aspects are as yet to be determined, as our staff has only begun to study, discuss and pilot specific restorative practices. However, we anticipate an increase in our suspension rate this year due to new administration establishing expectations and protocols as well as the implementation of a discipline module in SIS that will be more efficient in tracking the data. In terms of violence on campus, we consider our school to be very safe, and parent and student surveys agree. We have had only two incidents this year, both female-female. We know anecdotally from district personnel our incidents align with a trend that the majority of physical altercations across the high schools involve females. We are also seeing an increase in bullying behaviors. These are two trends that we will be monitoring with implications for interventions yet to be determined.

<b>Discipline Data</b>	<b>School</b>			<b>District</b>		
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Rate*						
Suspensions	8.9	2.3	0.4	5.8	5.1	4.4
Expulsions	0	0	0	0	0	0

*\*The rate is the total number of incidents divided by the total enrollment.*

Graduation: Especially noticeable in the past two years is a decline in the number of graduates. We attribute this to the current district referral policy where the bulk of our incoming students are low credit juniors. In the past, we received a significant number of low credit seniors. In addition, during the past two years, DHS has experienced a slight decline in student enrollment that we attribute to several factors. First of all, SFUSD is a district of declining enrollment that uses a weighted student formula to calculate site budgets; it is therefore in the interest of the comprehensive schools to maintain their enrollment levels, resulting in fewer referrals to continuation high schools. Secondly, due to budget cuts, the district has largely discontinued evening and summer schools for students to make up failed courses (the exceptions are senior summer school for students who can graduate with three or fewer extra classes and, just this spring semester, a small selection of specific classes offered in evening school at two different district sites). As a result, sites have increased credit recovery options (largely online coursework such as Odyssey and Cyber High) through grant funded after school programs, making it possible for the students who are less far behind in credits (closer to having enough credits to graduate) to stay at their home schools and graduate with their class.

Another contributing factor is the emergence of three viable alternative programs: Early Morning Studies Academy, a GED program for students who are at least 17 years old; Gateway to College, a collaboration between SFUSD and City College of San Francisco (CCSF) that offers a high school diploma and concurrent college credits; and Five Keys Charter School, an adult diploma program requiring fewer credits than other SFUSD high schools.

On a positive note, these options enable us to transition students who are not successful in our program. However, this past year we have noticed a significant increase in the number of students on our diploma track who transfer to Five Keys Charter School where they only need 180 credits to graduate, as compared to our 230 credits. For some students, this means graduating “on time.” For others, their families need them to enter the workforce sooner rather than later. In the past, the only option for an adult diploma

(with a reduction in number of required credits) was at the John Adams Campus of City College of San Francisco, located on the west side of the city. Many of our students do not travel to that part of the city due to safety concerns. Five Keys has several campuses that are more accessible to our students.

<b>Downtown High School Completion Statistics</b>		
	June	Summer
1998-1999	20	0
1999-2000 (1 <sup>st</sup> year of PBL)	49	2
2000-2001	93	3
2001-2002	67	3
2002-2003	83	1
2003-2004	70	0
2004-2005	84	3
2005-2006	62	6
2006-2007	57	10
2007-2008	47	17
2008-2009	60	6
2009-2010	61	7
2010-2011	45	10
2011-2012	40	8

Because DHS is a continuation high school where students come to catch up on credits, graduation *rates* are difficult to calculate. While many of our students may be in their fourth year of high school, they may not arrive at DHS with enough credits to graduate on time and are therefore not considered seniors. We have many students who are eighteen years old with fewer than 100 credits. On the other hand, SFUSD categorizes fifth year seniors as dropouts, yet many of our graduates stay at DHS an extra semester, or even a whole year, in order to earn their diplomas. There is therefore not a clear delineation of which students “should” graduate each year, with which we could calculate a graduation rate or percentage.

## **II. Significant School Changes or Developments**

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### ***Administration***

The most significant change since our last visit has been our administration. We feel extremely fortunate that, when former principal Mark Alvarado accepted a new assignment, the district agreed with us that the promotion of Ellen Wong from assistant principal to principal was the best possible decision for our school. It has resulted in a remarkably smooth transition. In 2001, when she enrolled her son at DHS, Mrs. Wong joined our community first as a parent volunteer. She was soon hired as a community resource specialist (a classified staff/paraprofessional position). She then obtained a teaching credential to become our vocational education teacher and subsequently our instructional reform facilitator (both certificated positions). Mrs. Wong took the steps to earn an administrative credential and served as our assistant principal for three years. It would be impossible to find anyone more qualified or committed to lead our community. Mrs. Wong brings a unique knowledge of our school from multiple perspectives as well as an emotional connection with DHS and its mission that would be very difficult to match.

Todd Williams, our new assistant principal, has a background in Special Education and, in this capacity, worked as a teacher at the other continuation school in our district before becoming a district Special Education content specialist. He has served as an administrator at a project-based charter high school in San Francisco and also brings experience in restorative justice practices. This experience has served as a timely foundation for discipline this year in that we agreed at the end of last year that we needed to develop a philosophy of discipline for the school. The SFUSD has also begun to train teams at sites across the district in restorative justice discipline practices in order to address the disproportionate number of African American and Latino students being suspended. Although DHS has not yet committed to becoming a restorative practice school site for the district, we have made restorative practice part of our professional development calendar and are piloting several restorative techniques. Mr. Williams, together with Wellness Center and district staff, has conducted a number of

professional development workshops on how restorative justice is designed to work as well as on differentiation, instructional strategies, and formative and summative assessments. He also visits classrooms almost daily and checks in with students about what and how they are learning.

The tone our new administration has set from the first day of the school year can be felt throughout the building. They have established specific expectations and posted them around the school. They are dedicated to thoughtful, measured responses to the many crises, major and minor, that arise during any typical day. They are extremely collaborative, work closely within the leadership team, and work to maintain the school's organization.

Some of the protocols from our last WASC report that were driven by the previous principal have, not surprisingly, morphed under our new leadership. For example, the practices that formerly fell under Prevention and Intervention (PI) have become part of our Student Assistance Program (SAP). The SAP team—comprised of Wellness staff, security, after school staff, the RSP teacher, and administration—meets weekly to review the needs of individual students, referred by any staff member, and identify the best services and responses to meet those needs. Staff can refer students for a variety of issues: academic, personal, family, relationship, health, attendance, etc. SAP has proven to be an effective way of coordinating support for students. The process has been particularly successful in improving communication between the SAP team and classroom teachers. There is a greater focus on individual student needs.

### ***Wellness and After School Programs***

Another important change to our campus this year was the complete turnover of all Wellness Center staff: coordinator, CHOW, counselor, nurse, and interns. Last year, the Wellness coordinator who had been with us since the center first opened left the school, and a new Wellness coordinator wasn't hired until November, significantly reducing services provided both because of the vacancy and because the new coordinator needed

to learn how to run the center. This year, the turnover not only of that coordinator but of the entire staff has meant that the new team has started from scratch, building relationships and protocols with students, faculty and staff, community based organizations (CBOs), and service providers. It is taking some time for programming and services to be restored to previous levels. Some of the goals related to student support that were outlined in WASC, in which previous Wellness Center staff was taking a leadership role, have been put on hold as new Wellness staff has focused on establishing a baseline of Wellness services on campus.

Due to the many budget cuts over the past three years, our after school program has also had to reduce its programming. Although our current director, Jorge Solorzano, has done a wonderful job of building a strong after school culture, his staff was reduced and there are no longer funds to continue much of the programming that was previously offered. The after school program began the year with only Mr. Solorzano as staff; toward the end of the first semester, enough funding was restored to hire a part-time assistant and a part-time support staff. Of the many enrichment classes offered during the past two years, only the popular cooking class can continue. One of the program's strengths, however, has been the use of the online credit recovery program, Odyssey, which has replaced the previously used Cyber High. Many students are taking advantage of this program and it has become the basis of our own site-based summer school. This year, for the first time, the after school program was able to keep the school open during Spring Break to allow motivated students to continue their online classes.

### ***Staff and Projects***

Another significant change is that we have had several teachers leave over the past three years but have been able to recruit strong, enthusiastic replacements. In addition to Get Out and Learn (GOAL), Music and Math in Resistance to Social Structures (MMARSS), Physics Reflected in Social Movements (PRISM), and the Wilderness Arts and Literacy Collaborative (WALC), which have all been running for several years, there are two current projects that are new since the last WASC report: Acting for Critical Thought

(ACT, with one veteran teacher and one newer teacher) and Community Oriented Research and Entrepreneurship (CORE, with two teachers both new to DHS this year). We are pleased with the variety of projects currently being offered.

Both of these new projects have developed new, exciting partnerships. ACT works with the writing program 826 Valencia as well as the American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.), which provides acting teachers and theater space. This is one of the most exciting partnerships between a community organization and DHS, as the A.C.T. has invested a great deal of resources and funding into working with and mentoring DHS youth. CORE takes students to work with the San Francisco Food Bank and The Glide Memorial Church soup kitchen as part of its mission, and has begin planning to rebuild the school's native plant garden and green the sidewalks surrounding the building through a Community Challenge Grant in partnership with Climate Action Now. Another new partnership is with two established projects, WALC (which has one new teacher) and GOAL, that have been able to partner with a National Geographic photo camp in conjunction with Restore the Delta to offer ten students a unique opportunity to work with professional photographers and have their photographs exhibited at the America's Cup.

One of the realizations we have come through the process of preparing this report is that we need to figure out a way to offer our new teachers the same depth of professional development that the veteran staff has been afforded. We think of certain established initiatives as being fully institutionalized—the literacy initiative, the establishment of DHS's core tenets of project-based learning and Critical Academic Skills (CAS), the scientific method, the foundation for what constitutes scientific inquiry and what does not—and yet some of our new teachers have had little or no exposure to that body of work. It has become clear that we need to create a means of spiraling back to our established best practices, even as we move forward with our new initiatives. This will be equally pertinent next year, as we are expecting two new teachers to join us—one of our teachers will be entering a Stanford doctoral program in education and another will be taking a leave.

Other staff turnover includes our cafeteria worker, one of our custodians, the part-time librarian and several of our paraprofessionals. Again, we have been fortunate that the new hires have become strong additions to our staff.

### ***Special Education***

DHS has embraced a full-inclusion model of Special Education. Formerly, in alignment with district mandates, only two projects included a Special Education teacher and all students who had previously been in Special Day Classes (SDC) were forced to choose from those projects only. Now, because the district is moving toward inclusion, they have allowed us to return to our previous practice of all students being able to choose from any of the projects. This model has proven to be less stigmatizing for SDC students and allows for them to find the best match for their interests, hopefully resulting in greater engagement.

In order to support our full inclusion model, paraprofessional hours have been increased and we have hired an additional paraprofessional to work with projects. Each project now benefits from the services of one paraprofessional, whom they share with just one other project; each paraprofessional works with two projects. The schedules are arranged among the paraprofessionals, resource teacher, and project teachers.

### ***Demographics***

Another change of note in our school is shifting demographics. Our population is increasingly Latino and increasingly male. For the most part, these are changes that have been taking place over the last few years. For many years, the largest demographic group we served was African American students from Bayview Hunters Point, then the number of African American and Latino students was approximately the same, and now Latino students from the Mission and Excelsior are now our largest group by far. This is a reflection of the declining enrollment of African American students throughout the

district. In 2007, district secondary schools were 13.2% African American; in 2010, 12.3%; currently, only 8.3%. This declining enrollment is seen as a result of African Americans no longer being able to afford to live in San Francisco and moving to more affordable places such as the East Bay.

<b>Demographic Shifts in DHS Student Population</b>			
<b>Group</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2013</b>
African American	32.5%	33.1%	25.0%
Latino	34.2%	39.0 %	53.6%
ELL	15.9%	22.4%	30.7%
Male/Female	54.3%/45.7%	55.5%/44.5%	60.5%/39.5%

At our school, this demographic shift has resulting in an increased focus on strategies to meet the needs of English Language Learners (ELL). Our percentage of ELL students has increased significantly as our Latino student population has increased. We have subsequently been sending more teachers to district ELL workshops and made ELL strategies a part of our best practices strand during professional development. We have also observed that many of our ELL students are fluent English speakers from bilingual families who have essentially grown up in San Francisco. We are working on reclassifying those students if they meet the necessary criteria: Intermediate level or higher on all areas of the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) with an overall Early Advanced level or higher, a passing score on the English Language Arts portion of the CAHSEE, and an English class grade of C or higher.

As for the gender imbalance, that has become much more noticeable especially this school year. By our calculations, we are currently close to 65% male and only 35% female. While we make efforts to distribute girls evenly throughout each project, there is no way to achieve gender balance in any classroom given the drastic imbalance of students entering the school. Our principal has been communicating with the student placement office about the gender imbalance, but they seem to have far more boys to place than girls. The gender imbalance has inspired conversations about possible school-wide campaigns to educate students about gender issues such as sexual harassment and rape culture.

## ***Workforce Development***

Downtown High School has developed two new workforce development pathways and a Workforce Development Committee in the past three years. The first pathway, Success 21, came about when the school was one of five alternative sites to be selected for the inaugural award of the School Partners Grant in the 2010-2011 school year. The budget of approximately \$225,000 per year for three years is funded by San Francisco's Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF). The grant and services are administered by our fiscal partner, Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), a community-based organization that is well versed in providing a full range of workforce services to youth and adults. The purpose of the grant is to provide a cohort of twenty-five students with an academic year of programming that bridges school to work and includes 21st century job skills, work experience/internship, opportunities to earn stipends, and post-secondary transition support. The goal is to motivate students to persevere and graduate from high school with a path to college and/or career. We are in the third year of the grant and have applied for the next three-year cycle. The only significant limitation of the grant is that it specifies one employer partner per school site: our partner is the San Francisco Department of Recreation and Parks. The bulk of the work experience is focused on habitat restoration with very limited access to administrative positions in which students might become more aware of the academic skills that are important within the workplace. This summer, we will be analyzing data collected over the last three years in order to deepen the work to improve and broaden the experiences and outcomes for students.

The students selected for Success 21 must be on track to graduate with good attendance of at least 80%. However, we know that all students benefit from vocational training and that there are many youth workforce programs in San Francisco that offer paid jobs. Over the last three years, we have worked with Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center (BHNC) to bring their Youth Employment Service to DHS students through our after school program. Students are eligible to participate if they have at least 60% attendance. An area of growth is to increase job placement for qualified students.

Lastly, the Workforce Development Committee was established in 2011. The group conducted a major self-assessment in the spring of 2012 but the work has been on hold due to the change in administration and Wellness staff. With the insights gained from the past three years and the expertise of our community partners, we are well positioned to create a comprehensive workforce plan, with a flow chart of options, before the new school year to be more strategic in meeting the needs of students. A committee retreat to do this work is planned for May.

### ***District Policies***

Our district has recently adopted a policy requiring all SFUSD graduates to meet the University of California A through G requirements. It is unclear what the full impact of this decision will be long term. Full implementation, beginning with the class of 2014, comes at a time of decreased enrollment across the city. As budgets were cut, so were most district summer and night school programs. Some of these programs are gradually starting to be reintroduced, but most are no longer options for credit recovery. As discussed in our profile section about graduation numbers, comprehensive high schools are therefore taking many measures to maintain their student numbers and to avoid losing students due to the increased requirements. However, the A to G requirements are extremely rigorous and we have yet to see if comprehensive high schools will have the capacity to support their achievement by all students. The number of students that were assigned to us in January was lower than usual, but it is possible more students will need an alternative setting or more aggressive and long term credit recovery options once the A to G graduation requirements are fully enacted with the class of 2014. This will no doubt affect our site.

Additionally, several other alternative programs offering different pathways to a diploma or GED are flourishing. As previously discussed, an example is Five Keys Charter School, which requires substantially fewer credits to graduate. A number of our students have opted to attend Five Keys in order to finish high school sooner. Based on

our principal's discussions within her alternative school professional learning community, our staff has begun discussions to evaluate if we want to change our own requirements. For example, we will have great difficulty offering two full years of foreign language and three full years of college preparatory math. Our discourse is preliminary and it is unclear what the district's position on any changes to alternative school requirements would be.

### ***Site***

Our building was remodeled to meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. Although the actual construction process was quite stressful, involving teachers moving in and out of temporary bungalows, we are satisfied with the results. We now have a working elevator, accessible ramps and bathrooms, widened doorways, and many cosmetic upgrades. In addition, we were able to have input on the modifications and so what had been an outdated and unused traditional chemistry lab became a project-friendly science lab/kitchen where teachers can conduct experiments and the after school cooking class can thrive. The district will be installing solar panels on our roof this summer and a grant has been submitted to re-establish a native plant garden in our yard on Kansas Street.

### **III. Ongoing School Improvement**

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Downtown High School's Leadership Team is the body that monitors progress on the Action Plan. The Leadership Team meets weekly, not only regularly evaluating Action Plan progress but also using the Action Plan to guide our site-based professional development plan and calendar. Wednesdays at DHS are minimum days for students; faculty and staff are able to engage in professional development from 1:00-4:00 p.m. each week. This time has been the primary vehicle utilized in implementation of the Action Plan.

Because our WASC Action Plan truly is the site's single school-wide improvement plan, we have consciously structured professional development to meet the goals set forth during our last self study. To this end, in year one of this Action Plan, we made the decision to design and deliver professional development internally as opposed to hiring presenters or consultants. We found that the most thoughtfully planned, relevant and productive workshops were those created by our own staff, which collectively holds a wealth of experience, knowledge, and expertise. To support the Action Plan, we divided the staff into four committees: Inquiry, Math, Humanities, and Student Support. All certificated staff members were required to participate in one committee, and committees rotated every Wednesday planning professional development workshops to move the staff forward toward reaching our Action Plan goals. In order to more equitably distribute responsibility for Action Plan implementation, committees were chaired by staff who did not serve on the Leadership Team. As sound practice that also supported specific Action Plan goals, we also instituted the requirements that each workshop must model effective instructional strategies, incorporate relevant research/scholarship, and offer tangible resources that could be utilized within the classroom as teachers identified desired outcomes borne of each workshop or training.

This committee structure during year one offered staff a variety of highly engaging workshops through which we met several of our Action Plan goals. Of particular note were the launch of the science-based Inquiry Initiative and the math committee's decision to focus on Complex Instruction, based on a district math initiative that has

provided several of our teachers with Complex Instruction summer trainings and coaching throughout the year. Also during year one, a WASC Action Plan committee became the means of working toward goals not clearly embedded in a specific committee. This committee was responsible for facilitating the revision of our CAS as well as discussions of the role of exhibition and the development of an individual student rubric for project exhibitions.

Each semester, we dedicate time to reflection and feedback on professional development offerings, as well as identifying priorities for future professional development. In year two, the leadership team determined that professional development needed to be even more closely aligned with Action Plan objectives. We restructured the professional development calendar into specific strands we identified as needing more of our attention: cohorts to focus on curriculum development incorporating specific initiatives such as Inquiry and Complex Instruction; sharing of best practices to model curriculum delivery designed for all students such as Special Education and ELL students; Critical Pedagogy to examine our positions on race and class issues and how they influence our practice; and common planning time among teachers/project partners to work toward implementation of school-wide initiatives and best practices. Leadership Team members facilitated their cohorts, and many of the committees from the previous year morphed into taking on responsibility for different aspects of the strands. For example, the Inquiry Committee designed cohort activities to support implementation of the Inquiry Initiative, the math committee designed and delivered Complex Instruction training, and the humanities committee took charge of the Critical Pedagogy strand.

The strand model moved us further forward in meeting Action Plan goals; in year three, we updated the strands to target even more specific outcomes. For example, the Action Plan identified science and math as priority areas for school-wide initiatives, so we dedicated one professional development strand specifically to math and science. Now, Inquiry Initiative expectations have been a focus since the year's first professional development and all teachers have received multiple trainings in Complex Instruction strategies. We continued the best practices and Critical Pedagogy strands through the

fall semester; the Critical Pedagogy strand has now emerged as the foundation of the next initiative in social studies.

Naturally, as this is the year of our midterm review, we have also incorporated professional development sessions specifically dedicated to assessing our progress on the Action Plan. In preparing this report, staff met in teams, each dedicated to one specific Critical Academic Need (CAN), identifying and sharing out progress, as well as bringing discussion items to the table related to goals that may have changed or require revision. Through this process, we recognized that certain practices we have trouble finding time for, such as student work sharing and peer observation, could become part of our Wednesday professional development calendar. This spring semester, half of each professional development is now devoted to student work sharing related to specific initiatives and best practices (scientific inquiry, complex instruction, formative assessment, differentiation, etc.). This peer support structure also includes videotaping teachers in action and responding to the lessons they deliver. The second half of each professional development is coordinated to target specific topics we have identified as requiring more attention, such as assessment, differentiation, Critical Pedagogy, and restorative practices.

DHS's ongoing school improvement process has been wholly collaborative and very organic to best address the priorities identified by staff and leadership, always based on the needs articulated in our self-study. We have routinely referenced our original Action Plan as a means of informing our school improvement work. In preparing this report, we realized that, while we have actively worked to address the CANs identified in the Action Plan, its highly detailed and sequential timelines were often too specific to accommodate our collective process. To that end, we created a more holistic working document, one that identifies where our CANs, related growth areas and targets, and Critical Areas for Follow-up intersect. This new Action Plan Guide is organized by priorities within each CAN. While the 2010 Action Plan still determines the direction of our work and the steps we need to take, the Action Plan Guide can function as a working document that allows our approach to the Action Plan to focus on specific priorities

within a bigger picture of improvement, rather than being narrowed by unrealistic specificity. It is included at the end of this section.

Being a small school whose governing body, the School Site Council (SSC), includes primarily leadership team members, we have not prepared annual reports related to this Action Plan. This midterm report was prepared through the following process:

- Members of the leadership team volunteered for a WASC subcommittee and met to identify a process and timeline for completing this report.
- The staff met in CAN groups to summarize their progress on the Action Plan.
- Each CAN group reported back to the committee of the whole and solicited feedback for their summary, as well as presenting specific issues for discussion that had arisen when, for example, the school seemed to be taking a different direction than what was articulated in the Action Plan.
- The principal and members of WASC subcommittee drafted parts I-III and V of the progress report.
- The leadership team members in each CAN group drafted a section of part IV of the progress report and submitted it to the WASC subcommittee.
- The WASC subcommittee finalized the report and shared it with the committee of the whole.

**Action Plan Guide (Working Document)**

<b>Critical Academic Need 1:</b> Develop school-wide structures to assess student progress toward mastery of Downtown High School’s Critical Academic Skills.			
<b>Priority</b>	<b>Related Growth Areas</b>	<b>Growth Targets</b>	<b>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</b>
Critical Academic Skills	Regular reexamination and revision (as needed) of ESLRs and CAS by school community	Critical Academic Skills (CAS) revisited and updated as needed	Regular re-examination of CAS and implementation of new initiatives to support CAS
Data	Identify and collect which data are most useful to us, and regularly revisit this data	School-wide assessments utilized to generate data that can inform instruction	Creation of a school wide system of data collection, assessment, aggregation to demonstrate to all stakeholders student progress against an

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			<p>agreed upon set of state or national performance and/or content standards</p> <p>(Action Plan timelines must reflect the urgency of said alignment)</p>
Assessments	<p>Develop additional rubrics around more academic initiatives such as math and scientific inquiry</p> <p>Develop authentic assessments such as school-wide rubrics across more content areas and for more, possibly all, Critical Academic Skills</p> <p>Further develop expectations and assessments of students for exhibition</p> <p>Develop common expectations for field experiences in order to facilitate maximum integration with project curriculum</p>	<p>Appropriate assessments identified for each CAS, school-wide requirement, and academic discipline</p> <p>School-wide assessment tools such as rubrics implemented across projects as suitable</p>	<p>Create a uniform curricular and assessment alignment with ESLRS and State and/or National Performance and/or Content standards within each core subject area and within each project</p> <p>(Action Plan timelines must reflect the urgency of said alignment)</p>
Student Portfolios	<p>Develop criteria and systems (such as student portfolios) to assess individual student progress</p> <p>Identify a means (such as portfolios) of assessing student progress toward achieving ESLRs and CAS over time</p>	<p>Structures such as individual student portfolios in place to measure student progress over time toward achieving DHS academic standards</p>	
Individual Learning Plans	<p>Design school-wide, uniform Individual Learning Plans</p>		<p>Creation of ILP (Individualized Learning Plan) for each student</p>

<b>Critical Academic Need 2:</b> Build upon community and family partnerships to support students' personal well being and academic success at Downtown High School and beyond.			
<b>Priority</b>	<b>Related Growth Areas</b>	<b>Growth Targets</b>	<b>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</b>
Family Involvement	<p>Increase parent and student input into governance and enhance understanding of governance among those groups</p> <p>Develop structures that facilitate ongoing parent/guardian participation and follow-up in monitoring student progress between conferences</p> <p>Increase the number of families involved in school activities and culture</p>	<p>Increase programming available to parents and families of DHS.</p> <p>Increase overall participation rates in all family programming at DHS.</p> <p>Formally assess parent and family perceptions of DHS support services.</p>	Continue to develop relationships between parent/guardian and school
Transition Plans	Connect every student with at least one support provider or CBO to support and help keep track of her/him after high school	<p>Increase programming around pre-vocational and vocational training and workforce development.</p> <p>Utilize CBO partnerships to connect every student with at least one adult who can support and guide her/him after DHS.</p>	Formalize transition plans for all students, regardless of post-secondary pathway
Assessment of Support	Develop centralized data-sharing systems around student support services in order to increase communication and allow for assessment of student support services	Develop an efficient system for communication and coordination of support services between all members of the DHS support team.	

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		<p>Develop and regularly utilize a means of assessing community partnerships.</p> <p>Develop a means of assessment for existing support services such as the PI program.</p> <p>Develop a means of assessing impact of support services on students' academic growth.</p>	
Support Structures	In order to systematize and incentivize high expectations school-wide, build upon support structures such as PI to help students meet the requirements of the attendance and credit initiatives		
<b>Critical Academic Need 3:</b> Leverage existing collaborative support structures to further improve project-based curriculum.			
<b>Priority</b>	<b>Related Growth Areas</b>	<b>Growth Targets</b>	<b>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</b>
Peer Collaboration	<p>Fully implement a regular schedule of peer support structures</p> <p>Leverage existing collaborative support structures to further improve project-based curriculum</p>	<p>Provide each teacher with peer observation opportunities once per semester.</p> <p>Examine student work collaboratively during professional development once per semester.</p>	Regular re-examination of CAS and implementation of new initiatives to support CAS
Professional Development	<p>Integrate more current educational research, recent scholarship, and academic data into professional development</p> <p>Integrate current educational</p>	Provide Wednesday professional development, designed by each committee, which incorporates current educational scholarship on a regular basis.	Further integration of current educational research, scholarship and data analysis into professional development days

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	<p>scholarship into in-house professional development</p> <p>Develop processes to determine need for professional development based on assessments</p>		
Funding	Supplement school budget in order to maintain current level of material provision for project-based curriculum		
Academic Initiatives	<p>Support full implementation of all Critical Academic Skills through initiatives, committee work, common assessments, etc.</p> <p>Support Math Initiative to further improve CAHSEE pass rate and advance students beyond CAHSEE level math</p> <p>Fully develop and implement school-wide initiatives in math and scientific inquiry, then social studies</p> <p>Fully implement Math Initiative and Scientific Inquiry Initiative</p>	<p>Identify priorities for additional initiatives based on ESLR and CAS needs, piloting possibilities through Wednesday workshops.</p> <p>Fully implement Scientific Inquiry Initiative across all projects: common definition of inquiry, inquiry processes, requirements, academic standards, and assessments, as well as development and implementation of inquiry-based lessons in every project.</p> <p>Similarly implement Math Initiative school-wide to ensure higher-level math integrated with each project's themes.</p>	<p>Regular re-examination of CAS and implementation of new initiatives to support CAS</p> <p>Create a uniform curricular and assessment alignment with ESLRS and State and/or National Performance and/or Content standards within each core subject area and within each project</p>

#### **IV. School-Wide Action Plan Progress**

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***Critical Academic Need 1:*** *Develop school-wide structures to assess student progress toward mastery of Downtown High School’s Critical Academic Skills.*

The priority areas for our first CAN, as identified in our Action Plan Guide, are revision of our site’s critical academic skills, identification and collection of useful data, and the development of school-wide assessments, student portfolios, and individualized learning plans.

Developing “school-wide structures to assess student progress toward mastery of Downtown High School’s Critical Academic Skills” has been a consistent focus over the past three years, and our concentrated work has moved the school forward considerably.

#### ***Critical Academic Skills***

<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Related Growth Areas</i></b>	<b><i>Growth Targets</i></b>	<b><i>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</i></b>
Critical Academic Skills	Regular reexamination and revision (as needed) of ESLRs and CAS by school community	Critical Academic Skills (CAS) revisited and updated as needed	Regular re-examination of CAS and implementation of new initiatives to support CAS

In year one of our Action Plan, the staff reviewed and revised our Critical Academic Skills (CAS) immediately. We also revisited the ESLRs and unanimously agreed that we would maintain them as they are. One of the things we noticed in our CAS review was that some of them were written to outline what a teacher should be providing but not written in terms of what a student should accomplish. These were reworded. There was an item about the math that should be offered that was inconsistent with how we deal with all other content areas. We had launched some key initiatives that we felt were important to project curriculum (e.g. science through inquiry) but were not explicitly in the CAS. Upon reflection, most teachers were not requiring traditional research papers

but asking students to complete original work in many other forms that required analytical thinking, so that CAS was revised. There was strong consensus on these changes and the process was not very time consuming. The revised CAS are now posted on our Wiki Space ([dhsdocuments.wikispaces.com](http://dhsdocuments.wikispaces.com)), and provided in the Appendix.

As per the recommendation in Critical Areas for Follow-up, our school-wide initiatives and CAS are now very much aligned. Some of the CAS were revised to better reflect our initiatives, and some of the initiatives changed as priorities within the CAS emerged. For example, because of the Inquiry Initiative, one of the CAS now states students will “utilize inquiry methods as a component of the scientific process and as a strategy to explore other subject areas.” Aligned with this CAS, the inquiry initiative has conducted multiple professional development workshops not only demonstrating the spectrum of scientific inquiry, but also asking project partners to plan together to integrate inquiry methods into other subject areas.

In addition, the math initiative’s focus on complex instruction is purposefully aligned with the CAS stating students will “solve problems that require the application of high school level math concepts to real world situations that are integrated with other subject areas.” Because complex instruction is designed around group problem solving, complex instruction professional development has presented us with several examples of “real-world” math problems students must solve together. Equally important in complex instruction is addressing the issue of status in the classroom through specific strategies structured around rotating student roles and ongoing teacher feedback. The math initiative has therefore allowed us to apply such strategies to group work in a variety of subject areas, and prompted us to begin designing a group work rubric to support both complex instruction in math and the “Work Collaboratively” section of the CAS.

Most recently, we have begun discussing our praxis around “Contribute Socially” as part of the more recent social studies initiative focusing on Critical Pedagogy. The CAS supporting “Contribute Socially” center around social justice, social change, and taking action. Our Critical Pedagogy initiative has begun the work of asking teachers to identify standards for active versus passive social justice curriculum. In short, all three of our

major school-wide initiatives since the creation of the last Action Plan have been designed to support our revised CAS.

**Data**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Related Growth Areas</b>	<b>Growth Targets</b>	<b>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</b>
Data	Identify and collect which data are most useful to us, and regularly revisit this data	School-wide assessments utilized to generate data that can inform instruction	Creation of a school wide system of data collection, assessment, aggregation to demonstrate to all stakeholders student progress against an agreed upon set of state or national performance and/or content standards  (Action Plan timelines must reflect the urgency of said alignment)

As per the Critical Areas for Follow-up, we began discussions about data collection in the leadership team quite soon after our WASC visitation. We identified as most meaningful the following data: attendance rates, credits earned, and grade point averages, including as compared to previous schools students attended. In considering this Critical Area for Follow-up, we determined that the most important student performance indicator we can measure is graduation—whether or not a student earns the 230 credits, distributed in each subject area, necessary to graduate from the SFUSD. We also identified the total number of graduates who have passed or not passed the CAHSEE as relevant data.

The majority of this data is readily available to us. Credit data currently resides in each student’s credit evaluation—created and updated by our counselor or an administrator—which lists credits earned every semester of high school, both before and during matriculation at DHS. Our challenge has been that there is no one specifically tasked

with compiling this data all in one place; rather, we are able to analyze each student individually. This also holds true for grade point averages, which are listed each semester on students' scholarship records (transcripts), and CASHEE test results, which are also available on district databases. We have yet to determine a method for centralizing each of these data sets together in one place and, most importantly, what staff member might be able to manage such a database. Another significant challenge is attendance data: the number of absences in each class every semester prior to DHS exists on scholarship records but appears somewhat unreliable, as we see wide variations within a single semester for many of our students. Attendance at DHS is kept by teachers, but the district's attendance system does not organize attendance data for our school. This is expected to change soon as a new SFUSD attendance system is to be piloted next year.

Our new assistant principal has volunteered to see what support we might be able to get from the district with respect to data tracking. In the past, the district has been unable to provide us with the data in which we are interested because their data systems focus primarily on test scores and their attendance system is not fully aligned with ours. Given that measuring student growth is a focus of in alternative school principals' professional learning community, perhaps we will have greater success with district systems in the near future.

Finally, we have had many lengthy discussions about what type of data would truly inform our instruction. Our reality is that we serve students with a wide range of skill sets—many students read far below grade level, a few are avid readers; some students have yet to master long division, a handful have passed advanced algebra. It is therefore our challenge to design curriculum in each subject area that can engage all of our students, who have all struggled in school no matter how diverse their academic histories are. To that end—to engage and support all students in their learning—we have created our project-based program. We have collected school-wide assessment data at different points over the past several years: literacy initiative essay data, math and English assessments upon enrollment, etc. School-wide assessment data invariably tells us that, while few students have achieved mastery of certain performance standards,

most still need practice. The practical impact of data collection on our instruction has therefore been minimal. We have realized that project-based curriculum and instruction to reengage students in their education is the driving force of our school; as we improve our data collection efforts, we must answer the question of how to best effectively and meaningfully the information.

***Assessments***

<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Related Growth Areas</i></b>	<b><i>Growth Targets</i></b>	<b><i>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</i></b>
Assessments	<p>Develop additional rubrics around more academic initiatives such as math and scientific inquiry</p> <p>Develop authentic assessments such as school-wide rubrics across more content areas and for more, possibly all, Critical Academic Skills</p> <p>Further develop expectations and assessments of students for exhibition</p> <p>Develop common expectations for field experiences in order to facilitate maximum integration with project curriculum</p>	<p>Appropriate assessments identified for each CAS, school-wide requirement, and academic discipline</p> <p>School-wide assessment tools such as rubrics implemented across projects as suitable</p>	<p>Create a uniform curricular and assessment alignment with ESLRS and State and/or National Performance and/or Content standards within each core subject area and within each project</p> <p>(Action Plan timelines must reflect the urgency of said alignment)</p>

Assessment has been a major focus for our work on this Action Plan, as identified in our Critical Areas for Follow-up. In year one, we began working on assessment with each teacher sharing assessment tools with the rest of the faculty so as to inform any school-wide assessments we develop together. A common rubric for the five-paragraph response to literature essay has used school wide for several years now and, within each

project, there are any number of rubrics being used to both assess student achievement and to inform students of expectations. These are the assessments we shared with one another to provide a foundation for developing school-wide assessments.

In the first year of this new Action Plan, we also devoted significant time to discussing the role of exhibition. Exhibition is heavily emphasized as the culmination of our project-based curriculum, with some teachers viewing it as a summative assessment and some as more of a showcase of student work. We clarified the role of exhibition for students by developing a rubric to evaluate each student's exhibition participation individually. We were already using a school-wide rubric evaluating each project's exhibition as a whole in our exhibition designing process and in the semester-end reflections we do as a staff. The individual student exhibition rubric was created as a common assessment tool that identifies performance standards for exhibition. It can be found in the Appendix.

We have also created and adopted a rubric to guide and evaluate scientific inquiry activities in each project. The Inquiry Initiative requires each project to develop a series of inquiry activities designed to help students answer an overarching scientific question. This rubric (also present in the Appendix) is a means to assess students' participation in a range of inquiry activities.

To support the Complex Instruction Initiative, we have begun developing a school-wide collaborative learning rubric. Four out of six math teachers in the school have been trained by our school district in the instructional approach of Complex Instruction, which is an attempt to bring equity to the math classroom by involving groups of students in problems that are open to multiple ways of entering and solving a problem. Through this training, there are common tools for encouraging and assessing group participation, as well as rubrics for group products. These are used by the Complex Instruction teachers and have been shared with the staff during professional development meetings. These assessments form the foundation for informing the DHS-specific rubric, which we plan to have ready to pilot school-wide next fall semester.

As per our Critical Areas of Follow-up related to alignment with state and national standards, the professional development workshops around scientific inquiry as well as standards informing the creation of the inquiry rubric were drawn heavily from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification guidelines. Two of the science teachers leading the Inquiry Initiative are National Board Certified in science. The spectrum of inquiry we use as a planning tool is the National Science Education Standard rubric for classroom inquiry. The Complex Instruction standards providing the foundation for our collaborative learning and math assessments are based on a Stanford University project and have not only been adopted by the SFUSD, but in districts across the state and nation.

Currently, we are in the earliest stages of identifying a way to assess how our students contribute socially. We have just recently begun to identify criteria with which we can evaluate curriculum, project activities, and student participation in addressing social justice issues. The timeline for this assessment, which is part of the Critical Pedagogy initiative, takes place after full implementation of Inquiry and Complex Instruction initiatives. Following this, work will be done on assessments for other CAS such as oral presentations, art products, and field studies.

This progress is a result of an ongoing commitment to improving our assessment practices. This semester, the structure for our Wednesday afternoon professional development has been revised to further prioritize assessment. Each week, a different teacher presents an assignment s/he has used in the classroom and the student work it generated. Teachers are assigned a specific teaching objective to be addressed in the lesson and student work samples they share: differentiation, formative assessment, summative assessment, scientific inquiry, complex instruction, etc. There is a formal protocol for sharing and feedback (see Appendix). This process has led to the faculty developing common language around and understanding of assessment. There is no more powerful route to school-wide change than examination of what students are capable of when offered well-delivered lessons and well-crafted assignments.

We believe that during the next three years, the cohesiveness of our vision for assessment—fashioned during these sharing sessions—will make our continued work on common assessments very productive. We have built our capacity for consensus and established a foundation of shared expectations. While we are heartened that the new Common Core standards are more aligned with our own practice in that they place a greater emphasis on process over memorization of facts, they are still tied to traditional discipline demarcations that do not apply to our interdisciplinary projects. In addition, until Common Core assessments are in place, it is unclear what our relationship to them will be. We therefore expect that the use of school-wide assessments that we develop ourselves will not only be the most authentic and practical means of assessment we use at DHS, but also provide us with the kind of data that is meaningful to us.

Finally, the principals of the alternative schools, also known as the A-team, have been working over the past three years to develop common assessments. The A-team is comprised of two continuation schools, one independent study school, and four county/court schools. This work has been hindered by personnel and program changes, as evidenced by a complete turnover of the original cohort of principals as well as a major restructuring at the independent study site. However, it is a critical time for alternative schools to examine assessments as the district implements A-G requirements for the class of 2014 and Common Learning Assessments (CLAs) that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts for first time 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students, as well as in math for Algebra, Advanced Algebra, and Geometry. This year, the A-team principals are assigned to an Equity-Centered Professional Learning Community (ECPLC) that meets monthly with a charge to come to some common agreements with regard to assessment by the end of the school year. As the monthly meetings rotate through the various alternative sites, it is clear that the programs are very different. Thus far, the group has agreed to develop and implement a pre and post survey of student attitudes toward school and learning. We expect that, as the ECPLC furthers this work, it will influence our own site-based approach to improving assessment at DHS.

**Student Portfolios**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Related Growth Areas</b>	<b>Growth Targets</b>	<b>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</b>
Student Portfolios	<p>Develop criteria and systems (such as student portfolios) to assess individual student progress</p> <p>Identify a means (such as portfolios) of assessing student progress toward achieving ESLRs and CAS over time</p>	<p>Structures such as individual student portfolios in place to measure student progress over time toward achieving DHS academic standards</p>	

As we explored the details of what might be contained in student portfolios and what form this portfolio should take, digital or material, we constantly came back to the question of what the purpose of the portfolio would be. Would it be used to inform instruction? Should it be used to assess students? There are compelling reasons to believe that the answer to both these questions might be no.

Students pick their projects based on interest. There are no prerequisites or curricular paths to ensure some common background knowledge or skills among the students entering our classes. Reviewing student portfolios might provide some insight into each student’s academic strengths and/or deficits, but it is unlikely that this would result in changing what is being taught (since the students chose the project based on the advertised curriculum) or how it is being taught. The school’s teachers have chosen to teach at DHS based on a belief that students learn best by experience. We already attempt to reach all of our students, recognizing the huge diversity of skill level and knowledge base in our classrooms. All Special Education and ELL students are fully mainstreamed into the projects, so we are ever mindful of the teaching practices that allow all students to access the curriculum. In our discussions, we often came back to the conclusion that we were doubtful that examining student portfolios would change much in our instructional content or delivery.

A “veteran” DHS student might be here for four semesters; many are here for a shorter length time. In order to graduate during that time, students must work to meet the credit requirements of SFUSD. We realized that it is difficult to establish growth over one or two semesters. Even if there was no evidence of growth, we would not be able to keep a student from graduation if they had fulfilled their SFUSD requirements. Again, how useful would a portfolio be? Perhaps there is a reason student portfolios are not mentioned in any of our Critical Areas for Follow-up. Based on our discussions as a staff, this Action Plan goal has been deprioritized for the time being.

***Individual Learning Plans***

<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Related Growth Areas</i></b>	<b><i>Growth Targets</i></b>	<b><i>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</i></b>
Individual Learning Plans	Design school-wide, uniform Individual Learning Plans		Creation of ILP (Individualized Learning Plan) for each student

At this point, we have implemented very simple Individual Learning Plans (ILPs): folders that follow students from project to project. Each student’s folder contains her/his transcript, credit evaluations and credit summaries from previous quarterly parent/teacher conferences that delineate the student’s plan for graduation. These credit summaries (see Appendix) have proven to be particularly useful as students move from project to project each semester. Teachers can see whether or not students are maintaining their paths toward graduation and meeting goals set in previous grading periods. One additional document we are planning to incorporate into the folders is a checklist identifying which CAS a student has completed each semester. Our staff has discussed other potential additions to these folders, but we have not identified any pressing needs. This can be attributed in part to the ease of communication between staff: teachers frequently consult with students’ previous teachers, the counselor, support staff, and administration when they need more information about students. Thus far, the folders are very useful and, though simple, they have satisfied the goals we had when we identified ILPs as a growth area.

**Critical Academic Need 2:** *Build upon community and family partnerships to support students’ personal well being and academic success at Downtown High School and beyond.*

The priorities for this CAN are increasing family involvement, developing transition plans, assessing the support we provide for students, and building support structures to facilitate student achievement.

Despite many staffing changes directly related to student support (specifically of the Wellness and after school program staff, as discussed in the “Significant Changes” section of this report), as well as tightening budgets since the 2010 WASC report, Downtown High School has moved forward to “build upon community and family partnerships to support students’ personal well-being and academic success at Downtown High School and beyond.”

**Family Involvement**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Related Growth Areas</b>	<b>Growth Targets</b>	<b>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</b>
Family Involvement	<p>Increase parent and student input into governance and enhance understanding of governance among those groups</p> <p>Develop structures that facilitate ongoing parent/guardian participation and follow-up in monitoring student progress between conferences</p> <p>Increase the number of families involved in school activities and culture</p>	<p>Increase programming available to parents and families of DHS.</p> <p>Increase overall participation rates in all family programming at DHS.</p> <p>Formally assess parent and family perceptions of DHS support services.</p>	<p>Continue to develop relationships between parent/guardian and school</p>

In the area of family involvement, Downtown High School continues to strive to build relationships with parents/guardians. Parent/guardian email addresses and cell phone numbers have been gathered to increase communication between families and teachers. Texting has become a favorite means of communication for many teachers. A parent/guardian survey was administered Fall 2011 and needs to be repeated in the coming year and on a regular basis.

It should be noted that, when we restructured our Wednesday professional development time into strands instead of committees, the Student Support Committee lost its structure and built-in membership. We expected that the committee would continue to meet outside of professional development time, but because the previous Wellness team was one of the driving forces within the committee, Wellness staff turnover distracted from prioritizing the committee's work. We anticipate that the Student Support Committee will be ready to reestablish itself after the Wellness Center has stabilized.

In the meantime, the school has significantly increased the opportunities for families to become part of school culture and activities. Families are now formally invited to school-wide celebrations like our annual Thanksgiving luncheon and talent show and a Mother's Day dinner hosted by the after school cooking class. This year, more families than ever attended the Thanksgiving event, and our annual Back to School Night was quite well attended. In addition, project events like GOAL's boat launch plus celebratory family potluck, ACT's performances, MMARSS's concerts, and WALC's art exhibits have become more numerous and well attended not only by families, but also often by mentors, employers, case workers, and other members of students' support networks. Families are also invited to student exhibitions each semester and efforts are ongoing to boost family involvement in exhibition through incentives and family contact. Some projects have begun to hold their own back to school nights each semester in order to better acquaint parents/guardians with their program activities and expectations.

In the area of governance, we continue to identify and recruit parent/guardian leaders for governing bodies such as the SSC and English Language Advisory Committee

(ELAC), but have had a difficult time maintaining regular and consistent parent/guardian involvement. It is often the parents/guardians of graduating seniors who are most involved because they gain a commitment to the school over time, but as students graduate or transition, their parents/guardians go with them. We have started focusing recruitment efforts on juniors so that their parents/guardians can serve full two-year terms on each committee.

Lastly, there was discussion of the idea of finding spaces in the community to hold meetings for families. However, students who attend our school live in neighborhoods all over San Francisco, so a feasible way to make these meetings happen has not been identified. The Student Support Committee will return to the question of building family voice and either find a way to hold community meetings or identify an equally accessible way to include families. A step in the right direction has been our after school program’s Family Literacy Project, which has offered workshops on topics such as financial aid and health and nutrition for families in the evenings.

***Transition Plans***

<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Related Growth Areas</i></b>	<b><i>Growth Targets</i></b>	<b><i>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</i></b>
Transition Plans	Connect every student with at least one support provider or CBO to support and help keep track of her/him after high school	<p>Increase programming around pre-vocational and vocational training and workforce development.</p> <p>Utilize CBO partnerships to connect every student with at least one adult who can support and guide her/him after DHS.</p>	Formalize transition plans for all students, regardless of post-secondary pathway

A great deal of progress has been made in toward this goal, as the transition and workforce development components of our school have grown from an idea to a fully-implemented set of services. As discussed in the “Significant Changes” section of this

report, the Success 21 program has been successfully implemented, serving up to twenty-five students each year. The Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center was also brought into the school in 2010 to provide pre-vocational and vocational services for up to twenty-five additional students. In 2011, a Workforce Development Committee was established to coordinate workforce services and case manage individual students. This committee meets monthly to do this work and expand vocational services for more and more DHS students. The committee also did a major self-assessment in Spring 2012 and has used the findings to determine the structure of vocational support on campus. Lastly, the Workforce Development Committee will continue to explore possible collaboration between workforce organizations and projects. Though no partnerships have been developed thus far, the feasibility will continue to be assessed as new projects and curricula are created at the school. Clearly, these services aid students as they transition out of DHS by giving them training and connections for employment.

Our academic counseling has also focused on transitioning students. In terms of transitioning students into higher education, a new partnership with City College of San Francisco (CCSF) has allowed our counselor, Jaime Osorno, to boost the number of students who enroll at City College in a timely manner. CCSF offers preferential registration to students who go through the enrollment process at DHS, and offers their placement tests on site each semester for graduating seniors. Mr. Osorno has coordinated field trips to the CCSF campus to further orient students, and he and his counseling intern work with seniors one on one to make sure their financial aid applications are completed and enrollment requirements are met. Any DHS student who wishes to transition to CCSF after DHS has ample support to do so.

Mr. Osorno has also been actively meeting with the parents/guardians of students who are not finding DHS to be a good match for them. He has created a menu of alternatives available to them, such as GED preparation programs, Five Keys adult charter school, John Adams adult school, and Job Corps. Mr. Osorno works with students and their families to identify viable options, research their choices, and make decisions as to their next steps. This type of transition planning is important at our school because it is our reality that many students do not see graduation from DHS as

their goal. We have large numbers of students who enroll here with such large credit deficits that they have too few credits to graduate on time, or even after a fifth year of high school. Over the past three years, our counselor and administration have become much more deliberate about guiding students into another program when they leave here, rather than simply dropping them from our rolls when they turn eighteen. This is a very important area of growth. Between workforce development, our CCSF partnership, and transition into alternative and adult programs, we feel that the Critical Area for Follow-up asking us to “formalize transition plans for all students, regardless of post-secondary pathway” has been well addressed thus far.

It should also be noted that our one of our Action Plan goals was to connect every student with at least one adult, support provider, or community based organization that could help guide her/him after DHS. Through activities like Wellness groups and after school programming, as well as through project partnerships embedded in the curriculum, our school has a wide variety of partnerships with community-based organizations, programs, and mentors. Some of the best examples are:

- ACT’s partnership with 826 Valencia which provides tutors who work one on one with students on an ongoing basis, and with the American Conservatory Theater who provides acting teachers, free summer classes and mentors
- GOAL’s partnership with the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park Association that teaches boat building and builds an actual boat with students every semester, as well as the Pacific Leadership Institute that trains GOAL students to run a ropes course and employs GOAL students on the ropes course every year
- WALC’s partnership with Literacy for Environmental Justice that leads habitat restoration activities and recruits WALC students into jobs with them and with other environmental programs, as well with San Francisco State University’s Minority Education Through Traveling and Learning in the Sciences program, which specifically selects WALC students to participate in a summer geology study every year

As these are just a few examples of the opportunities available to our students outside of school, we are confident that every DHS student comes into contact with people and

organizations that can offer them support beyond high school. Even DCYF has compiled an impressive list of the CBOs with which we partner (see Appendix). The challenge lies in actually keeping track of the relationships that are built from this exposure, not only in creating a list of every student’s contacts, but also in tracking those relationships beyond DHS. This seems an unrealistic goal, but we are proud of the work we have done to make sure all students have access to people and opportunities that can help them transition into the world outside of school.

***Assessment of Support***

<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Related Growth Areas</i></b>	<b><i>Growth Targets</i></b>	<b><i>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</i></b>
Assessment of Support	Develop centralized data-sharing systems around student support services in order to increase communication and allow for assessment of student support services	<p>Develop an efficient system for communication and coordination of support services between all members of the DHS support team.</p> <p>Develop and regularly utilize a means of assessing community partnerships.</p> <p>Develop a means of assessment for existing support services such as the PI program.</p> <p>Develop a means of assessing impact of support services on students’ academic growth.</p>	

Even though assessing the support services we offer students was not a critical area for follow-up, it is still part of our Action Plan. Quite frankly, that particular goal was largely driven by our previous principal and no longer holds the same sense of urgency as other areas of the Action Plan. The work that has been done is that communication tools and

protocols have been established among all staff involved in student support, which makes coordinating services and interventions for students much more manageable.

Though formal rubrics have not yet been developed to assess the CBOs we work with, the Leadership Team does debrief our community partnerships yearly and makes decisions about which relationships to continue or amend. As the Wellness Center does use rubrics to assess their relationships, the Student Support Committee will determine if the Wellness model could be used school-wide.

***Support Structures***

<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Related Growth Areas</i></b>	<b><i>Growth Targets</i></b>	<b><i>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</i></b>
Support Structures	In order to systematize and incentivize high expectations school-wide, build upon support structures such as PI to help students meet the requirements of the attendance and credit initiatives		

As discussed in “Significant Changes,” the Prevention Intervention (PI) program has been supplanted by the Student Assistance Program (SAP), which identifies and coordinates services for students who are referred by staff members. In addition to SAP, some examples of additional programming that has been established or expanded to support students in coming to school and earning credits are as follows:

- In the after school program, the Odysseyware online course program is helping students to supplement their credits. During Summer 2012, DHS offered our own credit recovery program for the first time, which was highly attended. On some days, students had to be turned away because there were not enough computers. Some students earned as many as 20+ credits during the term. During Spring Break this year, we also offered a one-week credit recovery program to help students, especially seniors, earn credits toward graduation.

- The after school program has worked with teachers and volunteers to launch a “CAHSEE Boot Camp” in the two weeks before CAHSEE examinations. This program involves students working closely with teachers and/or tutors, either one on one or in very small groups, to target their specific needs. For example, one student might work with a teacher practicing essay writing, while another gets tutoring in solving algebraic equations. Even students who have already fulfilled the requirements for graduation but who have not earned their diplomas due to not passing CAHSEE are invited to attend the boot camp.
- There is also a greater partnership between our staff and the district around the issue of truancy. For example, Denise Davis, our designated Attendance Liaison and her colleague, Roberto Peña, do home visits for students that are chronically truant. We are able to designate which students need home visits during SAP meetings. Our counselor, Wellness staff, and other support staff participate in many of these home visits.
- The new Wellness staff has shown itself to be very capable and has integrated well with the culture of the school, expanding programs such as the Breakfast Club to include hot, freshly cooked meals and nutrition information. New programming in the form of a “Real Talk” mini-conference each semester was established in the 2011-2012 school year and has been continued this year, which provides workshops in areas such as workforce development, health, sexuality, and other areas of interest for students.
- As discussed in “Significant Changes,” major shifts in the Special Education program have affected student support positively. After discussion and assessment, the school reached consensus upon making DHS a fully inclusive school. As part of this effort, an additional paraprofessional position was added to the school so that each project and each teacher could have paraprofessional support. This change has greatly impacted the school community, decreasing marginalization for students with disabilities and adding an educational resource for every classroom in the form of a paraprofessional who is available to academically support any struggling student regardless of disability. Our excellent paraprofessionals are now available to be additional adults that students can seek for support at our school.

The impact on student success outcomes that have occurred as a result of strengthened support services was also reflected in our Academic Expectations Campaign. Due to constant articulation and reinforcement, most students are aware that the minimum expectations for DHS students are to attend school at least 80% of the time and earn at least 15 credits each quarter. As a result, more and more students qualify for the incentive barbecues that take place quarterly.

***Critical Academic Need 3:*** *Leverage existing collaborative support structures to further improve project-based curriculum.*

The priorities identified for our last CAN are to facilitate peer collaboration, enhance professional development particularly through educational research, secure funding, and fully implement academic initiatives such as math and science in all projects.

The past three years have, in many ways, represented a coming of age for Downtown High School. While our project-based program is now in year fourteen, it has been in this stage of our school’s evolution that we have achieved the greatest unity. All faculty and administration equally share the vision of an academically rigorous, project-based learning environment creating equity for all, enabling us to make great strides in achieving our curriculum and instruction goals.

***Peer Collaboration***

<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Related Growth Areas</i></b>	<b><i>Growth Targets</i></b>	<b><i>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</i></b>
Peer Collaboration	Fully implement a regular schedule of peer support structures  Leverage existing collaborative support structures to further	Provide each teacher with peer observation opportunities once per semester.  Examine student work collaboratively during professional	

	improve project-based curriculum	development once per semester.	
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Peer collaboration is a cornerstone of our school culture and has been key in our growth over the years. Our biggest struggle in maintaining consistent peer support structures has been time. Teachers work extremely collaboratively within their projects, yet opportunities to work across projects are limited by such factors as who is on campus on which days, what other collaborations (such as with CBOs) each project dedicates time to, and whether teachers feel they can take time away from their own students or not. As such, one of our best decisions in the past three years was to embed many of our peer support structures into our professional development time. One such structure is project cohorts. In order to dedicate enough time to each project, we split the faculty into two cohorts that meet together and advise each other on specific Wednesday afternoons. Within cohorts, projects have shared and received input on curriculum plans, Inquiry Initiative work, teaching ideas over time (another element of national board certification our three National Board Certified teachers have introduced to the entire faculty), and student work as evidence of achieving learning goals.

Another peer support structure we have prioritized for Wednesday professional development time is sharing of student work. As previously discussed, this semester half of each professional development is dedicated to analyzing student work. Specifically, teachers look to see if the assignments are constructed in such a way that they facilitate the learning goals teachers have identified, and if the students do indeed achieve those goals. Focusing on student work sharing in this way has also allowed us to include peer observation as part of our Wednesday professional development time. While, over the past three years, we have intermittently organized peer observation days, it has been a challenge to do so regularly given each project's specific schedule. In scheduling each teacher's focus for student work sharing, we specifically assigned some teachers to be videotaped so that we could see certain instructional strategies such as complex instruction and collaborative learning at work. We have also used videotapes of teachers in action to provide examples of inquiry-based lessons. This practice enables teachers to

observe one another without taking them away from our own classrooms. Collaborative support structures at DHS continue to form a solid foundation for growth.

***Professional Development***

<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Related Growth Areas</i></b>	<b><i>Growth Targets</i></b>	<b><i>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</i></b>
Professional Development	<p>Integrate more current educational research, recent scholarship, and academic data into professional development</p> <p>Integrate current educational scholarship into in-house professional development</p> <p>Develop processes to determine need for professional development based on assessments</p>	<p>Provide Wednesday professional development, designed by each committee, which incorporates current educational scholarship on a regular basis.</p>	<p>Further integration of current educational research, scholarship and data analysis into professional development days</p>

We have been quite dedicated and extremely consistent in integrating research scholarship into our professional development. As previously discussed in “Ongoing School Improvement,” in year one of this Action Plan, we determined that faculty and administration would serve on committees responsible for designing and delivering professional development workshops related to Action Plan goals. One of the specific requirements of each workshop was that it would incorporate relevant research or scholarship. As a result, our professional developments have included analysis of scholarly articles and reports (many of them data rich) on scientific inquiry, critical pedagogy, race and class, status in the classroom, and restorative justice efficacy, among other topics.

This element of professional development has become a norm; teachers now request research with each new initiative or teaching strategy that is introduced. As our

professional development structure shifted from committees to specific topic-based strands, the incorporation of research and scholarship remained a pillar of our training. We feel we have effectively addressed the Critical Area for Follow-up asking for educational research, scholarship, and data analysis integration into professional development.

In terms of the process for determining what professional development is offered, we assess our needs every semester. At the end of each semester, staff is asked to reflect on what has been offered and what they would like to see in the upcoming term. This reflection process involves both written feedback and group discussion. We have always been able to achieve consensus on the direction we want our professional development to take. The Leadership Team is responsible for establishing the professional development calendar after hearing from the committee of the whole. Through this process, we established and revised the professional development strands we have now: the science-based Inquiry Initiative; Complex Instruction in math; Critical Pedagogy focusing on race, class and social justice; best practices focusing on meeting the needs of Special Education and ELL students; and making assessment part of every week instead of just one strand.

### ***Funding***

<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Related Growth Areas</i></b>	<b><i>Growth Targets</i></b>	<b><i>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</i></b>
Funding	Supplement school budget in order to maintain current level of material provision for project-based curriculum		

While funding is an isolated priority, not identified as a critical area for follow-up, it is nonetheless an area of need we have worked to address. Several pools of district grant money provide additional funding to support programming at our school: Proposition H money funding Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA), physical education and library services; Wellness Initiative money funding our Wellness Center; and the Expanded

Collaboratives for Excellence in Learning (ExCEL) grant funding after school programs. In addition, our site was awarded the School Partners Grant from DCYF, which funds our Success 21 workforce development program.

Although our goal to devote professional development time to learning and practicing grant writing has been tabled due to more pressing priorities, several of projects have been able to secure grant funding to support their activities. WALC is a leader in this regard; established in 1999 with a sister program at Balboa High School (also in the SFUSD), they obtained non-profit status in order to better earn grant funding. While DHS supports WALC with VAPA money and many instructional materials, their field studies costs are beyond the scope of the school’s budget. Over the last three years, through grants from several different foundations, their non-profit organization has been able to buy five WALC vans to transport students and cover all transportation, food, supply, and equipment costs for four camping trips and at least twenty day trips per year. GOAL also earns grant money to support their backpacking trip costs, and their boat-building partnership with San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park Association is funded by grant awards as well. ACT’s partnership with the American Conservatory Theater is made possible by their commitment of funding, PRISM has consistently won robotics grants so students can build robots, MMARSS was able to get a class set of guitars provided for free, and CORE recently applied for a Community Challenge Grant to support greening the school grounds next year. Our faculty is very dedicated to finding ways to make their project activities possible.

***Academic Initiatives***

<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Related Growth Areas</i></b>	<b><i>Growth Targets</i></b>	<b><i>Critical Areas for Follow-Up</i></b>
Academic Initiatives	Support full implementation of all Critical Academic Skills through initiatives, committee work, common assessments, etc.	Identify priorities for additional initiatives based on ESLR and CAS needs, piloting possibilities through Wednesday workshops.	Regular re-examination of CAS and implementation of new initiatives to support CAS  Create a uniform curricular and

	<p>Support Math Initiative to further improve CAHSEE pass rate and advance students beyond CAHSEE level math</p> <p>Fully develop and implement school-wide initiatives in math and scientific inquiry, then social studies</p> <p>Fully implement Math Initiative and Scientific Inquiry Initiative</p>	<p>Fully implement Scientific Inquiry Initiative across all projects: common definition of inquiry, inquiry processes, requirements, academic standards, and assessments, as well as development and implementation of inquiry-based lessons in every project.</p> <p>Similarly implement Math Initiative school-wide to ensure higher-level math integrated with each project's themes.</p>	<p>assessment alignment with ESLRS and State and/or National Performance and/or Content standards within each core subject area and within each project</p>
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We have made a great deal of exciting progress in developing academic initiatives common to all projects in each of the four core subject areas: the Literacy Initiative to address English language arts, the Inquiry Initiative to address science, the Complex Instruction Initiative as an approach to math, and the Critical Pedagogy Initiative as the framework for social studies.

The Literacy Initiative is the longest standing and most established of the initiatives, and has required very little new work over the past three years. Based on each project reading a class book every semester, the initiative's components include talking to the text, quote analysis, chapter questions along the full range of Bloom's Taxonomy, and a culminating five-paragraph response to literature essay. It supports the Communicate Effectively ESLR by incorporating the CAS calling for students to produce a five-paragraph, thesis-driven essay that follows a writing process. It also supports the Think Critically ESLR by requiring students to analyze and evaluate text. Teachers report that students who are not new to the school are fully aware that they will be reading a book and writing an essay; many students have become extremely adept at talking to the text and filling in quote analysis logs. The majority of projects now use the same essay

templates to help students brainstorm and draft their essays, and all of them use the same essay rubric.

The Inquiry Initiative has been significantly solidified over the past three years. We began with professional development examining the research about why scientific inquiry is good practice and looking at the National Board standards for science inquiry. Faculty on the Inquiry Committee demonstrated inquiry based lessons as well as scientific method lessons and more traditional science lessons that did not necessarily qualify as inquiry so that teachers could gain a better understanding of the spectrum of inquiry. A rubric to assess student participation in inquiry activities was ratified, as well as a common scientific method format with supporting template. These documents are all posted on the DHS Wiki Space and provided in the Appendix. The Inquiry Initiative has established specific components that all projects are expected to incorporate into their science curriculum: an overarching scientific question that is tied to the semester's themes, at least three activities to facilitate answering the question (one inquiry activity, one OHEC scientific process activity, one field-based science experience), and development of an answer to the overarching question that includes a defense.

The Inquiry Initiative has also included professional development activities asking projects to develop integrated activities that apply inquiry processes to multiple disciplines. This initiative supports the Think Critically ESLR's CAS of utilizing inquiry methods as a component of the scientific process and as a strategy to explore other subject areas. At this point in the Inquiry Initiative, all the pieces are in place and the next step is to better support teachers in full implementation. Peer support in the area of scientific inquiry has become part of the cohort work and student work sharing, but teachers may need more specific training or consultation, particularly with Inquiry Committee members. In addition, with the Literacy Initiative, staff did considerable work anchoring student work samples using the rubric; the Inquiry Initiative would benefit from similar efforts.

The math initiative has been inspired by the SFUSD's Complex Instruction initiative. Based on twenty years of research from the Stanford School of Education, Complex

Instruction is the district's vehicle for addressing inequity in student achievement of math standards. A summary of Complex Instruction in the SFUSD by the Strategic Education Research Partnership reads:

For the past three years, secondary mathematics teachers in San Francisco Public Schools have been working to increase students' participation and learning in mathematics. To this end, teachers are learning how to implement an equity pedagogy called, Complex Instruction, which pays close attention to how assumptions of competence – who is considered “smart” and who is not – affect students' choices about participation and their opportunities to learn. In addition to changing their teaching practices, these educators are also reforming their departmental learning communities to develop the necessary internal expertise and distributed leadership to sustain such practices. SFUSD supports its math teachers in these efforts by providing them with a Professional Development Network that includes five different, and connected activities during the school year. Mathematics teachers participate in the network as members of site-based teams, and they are involved for multiple years. The activities in which teachers participate are: (1) a 30-hour summer course about the theory and practice of Complex Instruction and 3 follow-up workshops during the school year, (2) In-classroom Coaching, (3) Common Planning Time, (4) Peer-reciprocal Observations and (5) Video Club. Each activity offers different opportunities to learn about Complex Instruction, and themes about equity, participation and math learning cut across all activities.

Currently, four DHS teachers are participants in the district's Complex Instruction program, which means four of six projects are implementing Complex Instruction as a math strategy. The school's Math Committee consists of Complex Instruction trained teachers who have delivered multiple trainings in Complex Instruction practice to the entire staff. Through the Complex Instruction Initiative, it is expected that all projects will develop Complex Instruction based math curriculum. Components of Complex Instruction included in the math initiative are identifying group worthy tasks, articulating multiple abilities, setting norms, designating roles, assigning competence, and participation quizzes.

Complex Instruction is aligned with the Think Critically ESLR and the corresponding CAS of analyzing data and solving high school level math problems that relate to real world situations as well as other subject areas. In addition, the structure of Complex Instruction enhances our Work Collaboratively ESLR, supporting all of the CAS therein:

collaborative learning with designated roles, curriculum-based team building, and group problem solving. As a common assessment to support the math initiative, we are currently in the process of developing a rubric to evaluate students as they work collaboratively. The Complex Instruction initiative gives focus and purpose to this ESLR and its assessment.

Finally, our social studies initiative has taken shape this year as a result of the Critical Pedagogy professional development strand. Through several workshops designed to have staff reflect on their own positions and pedagogy related to race, class, privilege, and social justice, the Critical Pedagogy team identified the need to articulate our praxis around actively engaging our students in social justice issues. Our Contribute Socially ESLR identifies as CAS not only analyzing social justice issues but also implementing actions that can lead to positive change and participating in community-oriented experiences. The next step of the Critical Pedagogy Initiative will be to establish standard expectations and components for social justice curriculum across projects, then a common assessment that will incorporate the Contribute Socially CAS.

For all four initiatives, successful implementation will depend on our ability to familiarize new staff with initiative components, while also reinforcing expectations with veteran staff, and examining our practice together. We anticipate this means that professional development time must be dedicated to each initiative every year.

## **V. School-wide Action Plan Refinements**

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For the most part, we have been very true to our school-wide Action Plan. We have not introduced new priorities, nor have we abandoned any that we identified during our self-study unless there was a process involved. Any objectives set aside were the result of discussion and input, as with determining that student portfolios, assessment of all support providers, and grant writing are not practical for our site.

As previously articulated, restructuring the Action Plan from a very specific timeline to a priorities-based guide has allowed us to take advantage of the energy, interest, and momentum we discover within our Action Plan process. We have a staff that is highly motivated to serve our students, which means we have maintained constant focus on professional growth and school improvement.