

# Chapter III

# **Progress Report**

**Action Objective I: Standardize Requirements Across Projects**

*To ensure that all students have access to a comparably rigorous curriculum across projects, Downtown High School will develop standardized academic requirements and assessment measures that all projects will implement.*

Over the past six years, standardizing academic requirements across projects in order to achieve appropriate levels rigor has been the foremost priority in our ongoing improvement efforts. In order to facilitate implementation of our Action Plan, we created four school-wide committees: Literacy, Math, Curriculum and Professional Development, and School Culture. Every certificated staff member serves on one committee and three of the four (all except School Culture) have been dedicated to Action Objective I. Much of our professional development time, which takes place every Wednesday afternoon for three hours (students have minimum days on Wednesdays, allowing staff regular and ongoing weekly professional development), has been dedicated to this objective as well. Committees have organized workshops designed to advance the design and implementation of rigorous, high quality curriculum in all projects. In recognizing the importance of guided curriculum development, we also created a new position at our school—Instructional Reform Facilitator (IRF)—to support teachers in project planning and implementation. The IRF position was later morphed into an assistant principal (AP) position so that our IRF could continue to support the academic program as an administrator and in a more permanent capacity. We have addressed this action objective and the related major growth needs, including critical areas for follow-up, as follows:

- 1. Standardize and monitor academic requirements across projects. (Critical area for follow-up)**

Following our last full self-study, our staff collaboratively developed two guiding frameworks that now provide the foundation for all project planning at Downtown High School. First, we identified “Downtown High School’s Core Tenets of Project-Based

Curriculum,” which effectively established a collective understanding of the structures that must be in place within every project in order to successfully engage students in academics. In creating these Core Tenets, we were able to institute a standard set of expectations that form the basis of our curriculum and the springboard from which we launch specific academic instruction. The Core Tenets are as follows:

**1. Integration**

- a. The central theme of the project allows for interdisciplinary curriculum.
- b. The project integrates instruction in multiple subject areas.
- c. Teachers work collaboratively in teams to integrate the subject matter delivered in each classroom.

**2. Challenging Academics**

- a. Curriculum is accessible to all students.
- b. Students at all skill levels are challenged to improve and develop their academic skill set.
- c. Content and performance standards are addressed through the project curriculum.

**3. Real World Focus**

- a. The project’s theme and product are meaningful to students.
- b. Students see the content of the project connected to the “real world”—in the community or at work.
- c. Students communicate with one another and work collaboratively in diverse teams.
- d. Students have access to at least one adult outside of the classroom with expertise and experience relevant to their project, who can address questions, provide feedback, and offer a sense of real-world standards for the type of work arising from the project.

**4. Experiential Study**

- a. Field-based activities are integrated into learning experiences.
- b. Students participate in engaging hands-on activities.
- c. Students develop ownership of their final products and project curriculum by taking responsibility for contributing during the process.

**5. Applied Learning**

- a. Students apply the knowledge they are learning to the ongoing creation of a related product.
- b. Students present what they have learned and exhibit what they have created in a public forum.
- c. The project offers students opportunities to develop meaningful skills that can be used outside of the classroom.

**6. Authentic Assessment**

- a. Students are assessed with a variety of methods based on their individual skill levels.

- b. Students receive ongoing feedback on work in progress from teachers, mentors and peers.
- c. Specific criteria are established for measuring student growth in mastering the knowledge and applied learning goals of the project.
- d. Students are involved in reviewing and/or helping to establish project criteria, and participate in related self-assessment.

Implementation of the Core Tenets is monitored by the Curriculum and Professional Development Committee (CPDC) as well as the administration. Each semester, every project completes a curriculum plan and meets with the CPDC and administration to obtain feedback. Together, the CPDC, project teachers, and administrators identify which Core Tenets are clearly in evidence and which need further attention. The CPDC offers recommendations for improvement, and the administration follows up with each project throughout the semester. In addition, the CPDC regularly conducts professional development workshops during which the Core Tenets are revisited and each project shares its curriculum plan, sample lessons, or best practices to solicit input from the rest of the staff. These sessions have included fishbowl discussions, veteran faculty consultations with new teachers, peer observations, and analysis of video recorded lessons. The IRF/AP position also contributes to creating and implementing these structures for monitoring projects' attainment of school-wide standards. Most recently, during our semester break weekend, the entire faculty, administrative team, and Special Education resource team—with just one teacher and one paraprofessional unable to attend—participated in a three day retreat at Yosemite National Park dedicated to collaborative curriculum planning, sharing, and feedback. Curriculum plans were turned into the administration at the end of the retreat and used to launch the new semester that very week.

“Critical Academic Skills: Standardized Academic Skills to be Embedded Across Projects” was the second structure we created in order to standardize academic requirements school-wide. These Critical Academic Skills were based on creating performance standards with which to assess student mastery of our Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLRs). Every project is expected to incorporate the Critical Academic Skills into their curriculum each semester. As a continuation school where students come to catch up on credits from classes they have previously failed, we must

make every course required for graduation available to students who are typically enrolled for fewer than two years, and often even fewer than two semesters. Because of this reality, and because our school believes that depth not breadth is the most pedagogically sound approach for our students, these performance standards have become far more important indicators of student achievement than content standards. Students will:

**1. Communicate Effectively**

- a. Compose two pieces of writing (creative and expository) that follow all steps of Downtown High School's adopted writing process.
- b. Produce a five-paragraph, thesis-driven essay every semester.
- c. Prepare and deliver formal and informal oral presentations to peers and community members.

**2. Work Collaboratively**

- a. Participate in teacher-designed collaborative learning experiences such as partner work and working in groups of three or more, with designated roles.
- b. Engage in team building activities that promote mutual respect.
- c. Complete ongoing group projects with individual roles and responsibilities.

**3. Contribute Socially**

- a. Participate in community-oriented experiences, in class or in the field, that involve people or organizations from outside the school.
- b. Complete assignments that require examining and analyzing social justice issues.
- c. Participate in classroom opportunities for consensus building and group problem solving.

**4. Think Critically**

- a. Complete assignments requiring textual analysis, including research projects that call for the evaluation of multiple sources, paraphrasing, and a bibliography.
- b. Receive direct group instruction in mathematics that is aligned with available SFUSD programs, and solve problems that require the application of math concepts to real world situations and/or other subject areas.
- c. Engage in the scientific process.

Incorporation of the Critical Academic Skills is monitored much the same way as the Core Tenets. When each project team presents its curriculum plan to the CPDC and the administration, teachers are asked to identify where the standards lie within the project's scope and sequence. Further, we have recently begun the process of developing project portfolios wherein each project must assemble a collection of student work as evidence that students are tackling the school's Critical Academic Skills. In addition, we

have coordinated structured sharing of student work during professional development time on Wednesday afternoons. Each teacher brought samples to share of student work that demonstrated engagement with the Critical Academic Skills, at a variety of levels. Teachers presented instructions for the assignment, which skills and knowledge the assignment was intended to measure, and the work samples they chose. Colleagues responded to both the work itself and to its efficacy in assessing the standards identified. This structure of student work sharing is a practice we plan to continue. The previously mentioned peer observations and watching tapes of teachers in action have also allowed us to identify effective instruction around our Critical Academic Skills, as well as suggest strategies to increase student achievement in those areas.

Both the Core Tenets and the Critical Academic Skills not provide a lens through which we as a school can assess project curriculum, but also serve as the cornerstones of project design and professional development. Given that project themes and content vary greatly, these two frameworks have become extremely useful criteria in aligning projects to the same set of expectations, both of the rigor present within the curriculum and of students' academic performance.

*2. Strengthen literacy and math components in all projects to improve students' skills.  
(Critical area for follow-up)*

Forming literacy and math committees was a critical step in addressing the need to strengthen literacy and math curriculum in all projects. Our school-wide literacy initiative, facilitated by the Literacy Committee, has become the strongest curricular program we have institutionalized across projects. After our last self-study, we began the literacy initiative by mandating that, each semester, every project must choose a "whole-class book" thematically aligned with their curriculum to read together as a class. Literacy curriculum is then structured around this text, with scaffolded vocabulary and reading comprehension activities, quote logs, chapter questions including higher order thinking skills aligned with Bloom's Taxonomy and, when the book is complete, a five

paragraph response-to-literature essay utilizing quotes from the text to support a thesis statement. The purpose of the Literacy Initiative is to make sure that every student at DHS engages with literature in order to advance their reading and writing skills. By focusing on one major work of fiction or non-fiction integrated into project curriculum and read together as a class each semester, students are offered academic depth in literacy that they would not have experienced in a comprehensive high school where reading is assigned as homework that many of our students did not complete.

Implementation of this curriculum has been supported by extensive professional development, both on Wednesday afternoons and during district-allocated professional development days held on site. These workshops have included strategies to engage readers, Bloom's Taxonomy, vocabulary development, talking to the text, techniques to accommodate the needs of mainstreamed special education students, teaching the structure of a five paragraph essay, how to offer students feedback on their writing, sharing best practices in literacy, using graphic organizers to scaffold essay-writing, and anchoring essay scoring using our school-wide essay rubric. All teachers have participated in this professional development to ensure that the literacy component in every project is well planned to advance students' literacy skills. The Literacy Committee also meets with each project individually to help guide curriculum development around choosing a book well aligned with project themes, developing essay questions and chapter questions, and planning a timeline to ensure there is adequate time to finish the book and write the essay.

Whereas six years ago, only one or two projects were taking on the teaching of books and essays, now every student in the school is required to read a book and write an essay each semester. The Literacy Initiative has become part of the fabric of project-based learning at DHS, as well as a shared experience for everyone here; students ask one another what book they are reading in their respective projects, they compare notes about their progress on writing the essay, and students who are in a second, third or fourth semester have a clear understanding of the expectations around literacy, entering new projects asking, "What book are we reading in this project?" or "Is this the book we have to write the essay about?" In the recent years, since use of a school-wide essay

rubric has become entrenched, students taking the English Language Arts CAHSEE often ask if they can use the rubric during their test.

The Math Committee has also offered our staff many quality professional development workshops and created curriculum that can be integrated into any project. They have conducted workshops on the Algebra Project premise, a problem solving approach to teaching math, how to utilize the new Geometry texts effectively, and how to integrate math into thematic project curriculum. Supporting teachers in developing integrated math components for every project is the new direction for the Math Committee, which has determined that students must have access to higher-level math, beyond the CAHSEE. The new curriculum they produced can be adapted for any project, but it is the goal of the Math Committee to help each project create math courses aligned with their specific content each semester.

In order to support the development of higher level, integrated math, the School Site Council made a decision last year to prioritize the hiring of math and science teachers. Prior to this decision, there was an imbalance of subject area expertise on the staff; we had far more humanities teachers than math and science teachers. As a result of this SSC decision, two humanities teachers voluntarily consolidated themselves and we were able to hire one math and one science teacher who is also adept at integrating math. Our new math teacher is now playing an instrumental role on the Math Committee, working with teachers in other projects to help develop integrated math curriculum, and every project now has one teacher who has experience and aptitude in teaching math.

*3. Review and implement common assessments of standardized requirements across projects. (Critical area for follow-up)*

In accordance with our Action Plan, we have developed several rubrics to be used as common assessments across all projects. The rubric to which we have devoted the most time and professional development is the Response to Literature essay rubric, which

supports the Critical Academic Skill stating students, will “produce a five-paragraph, thesis-driven essay every semester.” This rubric is used school-wide to assess the essays written about the whole-class book in every project. It has been a collective effort to develop, pilot, and revise the rubric, then implement it whole school. Students are given the rubric in every project as a guide when they write their essays, and all teachers then score the essays according to the rubric. Multiple professional development workshops were devoted to anchoring the essays in accordance with the rubric, using sample essays to identify the characteristics necessary to meet each criterion and comparing each teacher’s scores against another’s to achieve a common interpretation of the standards.

As a component of the Literacy Initiative, individual teachers have also piloted a reading rubric, a short response rubric (students will “complete assignments requiring textual analysis”) and an oral presentation rubric (students will “prepare and deliver formal and informal oral presentations to peers and community members”). These rubrics are in development stages, and will go through a process of revision before being implemented school-wide. A scientific inquiry initiative (students will “engage in the scientific process”) is scheduled to launch this coming spring, which will include development of a rubric to be used across projects. Scientific inquiry will then become a starting point to examine ways to implement inquiry methods in other disciplines. All of these rubrics are aligned with Critical Academic Skills, as noted parenthetically above.

Another common assessment we have developed is the curriculum plan rubric, which is designed to evaluate each project’s alignment with our Core Tenets of Project-Based Curriculum. Given that it is a requirement for all projects to address the standards set forth in the Core Tenets, this rubric serves as a guide in project planning and a way to assess the extent to which projects are achieving school-wide expectations.

Finally, we have implemented an exhibition rubric to evaluate our semester-end project exhibitions, during which students develop presentations to showcase their learning and work products. These exhibitions one of the most authentic assessment tools at our school because they offer projects an opportunity to demonstrate implementation of the Core Tenets—integration, challenging academics, real world focus, experiential study,

and applied learning—over time. The exhibition rubric therefore includes the extent to which many of the Core Tenets are evident within each project’s presentation.

*4. Develop comprehensive strategy to improve content and use of Personal Learning Plans. (Critical area for follow-up)*

The most relevant action we have taken in order to track individual student progress is to centralize upkeep of students’ transcript evaluations with our academic counselor and assistant principal (formerly IRF). Our transcript evaluations are essentially a spreadsheet detailing the number of credits students have in each course required for graduation, the total amount of credits they have earned, and the credits they must still gain in order to graduate. These documents serve as personal learning plans that are utilized at the quarterly parent or guardian/student/teacher conferences, which are held at the end of every grading period. During these conferences, teachers discuss students’ progress with them and their parents or guardians, and create a plan that details how many credits students must earn per quarter in order to graduate. For some students who arrived at DHS with a fair amount of credits, these plans project an on-time graduation. Other students, who arrived at DHS with fewer credits, have plans that include an extra semester of high school, or even an extra year. A small minority of students who do not wish to stay in high school past their fourth year, or who will not be able to graduate by the end of a fifth year even if they earn all of the credits available to them, have plans that include transitions to adult school or GED programs.

For many years in the past, the duty of creating and updating these credit evaluations fluctuated between teachers, counselor, and administration. However, we determined that it is most effective for the main office to hold this responsibility because they have access to all student records such as out-of-district transcripts, summer school and evening school enrollment, work experience credits, and after school credits such as Cyber High or one of the vocational programs with which DHS partners. Delegating

transcript evaluations to our counselor and AP has ensured that they are updated in a timely fashion and readily available for all quarterly conferences.

In addition, the school has begun diagnostic assessments in reading, reading comprehension, and mathematics of all new students as they enroll in the school. The results of these assessments will be provided to teachers to complement transcript evaluations. Students' Response to Literature essays are also shared among the staff.

Given the fast pace of transition at our school, with students entering and exiting throughout the entire school year and switching projects every semester, maintaining more comprehensive personal learning plans has been somewhat impractical. This is a topic we intend to revisit as we take on our newly identified critical academic needs.

***Action Objective II: Strengthen Support Structures for Students***

*In order to improve academic achievement and enhance educational experiences, Downtown High School will develop and implement comprehensive support services for students.*

In the past four years, DHS has experienced a tremendous influx of resources designed to support students both personally and academically. We have been able to access district programs such as the Wellness Initiative, the Expanded Collaboratives for Excellence in Learning (ExCEL) after school program, Cyber High, and the Regional Occupational Program's Career Technical Education offerings. These additions to our program have significantly increased our ability to offer comprehensive support services to students, as detailed for each major growth need, including critical areas for follow-up, below.

*1. In order to address issues such as violence, safety, substance abuse, nutrition, health and conflict resolution, lobby SFUSD for increased funding and personnel for student support services such as a Wellness Center, School Resource Officer, Peer Resource Program, an additional counselor and additional security guards.*

In the Fall of 2006, the Wellness Initiative—a partnership between the school district and the city—provided DHS with a Wellness Center. The Wellness Center consists of a full-time director, full-time Community Health Outreach Worker (CHOW), a part-time school nurse, a part-time therapist, and multiple counseling interns. Wellness also coordinates partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide students with a variety of support services. Wellness and their partners offer students a variety of services related to physical, mental, and behavioral health: individual therapy, group counseling, substance abuse education and prevention, sexual health services, free eyeglasses, medical attention, student support groups, in-class presentations, workshops, and assemblies. Having such a broad array Wellness services where there used to be none has exponentially increased our school’s ability to address the personal issues students have that can negatively affect their academic performance. Since the Wellness opened, it has served more than 100 students per year in some capacity.

A district grant enabled us to add the ExCEL after school program in the Fall 2008. ExCEL staff and CBO partners offer students a wide variety of after-school programming, from recreational to vocational to academic. Options include a fitness program, a sewing class, debate team, songwriting workshops, community art development, tutoring, and CAHSEE preparation. Through ExCEL, DHS has begun creating a meaningful after-school culture; students not only have access to a safe, comfortable alternative to being idle at home or out in their neighborhoods, but also can engage in activities that enrich their academic experiences.

In addition to Wellness and ExCEL as two major sources of programming designed to support students, the district also provided us with a second security guard in 2007, a part-time attendance liaison in 2005 dedicated to working with chronically truant

students, and a half-time academic counselor in 2008. This year, the school has contributed the funds to increase the academic counselor position from half-time to full-time. DHS also shares a School Resource Officer with a 6-12 school two blocks away. While the SRO spends most of his time at the other site, he is available and nearby when we need him.

The addition of so many positions dedicated to student support have provided us with a very complete and well-rounded staff that is well-equipped to meet the individual needs of our students.

*2. Formalize the use of tutoring and mentoring opportunities for students to ensure that available services are being utilized.*

Tutoring services have been formalized through the ExCEL program, which has three staff members dedicated to tutoring after school five days a week. In addition, ExCEL sets up special CAHSEE preparation groups to coach students as they ready themselves for the exit exams. Tutors pick students up from class five minutes before the end of the day in order to ensure that students access the tutoring services before they leave for the day. The tutoring coordinator also regularly checks in with teachers to identify tutoring priorities and gather work each student may need help with during tutoring.

Mentoring for students occurs regularly as a result of student engagement in some of our new school programs, rather than as part of a formalized mentoring program. For example, through the Regional Occupational Program (ROP) Career Technical Education (CTE) courses, students have engaged in a carpentry pre-apprenticeship program shared with one other school and a stationary engineers introductory course, which is hosted by our site. Students in both of these programs are prepared for union apprenticeships, and are able to work with trades people who can mentor them in those fields. Through a grant from IBM, others students have participated in the “Mouse Squad,” learning from professional mentors how to troubleshoot school computers.

Participants in CBO-run programs offered by ExCEL and Wellness often make connections with potential mentors that result in off-campus participation, internships, and jobs.

*3. Facilitate greater parent involvement.*

DHS is fortunate that the district allows us to hold two days of parent or guardian/student/teacher conferences four times per year, at the end of every grading period. This is the epitome of effective parent/guardian involvement in their student's education. There is consistently high parent and guardian turnout for these in-depth discussions among teachers, parents/guardians and the students themselves. Topics include students' academic achievements and/or challenges, attendance patterns, transcript analysis, and identifying paths toward graduation or an alternative should graduation not be viable. This will continue to be a cornerstone of our efforts to substantively involve caregivers as active members of our school community. Parents/guardians are also invited to be members of the School Site Council, English Learner Advisory Committee, and Student Advisory Committee.

In 2008, ExCEL received a family literacy grant to facilitate even greater parent involvement in the school. The ExCEL staff polled parents during conference days and created a series of evening events to match the needs and interests reflected in the responses. The grant has allowed ExCEL to offer workshops on such topics as understanding youth rights and navigating the juvenile justice system, and another about financial aid with our college counseling partner, Plan of Action for Challenging Times (PACT). These have been well attended by parents and students. Activities on the calendar for the Spring semester include a workshop on resources for immigrants, information on how to advocate for one's self in the health care system, and a celebration of our honor roll students.

4. *Establish, implement and monitor school-wide behavioral and academic expectations of students. (Critical area for follow-up)*

As we have strengthened the expectations of academic rigor in our project curricula, our expectations of students have risen correspondingly. All students are fully aware that they are going to read a book and write a five-paragraph essay in response. Even those that do not finish the process spend time drafting a thesis statement and working on an outline. Students now expect that they will be doing high school level math and science in all projects. The standardization of rigor across projects was reflected as students chose their projects this January. We did not hear students claiming they were picking an easy project; instead, we heard dismay that there were no easy projects to choose. The students were then selecting projects based upon interest. They are learning that academic expectations are far more uniform across projects than in previous years.

An area of student behavior that is of utmost importance to us is attendance. For the majority of our students, the reason they have not been successful in earning credits is their chronic truancy. There is a very strong correlation between percentage of attendance and grade earned in a subject area. With this in mind a program of incentives to improve attendance has been put in place. Students with 100% attendance in a given month receive a “Golden Ticket” entitling them to one off-campus lunch as a reward. Students with 80% or higher attendance receive a “Silver Ticket,” three of which can be exchanged for one Golden Ticket. The number of students qualifying for this privilege has been increasing. These students are recognized in a short monthly whole-school assembly.

In order to reduce the distraction of electronic devices such as cell phones and iPods, it is now school policy for a student’s first teacher of the day to collect these devices. They are locked up and then returned to the students at lunchtime. They are collected again after lunch and returned at the end of the day. If a student is caught with a device in class or in the hallways during class time, it is given to the principal and a parent or guardian must come in to retrieve it. There is increasing adherence to this policy and it

has greatly improved the focus of students, particularly those who used to attempt (and sometimes succeed) to text during class.

“Rightations” have been initiated by our Wellness Center to reward random acts of good behavior. Any adult in the building can award a Rightation to a student who is observed doing something admirable. Three Rightations can earn a student one Golden Ticket.

The process of dealing with students who need ongoing help with their behavior or academics continues to be arranging for a Student Success Team (SST). SSTs are conducted by our administrators or counselor. Members of Wellness staff, ExCEL staff, the students themselves, parents, case managers when applicable, and teachers participate. During the SST, plans are drawn up to address the student’s problems and responsibility for the carrying out of various parts of the plan is assigned. SST requests can come from any adult in the building.

*5. Foster respect for communal space by involving students in school beautification and keeping the campus clean.*

Downtown High School is second to none in our dedication to being not just a clean school but also a green school. In 2006, we became just the second high school in the district to begin a school-wide composting program, collecting compostable material such as food scraps and soiled paper in green bins. That year, we won an award from the San Francisco Department of the Environment (sf environment) for being the only high school to divert more than 50%—reaching 59%, in fact—of its waste through composting and recycling. Students from the Wilderness Arts and Literacy Collaborative (WALC) project did presentations to all classrooms on the benefits of recycling and composting, posted students in the cafeteria at lunchtime to help students sort their waste, and monitored waste disposal during school-wide events to ensure effective diversion of recyclables and compostables. Since our composting program began, we have hosted two sf environment assemblies to educate students about the benefits of waste

diversion. This year, a new project called Ecology and Agriculture Together for Sustainability (EATS) took over the composting program, expanding it to every classroom in the school, plus the restrooms, coordinating classroom presentations, and sending students to take out the compost on a regular basis. As a result, the most recent numbers from sf environment crown DHS as the number one high school in the district in diverting our trash from the landfill. A whopping 70% percent of our waste goes to recycling or composting. (The second school on the list diverted just 56%.)

Our school is exceptionally clean thanks to our exemplary custodial staff. Because the building is clean to begin with, students have responded by maintaining it well. There has been very little graffiti and the custodians, who worked in the building when it housed another high school, have commented that it is much easier to keep up the building now.

The EATS project has also taken on the upper school garden, which is thriving under their ministrations. They have grown an impressive selection of edibles, from broccoli to kale to carrots. They have plans to expand the garden by building raised beds, and even a greenhouse, in the upper yard where our currently unused tennis courts are. WALC and the Get Out and Learn (GOAL) project recently converted an enclosure of weeds and three redwoods trees in the back of the building to a creatively landscaped native plant garden that includes multiple seating areas where classes can be held. As more students take these projects, there can only be more student investment in keeping our gardens attractive.

Next year, our building will be remodeled to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the district is taking this opportunity to make other improvements to the building as well. There has been much thought put into this project and staff, students, and community members have had several opportunities to see the plans and give input. Unfortunately, most of the murals we have now will be painted over, but we see this as an opportunity to have our students create new murals to reflect their interests and talents.

*6. Increase coordination of extra-curricular activities and school-wide events.*

The ExCEL Program has done an excellent job of providing and coordinating a number of extra-curricular activities. They call their program Real Options Organizing the Future, or ROOF. Under their umbrella is a sewing class, a collaboration with artists from a local art organization, a writing workshop, a fitness program, debate club and a media arts class. This second year of the program has seen increased student participation. ExCEL also provides after-school tutoring. When students sign up for tutoring services, tutors meet them in their classrooms at dismissal to gently guide them to the library for academic support. In Room 8, ROOF headquarters, there are couches for relaxation, a pool table and sports equipment for recreation, and movies are shown every Friday.

For two years now, the Wellness Center has organized two whole-school conferences per year. The Roots conference is an all-day event around themes of social justice. It begins with an assembly featuring a spoken word performance from Youth Speaks (a local community based organization) and then a panel of community leaders conveying positive messages. Students then attend two workshops of their choosing led by individuals from a variety of community organizations. It is well received by the students, based on their evaluation forms.

The other Wellness initiative is our Block Party held near the end of the school year. This is an effort to link our students with community organizations before they disperse for the summer. Students are issued a “passport” and must get it stamped at the booths set up in the gym by the organizations. Then there is a barbeque with music and dance performances in the schoolyard. Again, this has proven popular with the students and the organizations.

Our major school-wide event remains our semester-end exhibitions. All projects develop a presentation for the rest of the student body, showcasing what they have learned and

created over the course of the semester. Exhibition can be in the form of an performance of original music for the whole school, or a project by project visits to an art gallery—set up in the gym—with a student docent as a guide and stops along the tour to talk with the artists. The expectations for exhibition are steadily rising as projects become stronger. At our retreat, we launched our work with a review of exhibition, project by project, with staff giving each other accolades and suggestions.

*7. Increase recognition of academic accomplishments and develop meaningful celebrations.*

Beginning in 2008-2009, DHS began to invest in building a culture of recognizing student success and deemphasizing students who are not meeting standards. Because the majority of students at DHS have the capacity to graduate and are engaged in school, we have decided to utilize the majority of our resources to support their success.

In Spring 2009, the school began an attendance competition between projects and every two weeks the project with the highest percentage of attendance won a pizza party. We also began having monthly barbeques for all students who have 80% attendance and higher. Since DHS is a closed campus, in the Spring of 2009 we began an incentive program that allows students with 100% attendance to earn one Golden Ticket per month, permitting them to leave campus for lunch (usually they just go to the corner store across the street and back). Students with 80% attendance or higher earn a Silver Ticket. Three silver tickets equal one Golden Ticket. DHS holds monthly whole-school attendance award assemblies and to publicly present students with 100% attendance with their Golden Tickets. Their names go into a drawing for a movie ticket, drawn during the assembly as an immediate reward. The ExCEL program also offers Golden Tickets as incentives for accumulating a certain number of hours in after-school tutoring or attending family literacy events.

In addition, the Wellness Center began a “Rightation” initiative that rewards students for doing something well or above and beyond the call of duty: helping a staff member carry something, helping clean something up, encouraging another student not to cut school. Rightations are posted on a display wall and students who earn three Rightations can receive one Golden Ticket.

***Action Objective III: Institute Structures to Support Accountability***

*In order to advance our project-based structure, Downtown High School will develop and implement a structure of accountability that clarifies expectations, provides coaching and monitors practice of all staff.*

Instituting structures to support accountability has been our greatest challenge since the last self-study because a significant portion of our staff was opposed to the idea that all teachers should be accountable to one another. We met considerable resistance from staff when attempting to institute practices such as peer observations, sharing video recorded lessons, creating project portfolios, sharing student work and receiving peer feedback on assignments, and meeting with the Curriculum and Professional Development Committee for curriculum plan review and recommendations. However, last year we experienced significant staff turnover due both voluntary and involuntary consolidations and disability leave. This year, the staff is infused with new hires, resulting in far greater unity. The staff now is more than willing to participate in existing structures for accountability, and excited to begin implementing new structures that were opposed before. A genuine appreciation for processes that facilitate collegiality now enables us to progress in this area.

- 1. Reinstate Curriculum Committee oversight of project curriculum plans, using a standardized process of drafting, presentation, feedback, revisions and approval.  
(Critical area for follow-up)*

Curriculum and Professional Development Committee (CPDC) oversight of project curriculum plans is firmly entrenched as a collegial process that helps teachers improve and refine the design and implementation of their instructional content. The Action Plan identified the Curriculum Committee as the body that oversees standardization across projects, and the committee was reinstated accordingly directly following the last full self-study. The committee provides projects with a template for their “Project Curriculum Plan” as a means of presenting a curricular overview, and schedules meetings with every project each semester during which teachers have the opportunity to present their curriculum plans, share ideas, hear feedback and consider suggestions. Particular attention is paid to project alignment with Downtown High School’s Core Tenets of Project-Based Curriculum and incorporation of the school-wide Critical Academic Skills. Specific effort has been made to facilitate more meaningful integration of subject areas based upon curricular themes, as well as devise ongoing projects that reflect student learning from throughout the semester, requiring application of knowledge and skills mastered during the project.

At the time when this process was first re-established, the committee was met with mixed reaction; some teachers looked forward to meeting with the Curriculum Committee as an opportunity to discuss their practice with colleagues, and others were opposed to the idea of presenting their curriculum to peers/equals rather than administrators/supervisors. They felt that any process with an evaluative element should stay within the realm only of administration. On the other hand, at that time, we had only one administrator, so it was not practical to rely solely on administrative oversight. The Curriculum Committee therefore moved forward in scheduling meetings with each project every semester. The principal joined the committee to offer an administrative presence in support of the process, as well as to ensure the entire faculty’s participation. As of now, however, given recent changes in the faculty, the CPDC’s management of curriculum plan procedures has been embraced by the entire faculty as a collegial and constructive process. There are three new projects this year, and each of them reported to school two days early to meet with the CPDC in the early stages of their curriculum development. The process has even been opened to the entire

staff, as during our recent semester break retreat, all projects shared their curriculum plans with teachers, administration, our counselor, and Wellness staff, gaining a tremendous amount of input.

As of last Spring, the administration further empowered the CPDC in its oversight of curriculum plan development. The committee is now tasked with presenting recommendations for each project to both the project teachers and the administration. The administration then holds as many follow-up meetings as necessary with project teams to support teachers' progress in revising their curriculum to address those recommendations. The curriculum plan process is standardized, structured, and vital.

*2. Develop a school-wide process to identify assessment tools, collect and maintain data, and use data to inform instruction. (Critical area for follow-up)*

The school has prioritized the use of school-wide rubrics, such as the Response to Literature Essay Rubric, as our primary assessment tools. In the case of the essay rubric, essay completion and scoring data is collected and maintained by the administration. The rubric was implemented in the 2007-2008 school year, and data collection started in the Fall 2008 semester. Data collected include numbers of completed essays and individual student scores in each category of the rubric, which allows analysis of matched scores as well as identification of which essay criteria are being met or missed both school-wide and per project. This data informs instruction because teachers have made significant improvements in scaffolding instruction in order to improve scores in target areas. Many teachers have redesigned graphic organizers to support the various components of the essay or added instructional activities based on student need. In addition, this year, all projects have begun providing each student with an inexpensively produced reader copy of the class book instead of a borrowed school-owned copy. Because the books belong to the students, they can make notations on their personal copy that can guide them when it comes time to write the essay.

The school-wide implementation of a Response to Literature Essay was a direct result of the need to improve student achievement on the writing section of the CAHSEE. Anecdotal data from test proctors indicate that students are applying the strategies they have used in class to write an essay, such as making an outline, recalling rubric criteria, using the five-paragraph format, utilizing a thesis statement, and formulating three arguments so they can present three supporting paragraphs.

We have been piloting more rubrics that could potentially function as well as the essay rubric to offer us meaningful data about student achievement of Critical Academic Skills, which then informs our instruction. In development are a reading rubric, a short response rubric, a researched writing rubric, an oral presentation rubric, and a scientific inquiry rubric.

In addition, starting in the Spring 2010 semester, the school began piloting the use of reading comprehension, oral reading, and math skill assessments with newly enrolled students and students in one of the projects. The participating teachers are using the assessment data to form ability level groupings that provide students with additional academic support. A post-test will be administered at the end of the semester to all pre-tested students and the data will be analyzed.

*3. Develop a process by which school leadership supervises staff to ensure effective delivery of project-based curriculum.*

We have developed several processes—facilitated by school leadership such as the principal, IRF, AP, and committees—to help teachers be more effective in delivery of project-based curriculum. The administration (principal and, new this year, AP) not only regularly observes and evaluates all teachers according the district’s parameters, but also begins each semester by reading every project’s curriculum plan, then having meetings with project teams to identify areas targeted for growth—making sure instruction is aligned with curriculum plans to incorporate our Core Tenets of Project-

Based Curriculum and our Critical Academic Skills. Ongoing consultations with project teams take place to support teachers in curriculum improvement. Administrators also sit on every committee, so that they are present when the CPDC meets with each project to discuss curriculum plans or the Literacy Committee meets with teachers to help identify benchmarks for the literacy initiative. The administration further supervises effective delivery of project-based curriculum by soliciting recommendations from the CPDC for each project to further develop their practice, then being responsible for follow-up around those recommendations.

While, as per teacher contracts with the district, the administration is the only body permitted to directly supervise teachers, there are also many collaborative processes designed to support teachers in delivering effective curriculum. These processes are coordinated by school leaders such as the IRF/AP, CPDC, and Literacy Committee. Foremost are the CPDC curriculum plan process and Literacy Initiative, both previously described in this progress report. In addition, we have instituted peer observations, sharing of student work, and analysis of video recorded lessons. We are also in the process of developing project portfolios that can demonstrate the efficacy of teaching and learning in each project.

Last year, our IRF (now AP) and the CPDC developed a peer observation protocol that we have found very effective. Teachers identify the colleagues and subject matter they would like to observe and a schedule is developed so that one substitute can circulate to cover the classes of multiple observers throughout the day. As they observe, teachers must record their feedback pertaining to the objectives of the lesson, instructional strategies employed, student engagement, and expectations. At the end of the day, everyone who has observed or been observed meets to debrief, facilitated by the IRF/AP. Each observer shares from her/his feedback form, both observations and suggestions. Other participants contribute related suggestions as well. These conversations have been invariably rich, held in the spirit of camaraderie, and instrumental in moving our practice forward.

Our protocol for the sharing of student work requires teachers to bring multiple samples—at varying levels—of a single assignment that demonstrates incorporation of one or more of the school’s Critical Academic Skills. Each teacher presents the background of the assignment, its objectives, and the criteria for assessing student achievement of the objectives. The rest of the staff then circulates to observe all the samples of student work provided. Afterward, the staff has a discussion about the work samples. The presenting teacher listens and takes notes but does not speak; this method helps ensure that the conversation is truly about the student work. Topics for discussion are to what extent the assignment is designed to facilitate student achievement of the objectives and to what extent the samples of student work provide evidence that students have achieved the Critical Academic Skills. After the discussion, the presenting teacher takes five minutes to write a reflection about insights gained and changes that could be instituted the next time the assignment is utilized. After all of the day’s presenters have completed the process, each one shares her/his reflection. Staff members who did not present can add observations to the reflections. This process has proven an excellent mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of assignments as assessments, as well as helping our faculty to build a shared understanding of appropriate levels of rigor within our curriculum.

Last year, inspired by three teachers on our faculty who were undertaking the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification process (in which candidates must submit two portfolio entries that include video footage of their teaching in action), the IRF and CPDC piloted a form of peer feedback based on sharing 20-30 minute video-recorded lessons. The protocol for this exchange is similar to the peer observation protocol, but the audience is larger. All staff members watching the video complete a peer feedback form as they watch. They must comment upon objectives of the lesson and clarity of instructions, instructional strategies that allow all students to access the curriculum, the level of student engagement, and the academic and behavioral expectations upheld by the teacher. After the video, the facilitator (the IRF/AP or a member of the CPDC) facilitates a discussion based on the feedback forms; faculty members share their ideas on ways in which the lesson was effective as well as ways that the lesson could be improved.

The administration participates in the student work and video sharing, and helps facilitates peer observation debriefs. This is important because it adds a layer of accountability to the processes: the administration must be accountable for engaging all faculty in ongoing improvement efforts, and the faculty must be accountable to both colleagues and administrators in working to continually honing their practice. It should also be noted that, in our current climate, teachers are not just willing, but eager, to participate in such protocols. As teachers of students who can be challenging to reach, the collective desire to constantly do better is both essential and exciting.

*4. Revisit and revise our shared definition of project-based learning and accordingly standardize integral components required of each project.*

We began year one of our Action Plan by studying various definitions of project-based learning and using them as a springboard for identifying, as presented in Action Objective I, “Downtown High School’s Core Tenets of Project-Based Curriculum.” The Core Tenets represent those characteristics most important to our school’s specific model of project-based learning, and those we feel must be embedded in all projects. To support this foundation piece, we next developed our “Expectations for Project-Based Learning at Downtown High School,” which aligns expectations of teachers, administrators and support staff with our Core Tenets.

These guiding documents have helped us to standardize integral components of each project in several ways. The CPDC and administration both utilize the Core Tenets as a lens through which to guide feedback on curriculum plans in every meeting with project teams. To that end, after the CPDC curriculum plan reviews process was re-established, we developed a rubric for curriculum plans based on the Core Tenets. The specific criteria for each Core Tenet serve as the “Meets Expectations” criteria within the rubric. Our exhibition rubric also incorporates demonstration of the Core Tenets into the criteria for effective exhibition.

Every year, we also dedicate some of our Wednesday Professional time to reacquainting ourselves as a staff with the Core Tenets and corresponding expectations. We present the documents to every prospective new hire as well, so that each candidate is fully aware of the demands of our program. Part of our opening day PD was a fish bowl during which returning teachers discussed their strengths as well as their challenges in embedding the Core Tenets into their project curriculum. This year, with so many new teachers, the AP has also convened regular “new teacher meetings” to ensure that expectations are clear and that ample support is available. The Core Tenets have served as a very effective means not only of articulating a shared vision of what project-based curriculum should look like at DHS, but also of guiding our practice, curriculum development, and school-wide professional development that promotes increasing standardization of expectations across all projects.

***Action Objective IV: Enhance Delivery of Project-Based Curriculum***

*In order to enrich the effective implementation of our project-based design, Downtown High School will provide a variety of professional growth opportunities for staff and will facilitate advocacy for our alternative program.*

Because our schedule builds three hours per week for professional development into our schedule, professional growth activities are a priority at DHS. Our committee structure, academic initiatives, and addition of an IRF/AP have helped us raise the bar for professional development since the last self-study. In addition, the “new” principal who came on board in Fall 2007 has made significant progress in advocating for our school at the district level.

- 1. Develop long-term vision and procedures for planning and implementing weekly professional development workshops as well as opportunities for outside workshops, conferences, and visitations.*

Due to the need to delegate responsibility for professional development to a specific body, the Curriculum Committee became the Curriculum and Professional Development Committee (CPDC) in Fall 2006. Having one of our committees coordinate professional development (PD) streamlines the process of creating a PD calendar to address our vision for the school and our needs as educators. The CPDC organizes Wednesday PD workshops, facilitating implementation of school-wide initiatives, peer sharing, progress on the WASC Action Plan, support in implementing Core Tenets and Critical Academic Skills, and a variety of additional offerings such as Wellness Center or classroom management workshops.

The majority of our PDs are coordinated in-house by our committees. PDs over the past several years have included a multitude of Literacy Initiative workshops offered by the Literacy Committee; Math Committee presentations on group work and problem solving strategies in math instruction, thematically integrating math into projects, the Algebra Project approach; CPDC workshops on the scientific process, Core Tenets, exhibition standards, and Critical Academic Skills; and Wellness Center presentations related to trauma, grief and loss, and non-violent communication.

The administration has retained the job of identifying appropriate guest presenters, consultants, and off-site PD opportunities for teachers, assisted by teachers who have taken the initiative to recommend and arrange for PD they believe will be beneficial. For example, last year, the organization Facing History and Ourselves delivered a series of four Wednesday workshops analyzing the impact of eugenics on the educational system in order to support teachers in conceptualizing curriculum related to the Critical Academic Skill “Students will complete assignments that require examining and analyzing social justice issues.” This year, because we added several new teachers to our staff and classroom management can be challenging at a continuation high school, the

administration hired the president of I Understand - Tools for Schools to conduct a two-part training about effective behavior management practices in the classroom. In the past, the administration also employed educational consultants from The Opus Group and Performance Fact, the former to work closely with specific projects on structured curriculum development, and the latter to help administration and support staff to more clearly delineate roles, responsibilities, and ways to best utilize the personnel resources we have on campus.

Off-site PDs supported by the administration have been numerous, providing a diverse array of valuable opportunities for growth. Two summers ago, the school paid for teachers to take college courses at San Francisco State University's Sierra Nevada Field Campus. One teacher took a course called "Watershed Analysis and Restoration Using Fluvial Geomorphology" and two teachers took a "Practical Observational Astronomy" class. Last summer, the administration advocated for our site to be included in the district's partnership with the Yale National Initiative to Strengthen Teaching in Public Schools. Two teachers were selected to be part of a district team of seven, and were able to attend a summer intensive session during which they participated in seminars with Yale Faculty and wrote curriculum units incorporating that seminar content. One teacher took a seminar entitled "Green Chemistry" and the other took "The Rise, Fall, and Rise Again of the Civil Rights Movement." Their curriculum units are now posted on the Yale National Initiative website.

Other off-campus PD includes two teachers developing a new project being granted permission days to attend field experiences with a veteran project experienced at creating integrated, inquiry-based field studies. Observing structured field experiences was a way for the teachers to gain ideas for planning their own. Another teacher whose project involved students creating films and digital stories attended two *World Savvy* seminars about youth and media, paid for by the school. Our IRF last year was funded to attend a nine-day workshop series about effective facilitation. Four teachers attended a series of workshops on culturally relevant teaching practice presented by Dr. Sharroky Hollie with the Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching.

The administration has consistently sought out and taken advantage of district-sponsored PD opportunities by ensuring our school is allocated spots and can send staff members. Two teachers last spring were able to attend the California Association for Bilingual Education conference. Two teachers this year have been able to attend a four-part workshop training in strategies for Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English, offered by the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE). One teacher was able to attend a one-day SDCOE workshop on preparing students for the Math CAHSEE and another attended the English Language Arts counterpart. We sent one teacher to two workshops about using the new Geometry textbooks and one to a training in the district's new School Loop on-line communication service. In addition, one of our teachers consistently participates in district textbook adoption committees and another has been extremely active on the district Ethnic Studies committee. Both teachers are released for permission days as needed. Last year, three of our teachers became candidates for NBPTS certification. The district funded their participation in National Board Resource Center at Stanford University support program.

The numerous PD opportunities both on-site and off-site, as well as the extremely high level of engagement on the part of the staff, is indicative of our school's dedication to professional development. The work of the CPDC and the administration has been effective in coordinating their efforts to provide such a richness of offerings.

*2. Institute in-house facilitation of professional growth and mentorship such as more formalized sharing of best practices, opportunities for peer observation, and time for faculty reflection.*

In the early years of this Action Plan, after we identified Critical Academic Skills to be embedded across projects, we conducted a series of workshops during which each teacher shared best practices demonstrating one Critical Academic Skill. For example, teachers demonstrated lessons related to scaffolding an essay, engaging students in the scientific method, modeling team building activities, and so forth. Demonstration

lessons are also frequently modeled during PDs, as when the Literacy Committee presents a vocabulary development exercise, the Math Committee models a group problem solving activity, or our NBPTS certified science teacher leads a scientific field inquiry during our staff retreat at Yosemite National Park. Sharing student work and video recorded lessons has also provided our faculty with an effective means of sharing best practices and, in the case of the videos, an opportunity for peer observation. Our formalized peer observation protocol, previously described, has been another positive structure for sharing our practice with one another to promote professional growth.

Faculty reflection has also been built into many of our professional development structures. For example, our procedure for sharing student work includes a written reflection by each participating teachers that is then shared in a larger group reflection about the process. The peer observation protocol and video sharing process both include a collective debrief at the end, during which both observers and those observed can reflect on the experience. This year, the opening PD day included an exercise illustrating each faculty member's path to Downtown High School so that new and returning staff members could get to know one another better. The staff retreat we had at Yosemite during a three-day weekend in between semesters—notably attended by all except one teacher and one paraprofessional—began with a reflection about the Fall exhibition. Each project was able to reflect on their own exhibition, hear feedback from colleagues, and offer input to other projects. The majority of our PDs incorporate time at the end for reflection on the workshop. Structured, institutionalized PD is one of the great strengths of our school; in our commitment to quality professional growth experiences, we have built reflection into our practice.

*3. Facilitate coordination within and among teaching teams for the purpose of ensuring that the school offers a variety of projects that reflect students' diverse interests.*

The diversity of projects at DHS reflects the diversity of the staff. The expectation from administration and the CPDC is that teachers create a project around a theme about which they are passionate. The process of offering a variety of projects therefore happens largely organically. However, development of new projects is guided by school leadership to ensure that project offerings do not become redundant. For example, in interviewing prospective hires last Spring and Summer, the interview committee asked candidates to present ideas for a project of their dreams. Their proposals were evaluated based on the school's need to offer high interest content not already provided by existing projects. The committee was excited to find a math teacher who is a musician. We needed a teacher with expertise in math, and music is an area of great interest for many students; we had been looking for someone who could fill that gap. The committee was also looking for teachers who could take over the school garden from a leaving teacher's project. As luck would have it, we interviewed one excellent Special Education/Humanities candidate who proposed a garden project, and one excellent science candidate who proposed the same concept. This made launching the new EATS project a clearly viable decision.

The CPDC also works with project teams to prevent duplication of curriculum in the planning stages. For instance, our newest project, called BIKE (Build! Investigate! Know! Explore!), began this past Fall, with a variety of thematic possibilities. During the planning days before the start of school, the CPDC steered BIKE toward themes not already explored in other projects (such as how to repair things) and away from those that are (such as the sustainability theme that EATS chose to emphasize).

Teachers likewise consult with one another regularly to be careful that they do not replicate project content. EATS teachers coordinated with WALC teachers to make sure their sustainability curriculum did not overlap WALC's environmental science focus. MMARSS (Music and Math Alive in Resistance to Social Structures) worked with PRISM (Physics Reflected in Social Movements) to make sure that they chose to emphasize different historical movements for change. School-wide sharing of curriculum plans, as done during our recent retreat, helps to facilitate this process, as

does the collegial nature of the staff; teachers with similar curricular themes seek out one another for planning purposes.

*4. Promote better understanding of continuation education and PBL within the school district and among stakeholders by developing a strategic advocacy plan to promote our alternative educational program.*

In previous years, the voice for alternative programs across SFUSD was weak. Alternative schools shared the same business meetings as comprehensive schools; therefore, no specific alternative school agenda existed. In 2007, alternative school principals (the A-Team, consisting of our current principal, the other SFUSD continuation high school's principal, the independent study high school principal, the court schools principal, the county community school principal, and the newcomer high school principal) began meeting to draft a proposal for the SFUSD for an expansion of alternative schools and a new paradigm of operations. The Alternative School Action Plan (ASAP) was researched and proposed to SFUSD as a new road map for the alternative programs. SFUSD responded in 2009 by creating a Director of Alternative Programs central office administrative position to support this new direction. In addition, the SFUSD has altered specific systems to better meet the needs of alternative schools such as DHS. For example, a new internal transfer process allows alternative schools the authority to transfer students between themselves rather than sending students to the Student Support Services Department for assignment. In addition, the district has agreed to a new policy of transferring students at the beginning of each semester and quarter, with the exception of safety and discipline transfers. This practice protects the integrity of project-based curriculum, which is at its best when curriculum builds upon itself so that students are able to apply their learning to a final project. Even though, as a continuation school, we have always been accustomed to open entry and open exit, it has consistently been difficult for students arriving late in a grading period to integrate themselves into an ongoing curriculum. The agreement to assign students

only at the beginning of each grading period is something we had been requesting for years, now finally enacted due to the A-Team and ASAP.

Over the last three years, our new principal has also been able to lobby for site support from the SFUSD. The Assistant Superintendent of High Schools provided DHS direct support when we moved to add an assistant principal position by consolidating our head counselor position. Human Resources supported DHS considerably from 2007-2009 through an extensive recruitment effort that allowed us to secure appropriate and qualified Special Education, math and science candidates.

The administration has also gained significant support from outside of the school district. In 2008-2009 they proposed the Prevention Intervention (PI) program. PI was taken directly from the ASAP and is a new model for coordinating CBOs and working with city agencies to maximize resources for our students. The administration was able to secure a commitment to direct financial support for the pilot from the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and their Families (DCYF). The relationship with DCYF has subsequently resulted in DHS being named one of five schools the city will be funding to build a workforce development program that will be launched in the 2010-2011 school year. The administration has also been awarded a \$5,000 grant from IBM that directly funds a program called the Mouse Squad, training students to trouble shoot computer problems, and a \$15,000 grant from the San Francisco Foundation that DHS has been using to build its current workforce development programs.

The principal is also extremely active in the larger Potrero Hill community as a board member for the McKinley Square Park Foundation, McKinley Square Park being two blocks up the street from the school. DHS has also opened its doors to the community and is used as a hub for block captain meetings and other community meetings. This community involvement, combined with the service learning DHS projects are engaged in, is having a positive effect on the relationship between DHS and the neighborhood.