

Chapter IV: Category D

Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability

Category D

Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability

D1-D2. To what extent:

- **Does the school use a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, analyze and report student performance data to the parents and other shareholders of the community?**
- **Do teachers employ a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate student learning?**
- **Do students and teachers use these findings to modify the teaching/learning process for the enhancement of the educational progress of every student?**

Professionally Acceptable Assessment Practices

Downtown High School uses a variety of methods to evaluate student performance and share the information with our stakeholders. Formalized testing data is often collected at the direction of SFUSD and state mandates, rather than as an organic method by which DHS measures the success of its students. For instance, the school conducts standardized tests as mandated by the state. However, the results from these tests are not helpful in formulating curriculum. They only confirm that the majority of our students are below the 40th percentile. Our students know that the scores on the state tests will not impact them directly and do not take them seriously, so it difficult, if not impossible, to assess the validity of the results. There are also very few matched scores each year due to the open entry/open exit nature of continuation education and the fact that seniors are not tested. Many students who have been with us a full year and would thus qualify as a matched score are seniors and therefore not tested. Furthermore, the

design of using standardized test data does not reflect our population. For a variety of reasons including the short duration of time spent at DHS, lack of matched scores, and even truancy, teachers do not use test statistics to formulate curriculum and the school is not able to study it as meaningful data.

Due to the nature of our school and its students, additional criteria such as student morale, attendance, and behavior are vital in assessing the value of our program. These factors are critical in evaluating whether we are providing a program that will engage formerly truant students, as well as one that will provide opportunities for students with behavioral problems to become serious students who are on-task, learning and, sometimes, even leaders. During reflective staff development opportunities, factors such as attendance rates, behavior of students, numbers of fights, suspensions, expulsions, and other holistic measures inform and guide our program, policies and procedures. Often, this type of data is anecdotal, qualitative, and/or narrative. While the school is responsible for maintaining data in such areas as suspensions, expulsions and attendance rates, policies and modifications to our program are often created from discussions with narrative assessments rather than numerical data. For instance, teachers created a cell phone policy not from charts monitoring cell phone abuses, but from a generalized discussion among teachers and staff.

Basis for Determination of Performance Levels

To a greater extent than in a traditional high school, credits earned are the best measure of student achievement. To earn credits at DHS, a student must not only complete assignments to a satisfactory level, but also have the attendance and participation to justify the awarding of each credit. As a continuation high school using the Carnegie credit system, twelve hours of productive attendance makes a student eligible for one credit. A student cannot just squeak through by passing the final or get a D and still earn five credits, as is possible in most traditional high school classrooms. Furthermore, with so much of project-based learning being experiential, many assignments cannot be made up. Students must be present and participating for learning to take place.

It is also specified that a student must complete at least sixty hours per quarter outside of the classroom hours in order to earn five of their 22.5 credits. In some projects, these hours are earned by participating in camping trips, in others through combinations of extended field experiences, weekend events, and homework assignments. As a staff, we are currently exploring how to make these hours as meaningful as possible by integrating them into our curriculum. We are also grappling with how to motivate students to take advantage of these credit-earning opportunities.

At DHS, student performance can also include credits earned by working with community partners. For example, we have students doing internships with CBOs—such as the Bay Area Video Coalition, Conscious Youth Media Crew, and Bay Area Urban Debate League—who are able to use these hours toward their graduation requirements. This opportunity is yet another way for students to improve their academic performance, as they develop and pursue interests that connect their learning to real world applications.

Quarterly parent/guardian conferences, where teachers and parents/guardians assess a student's progress toward graduation, are an opportunity to have meaningful discussions with each student's family about his or her achievements. Examples of the student's work are shared and areas of strength and concern are discussed. The most important data to the student, parents and teachers is the degree to which this student is making adequate progress toward graduation.

Of the state-mandated tests, the only one that carries weight with our community is the CAHSEE because students must pass the test in order to receive a diploma. As a staff, we have examined the passage rates to determine what support efforts seem to be effective. This data has been shared with those running our after school program to tailor CAHSEE tutoring to best help our students. Students' CAHSEE results are also provided to parents during conferences.

One measure of student achievement that is used and valued school-wide is the five-paragraph response to literature essay. It is now well established that students in all projects do this essay every semester about their class book. The same rubric is used by all teachers and we share the essays and our scores during anchoring sessions to ensure that scores are comparable across projects. We are looking into how this data can be used to measure student progress. We also use this data to examine our own practice and improve our literacy teaching. For example, when students across the school were earning consistently low scores in the area of analyzing quotes in body paragraphs, many teachers created graphic organizers forcing students develop quote analysis before typing their essays.

Appropriate Assessment Strategies

DHS has made much progress over the past six years in the area of assessment. We have implemented a school-wide assessment of writing (the response to literature essay rubric) and implemented a school-wide exhibition rubric to increase the rigor of exhibition presentations to more fully reflect the depth of learning taking place in each project. We have piloted rubrics that may be revised and implemented school-wide for short answers and oral presentations. It is a goal to continue developing additional whole-school assessments for more of our Critical Academic Skills.

Our project-based structure allows teachers to use many types of assessments that suit the content being assessed and the diversity of students' learning styles. In WALC, teachers use art projects to help students express concepts from science, social studies, language arts, and math. Art assessments can provide valuable insight into the students' understanding. In Still Life and MMARSS, teachers read students' blogs to check for on-going learning. In PRISM and GOAL, students create iMovies as final projects to demonstrate their understanding of project themes and content. GOAL and WALC use all-subject field notebooks to capture a student's growth and give regular and frequent feedback to the students through these notebooks.

At one point, the staff collectively developed assessment rubrics for major student tasks such as oral presentations, the essay writing process, the scientific process, and research assignments. The writing rubric is put into practice on a whole-school basis. At the end of each semester, every student is required to write an essay based on the class book. Project teachers grade the essay using the rubric and later, some professional development time is used to read essays as a whole group and compare our scores in order to ensure equity across projects. At that time modifications to the rubric are suggested, evaluated and adopted. This anchoring process is used to make sure students are being held to the same academic standards in every project. Each teacher's grading process can then be modified for the next semester if needed.

During two of our professional development sessions last year, we had each teacher bring in an example of an "every day" assessment and the student work generated by this assessment. We used the work as basis for evaluating both the assessment and the learning goals being measured. The process evidenced that teachers use a variety of "traditional" assessments such as quizzes, tests, short answer questions, visual representations of concepts, small group and individual projects, and written reflections. However, the assessments that characterize our school are our major culminating assessments: the projects that make our curriculum project-based. For example, in the "Hollywood" project, throughout the semester students study writing and systems of oppression with assessments of the students' skills and understanding at regular intervals. Their midterm assessment is an original screenplay written by each student, illustrating one of the systems of oppression about which they have learned. In the second quarter of Hollywood, students produce films based upon the screenplays they have written. They are taught about acting, directing, light, sound, and editing. These elements are assessed as they are taught, but the quality of the final films represents the ultimate assessment of the process. This is an exemplar of authentic assessment. While the films are Hollywood's project, they are based upon and reflect a semester worth of curriculum in social studies, art, and English language arts. Other projects similarly utilize both standard assessments and project-based assessments.

We as a staff recognize the need to strengthen our use of assessments to better evaluate student progress toward mastery of our ESLRs and CAS. We continue to discuss ways to make our exhibition a true measure of student learning and are committed to finding ways to measure student progress toward this end. In addition, we have begun discussing possibilities like project portfolios, more school-wide rubrics for CAS, and digital student portfolio that will allow us to evaluate student progress over time.

Demonstration of Student Achievement

At the end of the eighteen-week semester, our school-wide project exhibition allows for the presentation of student products to showcase the specific skills and content learned in each project. Peer and community critique occurs as students, parents/guardians, teachers, administration, support staff, funders, CBO representatives and district personnel circulate through final presentations and complete evaluation forms at the end of each project's presentation. The exhibition is an important assessment tool that is unique to DHS, and one that helps teachers evaluate the goals for curricular development by offering collegial and student feedback. This process, as well as feedback and reflection during staff development, can also help teachers identify areas where improvement is needed and any corresponding professional development that might be necessary. Teachers give each other feedback on the project exhibitions using our Exhibition Rubric as part of an end-of-semester reflection.

In every exhibition, students demonstrate their proficiency in our ESLRs: working collaboratively, examining social issues, thinking critically and, above all, communicating effectively. All exhibitions, to varying degrees, require students to present their thinking and learning to their peers and their instructors. By its public nature, exhibition is an authentic assessment of a student's ability to share knowledge and analysis with an audience. Where we hope to grow is in strengthening both the depth and breadth of skills and content knowledge a student is able demonstrate in exhibition. This is one of our main goals in our new action plan.

One of the benefits of project-based curriculum is the way it can provide a variety of opportunities for students to see concepts in concrete and real world applications. This is especially true of students identified with learning disabilities. Geometry in the abstract may be difficult for a student who struggles with math, but is entirely accessible when applied to building a boat with one's own hands. A student who has difficulty understanding geology as presented in a textbook finds it much easier to grasp when studying rock formations out in the field. For some SDC students who have been in self-contained classrooms for much of their educational career, the structure of DHS, along with the ability to interact academically with classmates who have been in mainstream class rooms all their lives, has been extremely successful. Given the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge through art, music or presentation many students experience success at levels previously denied to them.

Curriculum Embedded Assessments

During each quarter, teachers receive a scholarship record and transcript evaluation for all students in order to assess their academic progress thus far. As the semester unfolds, assessments are embedded into the project curriculum. Each project team determines the strategies that best suit the project. A wide range of authentic assessment methods are in place to evaluate student learning such as oral presentations, visual presentations, quizzes, pre-tests and post-tests, portfolios, video productions, performances, final examinations, rubrics, peer evaluation, and the writing process. For example, the WALC project routinely collects and assesses a "WALC Book," which is a structured notebook with a pre-printed table of contents wherein students complete all assignments from notes to field sketches to poems to math problems. GOAL uses a similar field book. The results of our many assessments are evaluated by project teachers and are tools by which teachers reflect upon the progress of their students in terms of achieving academic standards and ESLRs.

For English and Math specifically, this year we have implemented reading, reading comprehension, and math assessment tests upon intake of new enrollees. This data will

be used to inform teachers of students' current skill levels and, in the future, help us evaluate student learning and progress over time. Teachers assess English Language Learners for the district through the Language and Literacy Assessment Rubric (LALAR) that includes evaluation in listening/speaking, reading, and writing. Our Literacy Initiative includes many embedded assessments for reading comprehension related to the whole-class books. Students must answer chapter questions, analyze quotes, create story maps, design character posters and, at the end, write a five-paragraph response to literature essay. In Math, embedded assessments include problems of the day, homework, quizzes, tests, group math projects, and presentations of math concepts. Assessments for English Language Learners (ELLs) and general education students are largely the same, although consideration is given to ELLs in grading. As previously discussed, however, because we are a school for struggling students, all DHS students are graded in the context of their progress and improvement rather than in comparison to others.

Student Feedback

As a staff, we rely mostly on the informal, ongoing incorporation of student response to a lesson or project. Because of our structure, partner teachers work closely with fifty students or fewer per semester. This creates opportunities for conversations with students of greater depth than possible in most school settings. Recurring feedback can easily be incorporated into a semester-long project or considered for another semester. For example, talking with students about what they had enjoyed most in previous projects led PRISM teachers to incorporate photography as part of their current semester of curriculum. WALC developed a unit on evolution focusing on animal adaptations because any animal—from spiders to dogs to actual wildlife like a coyote—always steals the show during field experiences. In addition, student feedback about the whole-class book in every project helps project teachers decide whether to teach that book again or look for a new one that is more interesting to students.

Some project teachers ask for feedback directly in the form of semester-end surveys and reflections from the students. Indirectly, we get student feedback in the form of student sign-ups in subsequent semesters. Students must talk to the teachers before signing up for a project, and we often hear that they are picking a project based on the exhibition. Some students will seek out a project if they are impressed with a project's product or the students' presentations.

During quarterly parent/guardian-student-teacher conferences, students also give feedback on why they feel they are being successful or having difficulty meeting the projects' expectations. Parents will share what complaints or positive comments they have heard at home. As we develop and revise our rubrics for the Critical Academic Skills, we hope to include them in our conferences as a way to share student progress and get feedback on student response to the incorporation of these standards.

It is required to have students on the School Site Council, another forum for student voice. Students contributed their input to the discussion when it was decided that the school needed to strengthen math and science in many projects.

Modification of the Teaching/Learning Process

Every teacher modifies instruction many times daily based on clues as overt as a cry of "I don't get it!" and as subtle as a knitted brow. This is data. On several levels, the structure of DHS allows for consideration of student engagement and performance in guiding curriculum modification.

Due to the favorable student-to-teacher ratio, teachers are able to spend more time with each individual student and can better use everyday classroom assessments to check for understanding. This data is of immediate relevance when planning lessons for the next day. If students are not grasping a concept, it is time to build in different instructional strategies or additional scaffolding. Working closely in teams of two further allows teachers to have the kind of in-depth conversations—about strategies and modifications

for a difficult class, a challenging concept, or a specific student who is struggling—that are so difficult, if not impossible, in larger more traditional high schools.

At a larger level, since all projects are one semester in length, it is possible to refine and rewrite the project curriculum in a shorter cycle. There are regular meetings between project teachers and the school's Curriculum and Professional Development Committee to evaluate the rigor and accessibility of the curriculum. The committee examines the accessibility of the curriculum. Teachers must demonstrate that they are considering the needs of all students. The Literacy and Math committees also make themselves available for consultation with each project, offering feedback on the efficacy of lessons or helping to identify more effective instructional approaches and tools if students are not demonstrating comprehension of the subject matter through their assignments.

Monitoring of Student Growth

The Literacy Initiative, being our current model program, provides a good representative example of how student progress toward achieving academic standards is monitored. For the past three semesters, each project has submitted data to the administration indicating all student scores in every area of the response to literature essay. The administration has compiled that information in order for us to track how many students are completing the essay each semester, gains or losses in scores, which standards are more widely met and which need more attention in our teaching, and whether or not those students with matched scores are improving or slipping. Because the first two semesters of data reflect some gaps in participation and understanding of the rubric on the part of the staff, this fall's data reflects that all teachers are now on board, and thus provides a truer baseline to compare against future data.

The professional development schedule reflects time dedicated to discussing general perceptions of student progress and providing strategies to help teachers support all students, including those with learning disabilities or mental health problems such as depression or grief. The Resource Specialist (RS) teacher regularly examines how

teachers are modifying curriculum and assignments to reflect accommodations required by a student's IEP, and works with classroom teachers to monitor the progress of both SDC and RSP students toward meeting IEP goals in their projects. We are fortunate to have two highly qualified paraprofessionals who work primarily with our SDC students but often work with other classes when teachers request the support. Because they work individually with students, they help teachers to keep track of student progress in completing assignments, comprehending material, and meeting project requirements. Our RS also arranges to work one-on-one with Special Education students as needed, which allows for closer attention to student progress. The after-school program has initiated a policy where students are collected from their classes for tutoring and homework help. This service is provided based on teacher recommendation and is available to all students regardless if they have an IEP or not. Tutors communicate student progress to teachers, and teachers help identify the academic standards with which tutees need support. Our Wellness staff works closely with classroom teachers and administration to coordinate support of students who need counseling and coping strategies so that they fully engage with their academics. Teachers, administrators, and Wellness staff can all tap into each other's knowledge of students to monitor if they are making adequate academic progress toward meeting ESLRs and CAS.

SFUSD has recently adopted the School Loop program to allow teachers to post grades and attendance on-line for parents/guardians as well as keep them informed about school events and project assignments. As DHS teachers get trained in School Loop, we will be able to incorporate this resource as part of our efforts to strengthen our communication with the parents/guardians of our students so that they are better able to monitor their student's progress. As more teachers become proficient in the use of the district's new online data system, the process of recording and analyzing daily assessments should become streamlined.

We see the need to provide more specific feedback to our students and their families on their growth in acquiring our Critical Academic Skills. These stem directly from our ESLRs and are pivotal not only to assessing the students' academic growth but assuring that all projects are providing equal opportunities for the students to learn. Since each

project can have entirely different subject matter and pedagogy, these skills were developed to be standardized throughout the school and, as such, should be subjected to the same measuring instruments throughout the school. The efficacy of the Literacy Initiative has inspired us to develop school-wide assessments as appropriate for a range of CAS. We recognize this as a major area of growth for us.

Strengths and Prioritized Growth Areas

Strengths	Evidence
1. Use of whole-school response to literature essay rubric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubric • Professional development/anchoring workshops • Rubric data demonstrating growth • Modified curriculum to support students in completing the essay
2. Quarterly parent/guardian-student-teacher conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference sign-in sheets • Credit evaluations used at conferences
3. End of semester exhibitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibition evaluations • Exhibition rubric • Exhibition videos

Prioritized Growth Areas	Evidence
1. Develop authentic assessments such as school-wide rubrics across more content areas and for more, possibly all, Critical Academic Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of existing school-wide rubric (response to literature essay, exhibition, curriculum plan) • Lack of rubrics in all content areas • Lack of rubrics for CAS
2. Identify a means (such as portfolios) of assessing student progress toward achieving ESLRs and CAS over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of comparative assessments that measure growth over time • Lack of system for evaluating or communicating student progress school-wide

D3-D4. To what extent:

- **Does the school, district, and community regularly review student progress toward achievement of the academic standards**

and the expected school-wide learning results and report to the parents and other stakeholders of the community?

- **Does the assessment of student achievement in relation to the academic standards and the expected school-wide learning results drive the school's program and resource allocation and use?**

Assessment and Monitoring Process

There are many stakeholders involved in monitoring student progress at DHS. First and foremost are the teachers and students. In our integrated approach to project-based learning, standards of the major curricular areas are taught and regularly assessed in each project by the team teachers, who communicate continually with students about their progress so that they can take responsibility for monitoring their own progress. For example, many projects have a notebook or binder in which students must keep all of their assignments. Students themselves can monitor which assignments they have completed, which are missing, and the grades they are receiving. Students are also given periodic assessments (progress reports) of points and credits based on amount of integrated academic work accomplished.

At the next level, parents/guardians become involved. Teachers assess and report credit accumulation at each grading period so that students and parents/guardians know how many credits they have earned in each particular curricular area and can evaluate their progress toward graduation. The most important means by which our school involves parents/guardians in monitoring academic achievement information is every nine weeks through individual parent/guardian-student-teacher conferences. At these conferences, teachers communicate students' progress in a variety of areas in addition to progress toward graduation; examples include meeting the project's performance standards, mastery of skills and content, fulfillment of the project's academic requirements, credit accrual based on attendance, analysis of previous credit achievement based on transcripts and general strengths and weaknesses. Report cards

are mailed home following conferences and confirm discussions of student progress. Parents/guardians are also involved because teachers are expected to call home when students are absent, misbehaving, or not meeting standards, and to give positive feedback when a student is achieving. Through this regular contact with homes, parents/guardians are asked to partner with teachers in monitoring the progress of their children on an ongoing basis. Teachers also send individual progress reports home with students regularly as standard documents by which student achievement is reported.

Another set of stakeholders is case managers, social workers, and probation officers. These stakeholders involve themselves in monitoring student progress to different degrees, but the school makes an effort to keep them informed through phone calls and invitations to the parent/guardian conferences. School support staff—Wellness and ExCEL staff, security aides, secretaries, the counselor, and our attendance liaison—interface with these stakeholders as well teachers, students, and parents/guardians through the Prevention and Intervention (PI) program. Support staff have each been asked to mentor/case manage a handful of students to increase their involvement with monitoring student progress.

The district and board are not highly involved in monitoring the progress of our students, but they do track specific data sets such as tests scores and attendance. They have acknowledged our gains in student attendance over the last year.

Reporting Student Progress

We have numerous processes in place to keep stakeholders informed about student progress. The school-wide project exhibition is a means by which we share student accomplishments with stakeholders. Students exhibit their mastery of ESLRs and CAS by presenting their culminating projects to their peers, parents/guardians, and invited guests such as staff from the school's CBO partnerships, representatives from foundations that fund certain projects, district personnel, even social workers and probation officers. Some projects also share student work indicating accomplishment of

academic standards with parents/guardians and other stakeholders through the publication of anthologies of student writing and special film screenings. WALC holds an annual year-end celebration to which students, families, friends, and funders are invited. It is always a well-attended showcase of student accomplishments. GOAL has an official boat launch every semester that includes family members and community partners who are able to witness tangible evidence of student achievement when the boat proves sea worthy. These events are effective in allowing stakeholders to celebrate student accomplishments and interact with evidence of student learning.

Parent/guardian conferences and phone calls are extremely effective processes in keeping parents/guardians informed about student progress. The directness and regularity of contact enables teachers to develop relationships with families so that there are no surprises at quarterly conferences. Parents/guardians also begin to feel more connected to teachers, and are thus more likely to check in to monitor their child's progress proactively. Families also receive a quarterly newsletter that is mailed home. Parents/guardians who report receiving it appreciate being informed of upcoming deadlines, requirements, and events.

The Balanced Scorecard includes demographic data as well as information on the school's program and student achievement. This report assesses overall school-wide performance. The importance of this report is that it shows stakeholders at the district and board levels how the school as a whole is performing. At DHS we are particularly driven to create our own assessments that will be recognized and valued by our community. Since it is acknowledged that we are not invested in the traditional measures of school performance, it is imperative that we can offer convincing evidence that our program is benefiting students and identify useful data that we can utilize to improve instruction within our project-based model. That is why improving assessment ranks so highly in our list of growth areas.

The SSC is a governing body made up of administration, teachers, support staff, parents/guardians, students, and community members. It is kept informed about student progress through regular updates on the school program, as well as periodic

review of pertinent data and assessments of the school's progress in meeting students' needs. The SSC uses this information to make important decisions, such as devising and granting final approval of the Balanced Scorecard and budget based on information about student learning and achievement. For example, the SSC used the staff's assessment of students not receiving enough math and science instruction to change our program focus and acquire new staff in order to strengthen school-wide math and science curriculum.

For in-house stakeholders, counseling logs are primarily used to document students' behavioral and personal performance on an on-going basis, but are also used to show a correlation between student behavior and academic performance. Staff members such as the counselor, Wellness staff, administrators, and teachers hold Student Success Team (SST) meetings and use the counseling logs and personnel input to analyze how circumstances in students' lives have an effect on their academics. This type of data is essential to the students' overall school experience. An action plan is constructed to outline what role various school support providers—including CBO partners, Wellness Center service providers, case managers, social workers, and probation officers—will play in helping the student reach her or his full academic potential.

PI is another program designed to keep stakeholders informed and involved. Our school community is committed to treat each student as an individual and craft personalized interventions, using all the expertise of our various partner organizations as well as parents, teachers, administrators and other school staff. The intention of the PI Program is to ensure that all of these caring adults are communicating effectively with one another, avoiding duplication of efforts for one child and missed connections for another. The principal is the PI coordinator.

Although DHS has many systems in place to assess and monitor student progress toward the achievement of academic standards and school-wide learning results, we historically have not had an efficient line of communication to the district and the school board. However, this year the district created a new position, Executive Director of Alternative Support Programs. Her close involvement with DHS will allow stakeholders

at the district level to have a better understanding of student successes and challenges. Furthermore, the district will have a better idea of the types of resources and support that can be allocated to DHS based on this increased communication.

Modifications Based on Assessment Results

One example of how assessment results have caused changes in the school program, professional development activities, and resource allocation is our decision to bolster math and science. Assessment data across projects—exams, quizzes, assignments, and curriculum plans—indicated the need for a more rigorous math and science curriculum, leading to the SSC’s decision to hire credentialed math and science teachers to develop new projects that offer students higher level math and science curriculum. To facilitate implementation of more rigorous math and science content in all projects, Wednesday professional development now reflects an increased focus on math and science. This year and last year, there has been at least one Math Committee workshop per quarter. Math Committee members provided every teacher with a quarter-long problem-based math curriculum to use as a foundation upon which to integrate math with project themes, as well as meeting with individual projects to help them develop integrated math curriculum. Work has begun on a four-semester math curriculum that will serve as a foundation from which project teachers can tailor the lessons to fit the themes of their projects. Faculty also received an introductory workshop on the scientific process and a demonstration of field-based scientific inquiry. A more comprehensive Inquiry Initiative is scheduled to launch after the WASC visitation, dedicated to providing projects with an approach to teaching science that can be integrated into any project’s unique, overarching theme. Multiple professional development sessions will be dedicated to training teachers in methods of inquiry, identifying topics in science that can be thematically linked to each project, and developing inquiry activities and assessments that engage students in science. While our budget next year will be limited, projects can expect some level of financial support in acquiring the materials they need to launch scientific inquiry. As project themes change, projects will receive ongoing support in developing new, integrated science curriculum.

These budding math and science initiatives follow in the footsteps of the Literacy Initiative, another example of assessment results causing school-wide changes. As previously discussed, the Literacy Initiative began as a result of our findings that students were largely unsuccessful in the essay portion of the English Language Arts CAHSEE, and not particularly successful in the reading comprehension section either. To bolster reading comprehension skills, the Literacy Committee created a school-wide program that requires every project to read a whole-class book, supported by a wide variety of scaffolded activities. Every student then writes a thesis driven five-paragraph response to literature essay in order to develop the expository writing skills necessary to pass the CAHSEE. Teachers have an effective assessment tool in the form of an essay rubric to help guide their instruction. At the end of the semester, all students are familiar with the both textual analysis and essay composition. We dedicated a great deal of Wednesday professional development time to launch the Literacy Initiative and invested in multiple class sets of books for every project. The Literacy Initiative continues to improve English Language Arts instruction school-wide.

Strengths and Prioritized Growth Areas

Strengths	Evidence
1. Quantity and diversity of stakeholders supporting students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/guardian conferences • Teacher phone logs • SST meeting records • Logs of probation officer, case manager, and social worker visits • CBO partnerships with projects, ExCEL, and Wellness Center • Wellness Center service provider list • ExCEL CBO program list • PI structures
2. Development and support of school-wide initiatives based on assessment results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Initiative: numerous PD workshops, resource binders provided to projects, essay rubric, meetings with each project, instructional tools and lesson plans developed by teachers • Resources allocated to Literacy

	<p>Initiative: class sets of books and readers, PD time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of Inquiry Initiative: two workshops during PD time, greater number of inquiry-based science lessons offered, lesson plans for inquiry activities • Launch of Math Initiative: quarterly math PDs, school-wide math curriculum, math committee meetings with projects, higher level math embedded in curriculum plans
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Prioritized Growth Areas	Evidence
<p>1. Fully implement Math Initiative and Scientific Inquiry Initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment results on Math CAHSEE • Curriculum Plans reflect difficulty integrating higher level math • Relatively recent incorporation of science curriculum into all projects • Curriculum plans in which science component is not fully developed • Success of scientific inquiry in some projects • Lack of school-wide assessments for math and science related CAS