

**MID-CYCLE VISIT  
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS  
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

**FOR**

**SOUTH TAHOE HIGH SCHOOL**

**1735 Lake Tahoe Boulevard  
South Lake Tahoe, California 96150**

**Lake Tahoe Unified School District**

**Self-Study Visit**

**March 6 - 9 2016**

**Probation Visit**

**March 2018**

**Mid-Cycle Visit**

**March 25-26, 2019**

**Visiting Committee Members**

Constance Oliver

Teacher, Linden High School (retired)

Julie Winkel

Asst. Principal, Oakmont High School

## I. Introduction

### **General comments about the school, its setting, and the school's analysis of student achievement data.**

South Tahoe High School is located in El Dorado County in the Sierra Nevadas at 6,330 feet elevation. 1083 students attend the four-year comprehensive high school. Over 50% are low socio-economic students with 145 EI students and 11.6% special education students. STHS is an AVID national demonstration site. The school also includes Independent Learning Academy located on the campus. The primary goal of the school is to prepared students for college, career and life. Students and Families feel safe on the campus and have multiple opportunities for connectedness to the school. The facility is kept clean and safe from accidents. A SRO, Social Worker and empathy training has made the campus a friendly place for students and staff.

### **Include a description of any significant changes and/or developments, i.e., program additions since the last full visit, changes in student enrollment, staffing changes.**

Due to a district Golden Handshake several teachers chose to retire leaving the school to hire 12 new teachers. Some came with experience and others did not. The school has assigned mentors for each of these newer teachers and has successfully integrated them into the Viking model.

CTE teachers are working to complete certification such that they can grant certificates of completion to students in Exercise Science, Dentistry, Culinary Arts, and Auto Technology (ACSE). These also coordinate with local Lake Tahoe Community College often with dual credit offered to students who completed the courses.

New courses offered as a results of surveys include:

Financial Literacy

Math III

Steam I

The other positive major change at STHS was the new principal who started in Fall 2017. She came with energy and an attitude to listen to what the stakeholders wanted for the students. Through meetings with Booster Groups, ELAC parents (Cafecitos), faculty/staff and students she listened to the concerns of all stakeholders and began to impliment small changes that had big effects on the school community.

A single release day in the fall was devoted to alignment of curriculum to standards with development of common assessments to be used by most departments in each class. In addition the meetings were opportunities for teachers to develop qualities in the graduate profile and ways students demonstrate progress. These have not been reviewed or updated because of lack of released time. The exception is that some teachers choose to meet to build collaboration within departments on their own time.

A partnership with Lake Tahoe Community College has developed several classes for dual enrollment. As teachers are certified by the college additional classes will enable students to complete 1 year of college during their time at STHS. CTE classes are of special interest providing students with certificates of completion that can lead to employment. In addition on-line courses have been added to facilitate students who must be absent from school due to athletic participation, competitions, illness and returns to Mexico.

Professional Development is both on campus with the emphasis on Character in the Viking Profile and development of the Department Companion Plans. In addition, the district provided AVID conference attendance for 12 teachers and staff plus coaching model PD for a teacher released to aid in CCCS strategies and PBL implementation.

**Describe the impact these changes and/or developments have had on the school and/or specific curricular programs.**

Adherence to Common Core is evident in the development of the Math sequence although teaching strategies are not completely implemented. English classes have implemented the writing piece of Common Core and are developing the cooperative skills that allow students to expand their understand. Word walls were evident, but they did not include the visual clues for the EL and Special Needs learners.

Writing has been a major emphasis for the entire school. Started by the science teachers all now have a Claim, Evidence, Reasoning, as the model for writing. Students reported familiarity with the sequence and implement it in their writing in classes. All said there was a much greater emphasis on writing and it was the one area that they felt was their greatest takeaway from high school. Each department has tweaked the CER posters to match the needs of their department.

**Briefly comment on the school's follow-up process. Include a description of the committee that has been responsible for overseeing the progress of the school's action plan and the preparation for the visit.**

The school community met to review the original recommendations of the VC from 2016 and then they added additional areas for growth from the 2018 probation visit. Emphasis has been on Viking Graduate Profile (SLO's) with particular attention to Character building.

CA Common Core Standards have been adopted and implemented in math and ELA courses. NGSS is evident in the STEAM I class. As materials are produced the other science classes are ready to begin implementation.

**Describe the process used to prepare the progress report.**

Input from stakeholders was collected through:

- parents at Cafecitos meetings, surveys and conferences
- students through student leadership and ad hoc committee of interested students
- teachers through staff meetings, release days for planning, department head meetings
- Viking Vision meetings for parents, staff and students to provide feedback on focus areas.

The staff and administration selected the Viking Graduate Profile element Character to address in classrooms, staff meetings, parent meetings and special emphasis events.

The report is a combination of input from all stakeholders throughout the year summarized by the Principal and WASC Chair. It was submitted to staff and parents for review and validation.

## **II. Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up/Schoolwide Action Plan**

**Provide an analytical summary about the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section referencing the critical areas for follow-up addressed through each section.**

There are pieces of evidence to support student voice and connection to school. The administration team worked to develop a Principal advisory committee of students with 10 representatives from each class. It started strong, but logistics became hard as the school year continued and they are looking to revive it with the support of the new activities director next school year and revive the Leadership course into the master schedule next year. When walking through the hallways there is student work hung up representing several subject areas and a variety of levels of student abilities: from award-winning / nationally-recognized photographs, athletic accomplishments, classroom writing assignments, group work, posters, AVID graduates from prior years dating back to 2001, and art work.

The administration has built partnerships with parent stakeholders. The parents feel like they are listened to and their suggestions are taken seriously to impact the choices made for their children. An example of this is the issue of communication. The parents voiced this as a concern and the administration focus on this and adjusted the variety of how information is shared with parents and students. They have extended their voice calls and emails to social media posts, updated webpage information, and text messaging. The extended use of AERIES as a communication tool is an additional layer to connect with parents is seen as a positive change. The concern of communication was also brought forward by students. As a result the daily announcements have changed from only an audio version to an audio visual presentation through the Digital Media class during 2nd period. The presentation is directed, produced and presented through students. This provides life skills for students and a connection to listen to what is being shared by peers about important events on campus.

**Note the evidence supporting the progress made and the impact made on student achievement.**

Changes were begun in the Fall of 2017 and have not been reflected in the CAASPP scores. Lake Tahoe School District recognizes the low scores and is making changes as low as the K-2 grades. These improvements as well as full use of the CCCS should be reflected in increased scores in subsequent years.

More EL students have been enrolled in the Dual Immersion in the lower grades (starting at Kinder) which is impacting the program at the high school with higher enrollment. The increased number of students has allowed the district to create a full offering of courses to complete the program K-12 (being presented for board approval next month). Students report greater satisfaction with school and their ability to master English, which is projected to contribute to increase success for EL students at the high school level. In addition a focus to promote the goal of many students, both native and nonnative speakers, to earn the State Seal of Biliteracy on their diploma. Through the district leadership courses are being reorganized to better serve all language learning students.

It should be noted that at this time there is no standardized testing strategy to measure literacy in the school population. The district is investigating ways to better evaluate progress.

Departments are in the process of developing summative and formative assessments to better evaluate student achievement. The development of common summative assessments has been established with Math 1 and Math 2 courses, currently working on Math 3, through the Illuminate program. In addition, the special education department has developed a co-teaching model for Math 1 to support Special Education student success in math. The ELA department has implemented new curriculum and is continuing to develop as a team and build common assessments. With the current effort teachers will be able to develop curriculum to meet standards and the needs of the students.

During the district leadership meeting, it was presented that the district is looking at the implement of a TOSA model to support instructional coaching as a tool to support instructional changes and supports to impact student achievement. Using their staff as a resource and build capacity within to impact instruction.

**If any critical areas for follow-up were not included in the school's action plan, indicate what actions have been taken to address these issue(s) and include supporting evidence.**

The plan has a wide variety of activities that have been implemented to improve student achievement, however the PBL piece is in the very beginning stages. Plans are in place

to provide coaching for teachers as they attempt to include a project in their curriculum.

All the recommendations included in both self study 2016 and probation report of 2018 are included in the action plan. It is the goal of the school to implement the changes over the next 3 to 6 years.

### **III. Commendations and Recommendations**

#### **Commendations:**

#### **Comment on significant progress the school has made in responding to the critical areas for follow-up and in carrying out the related action plan.**

There is a clear plan for next steps, updated action plan and plan for updates for each incoming freshman class, continued outreach to families, and established partnerships for community support.

Family participation: (parent to parent trainings) parents get to pick what they wanted to focus on for the year through multiple meetings(i.e. school site council, booster clubs, ELAC).

STHS has developed a more extensive selection of online courses for students involved outside school in competitive sports, long term independent study for families leaving out of country and identified at risk students. The online course are now monitored by a teacher to develop a more blended learning for students at risk of meeting graduation requirements and is being used as an intervention tool.

Schoolwide Literacy focus has been developed and presented to staff, full implementation of the plan will be next year. The literacy focus is supported by all staff to help close the opportunity gap for identified at risk groups (EL, Special Education, SED). Through district support the program is reaching into the middle school.

The school committed to release days for each department to create Companion Plans to align with Action Plan this supports a positive start changing instruction to include focus on CCCS and Social Emotional Learning as mentioned in the recommendations of the previous WASC visits. The department alignment with the action plan shows what it looks like in each classroom. The Companion plans were developed with long term change in mind to build capacity of staff to increase student success.

As part of the focus on achievement the school developed and implemented a framework for writing structures across the curriculum with the use of the common vocabulary. The common language is used for writing skills: Claim, Evidence, Reasoning. This framework has been agreed upon to be used in all departments and is used to guide writing across curriculum. Other departments are still working with the fidelity of the framework, but is referenced in their work. The framework was developed by each department to adopt based on the subject area, the use of colors to organize writing is used along with the frameworks common language. The color coding and set structure also supports EL students to better develop writing skills across curriculum.

Posters were created by each subject area and are posted in each classroom as a regular reference for students. During the student meeting, the students spoke about their experiences with the framework. They find it helpful that the same structure is used in all their classes when it comes to writing expectations. When asked about their most positive academic experience many students voice their development with writing skills.

The evidence of the development of the Viking Profile with the focus on Character this year is evident throughout conversations with staff, students and parents. In support of that focus STHS has done a variety of events to support students in their development of strong character. They have had a guest speaker who was a Holocaust survivor on campus to talk to the students about grit and perseverance. STHS had students participate in the Challenge Day program. The students spoke highly of this experience and hope it will return with opportunity for more students participate. The school Librarian also developed a lesson of digital literacy and empathy and presented to all students on campus. Students voiced that the lesson was very relatable and helpful as they look at social media and their own digital footprint. Staff has participated in several pieces of training through staff meetings focused on character development for themselves. Staff meeting documents provide evidence of training from teachers to teachers about strategies of dealing with behaviors and building relationships with students to increase engagement. Resources from Teaching Tolerance and Brain Development Conference have been used to support this work for the staff. Students voiced that they have seen noted changes with interactions between teachers and students.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Comment on any critical areas for follow-up/action plan sections that have not yet been completely addressed.**

The VC acknowledges the changes that have been implemented at STHS and offers the following to encourage continued progress on each of the following. The administrative staff and teachers have embraced the concept that change occurs over time and is a continual process not a “one and done”.

- a. In addition to the monthly visits, build in more frequent collaboration time to allow development of common assessment (summative and formative) measures to guide instruction to impact student success. This need has been identified by administration, teachers and district office personnel.
- b. Use Illuminate Data with more frequent snapshot tools to drive changes with instruction particularly with the EL and Special Needs population so that students can be successful in the Core classes.
- c. The use of AERIES analytics to develop multiple measures of data collection to identify student’s needs and interventions.
- d. Continue to build professional partnerships to allow internships for CTE pathways

- e. Fully implement the Literacy Program with measures of student achievement and success in full integration into the Core classes including moving long term language learners general education.

**Identify any new areas of concerns, if applicable.**

1. What data and tools are you revealing to address equity in higher level courses?