

Western Association of Schools and Colleges
Focus on Learning

MIDTERM VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

Leigh High School
5210 Leigh Avenue
San Jose, CA 95124

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Midterm Visiting Committee

Joseph D. Mahood
Assistant Principal
Aragon High School, San Mateo, CA

Trudy Goss
Assistant Principal
Monte Vista High School, Cupertino, CA

General Comments about the School

Leigh High School (Leigh) is one of five comprehensive high schools in Campbell Union High School District. The school is situated in a residential community of mostly single family homes in the Los Gatos foothills, serving a community of middle to upper-middle class students in the heart of Silicon Valley. Leigh is a safe and motivating place for students. Leigh's approximately 1700 students annually score above the state and national averages on the STAR, CAHSEE, SAT, and Advanced Placement(AP) tests. Leigh also serves a large Special Education population through its Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI) and Emotionally Disturbed Therapeutic Model (EDTM) programs. Maintaining an average class size of thirty-two students, Leigh provides a comprehensive curriculum that includes instructional programs designed for college-bound, Special Education, and vocational students.

Advanced Placement instruction is offered in Chemistry, English Literature and Composition, English Language and Composition, US History, American Government, Studio Art, Spanish Language, French Language, Physics, Biology, Calculus AB/BC, Statistics, and Music Theory. Leigh also offers eight honors classes: English 1-4, World History, Biology, Physics, and Chemistry. The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program has been in place since 2002, and has expanded to four AVID classes, one for each grade level. The Central County Occupational Center (CCOC) offers interested students a variety of vocational training in areas such as multi-media, managerial accounting, fire science, electrical maintenance, and auto body repair. Most of the high school students in the county's Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Deaf/HOH) program attend classes at Leigh, some of whom take sheltered classes with other Deaf students, but many of whom are mainstreamed into classes ranging from P.E. to AP Calculus with Leigh's hearing population.

In 2010, 368 out of 377 seniors were eligible for graduation from Leigh High School, 52% of whom met the UC system's A-G requirements. Of the 347 surveyed graduates, 45% planned to attend a four-year university, 49% planned to begin their higher education at a community college, 2% entered the military, and 4% had not made a decision about their future plans at the time of graduation.

Leigh has recently focused its efforts on incorporating Differentiated Instruction (DI). Under the guidance of a consultant, teachers worked with each other to differentiate existing lessons by ability, interest, and/or modality to increase student achievement. This group of teacher leaders has grown in the past year, and now several of them are using standards-based approaches in their classes.

Leigh has an Instructional Action Team (formerly called the Collaboration Team) to identify faculty and student needs as well as create a single focus for professional development across campus. The team meets regularly, usually in the week or two before collaboration days. The Instructional Action Team's current focus is on facilitating the faculty's collaboration projects by reviewing proposals and progress reports.

Leigh is currently undergoing building renovations. The boys' and girls' locker rooms and the gym and its lobby were completed in the 2010-11 school year, and the permanent outfield fences for softball and baseball are underway, as well as the new back stop and bleachers for baseball. A state of the art performing arts building is opening in the spring of 2011.

Significant Developments/Changes

Significant Changes that have affected the school since the last visit include:

1. The special education department is in year three of a mainstream inclusion model for resource students.
2. The math department implemented Algebra I Math Recovery providing assistance at the end of each six-week grading period to students that have not passed the benchmark test. This intervention has closed gaps for individual students and is considered to be the single biggest influence on the increased math CST and CAHSEE scores in the past two years.
3. National Coalition for Building Institute is a workshop run by students following a training. This three-day experience focuses on breaking down stereotypes and building connections amongst the student body. Now that all four classes have participated the experience has provided the students with a shared vocabulary and increased the positive climate on campus.
4. In AVID, growth in student enrollment and staff cohesion.
5. Layers of support to create a positive experience at Leigh and address struggling students as their needs arise: LINK Crew, TOPS, NCBI, School-After-School.
6. Earth Science was introduced as an option for freshman in 2009-2010. This course provides students with the opportunity to become familiar with the routines and skills used in science in order to increase their confidence and success in Biology.
7. Teacher satisfaction and overall effectiveness of collaboration time has increased 24%.
8. Teens Offering Peer Support (TOPS) was introduced to assist students in developing skills in active listening, problem solving and decision making, and empathy, empowering them to help create a more positive, supportive school climate. Students on campus seek out a TOPS student for support.
9. A number of courses have been added: AP Language and Composition is a junior level English; Earth Science, a science class for freshmen; Drama 2, 3 & 4, Technical Theatre 1, 2 & 3 and Musical Theatre 1.
10. Program eliminations include Childhood Development, Computer Applications, Elective Physical Education, class size reduction in English 1 classes of 20:1 and summer school.
11. Reduction in guidance staff.
12. Decrease in staff morale and their view of administrative support.

Leigh's total enrollment has remained fairly consistent at just over 1700 students. All ethnic subgroups have also remained steady except for Hispanic students and students reporting as Multiple Ethnicities or No Response. In the case of Hispanic students, Leigh has seen an increase over the past three years from a total of 177 Hispanic students in 2007-08 to 316 in 2009-10. Between 2008-09 and 2009-10 when the percent of the Hispanic population nearly doubled, the percent of the Multiple Ethnicities or No Response population fell by half.

There has been very little staff turnover in the last two years. In 2009-10 and 2010-11, only four teachers were new to the Leigh teaching staff each year. In 2008-09, thirteen teachers joined the Leigh staff. Some turnover was due to retirements and some to non-re-elects. The guidance office is one area that has seen a decrease in staff over the last three years due to budget cuts. In 2008-09, Leigh had three full-time guidance advisors, in 2009-10 there were two full-time guidance advisors and one half-time guidance advisor who worked on special projects, and this year there are only two guidance advisors.

Implementation and Monitoring of the School-Wide Action Plan

The principal is the primary person responsible for ensuring that the process of implementation of the Action Plan is carried out; however, the leadership team along with the faculty and staff play a key role in ensuring that all decisions address the key issues in the Action Plan. The Leigh Leadership Team consists of the Principal, Assistant Principal and multidisciplinary teachers from all the departments.

The Action Plan was revised after the visit to incorporate the three Critical Areas for Follow-Up:

#1 Develop and use a method to assess ESLR integration and achievement.

#2 Implementing high yield teaching strategies and best practices across all content areas.

#3 Utilize assessment data to support all students' academic achievement and social development.

Action Plan and the ESLR's are reviewed each year by the faculty and staff to gauge progress towards the identified goals. Progress on the Action Plan is communicated to faculty through faculty meetings and Instructional Action Teams. Parents are notified of school plans and changes in policies through the school website, School Loop and newsletter.

The midterm report was primarily prepared by the Principal, Vice Principal and WASC Coordinator with input from all major stakeholders. It was formally presented to the faculty, Education Council, and Parish Administrative Team prior to being submitted to the Chair of the WASC Visiting Team.

Follow-up Process: Progress on Schoolwide Action Plan

The Leigh staff developed a detailed action plan as part of the WASC self-study process in 2007. It had four main components:

Action Plan #1: Improve staff collaboration and professional development to increase student achievement.

Tasks included:

- a) establishing a Collaboration Team,
- b) building data review into standing school meetings as a matter of course,
- c) writing/revising and implementing curriculum guides for all courses,
- d) providing technology training and professional development in the area of differentiated instruction.
- e) developing an articulation plan with feeder middle schools to map curriculum and to develop an eighth to ninth grade transition program remains in place as there is a desire to build the connection but an expectation for regular contact needs to be in place.

This addresses Critical Areas of Follow-Up #2 & 3.

The Collaboration Team was established in Spring of 2008, consisting of a team of multidisciplinary teachers who volunteered to work with the Vice Principal in planning collaboration days. The Collaboration Team was replaced by the Instructional Action Team (iAct) in Fall 2009. The iAct was facilitated by a Dean but completely teacher-driven; teachers designed a *Protocol* for their colleagues to use to guide their collaboration. The *Protocol* allows teachers to choose their own collaborative projects, set their own goals, and work at a pace appropriate to their task.

Leigh regularly reviews and analyzes data as a matter of course. Department Chairs examine CST, AP, benchmark, CAHSEE, and specific ninth grade data in Department Chair meetings. English and Math departments discuss their benchmark data and how to use it to inform instruction. Administration often discusses data in their weekly meetings. The School Site Council looks at all of the data and reports, and they use this when considering the Single School Plan for approval.

Curriculum guides were a districtwide initiative that began in 2007-08. In Fall of 2009, professional development funds were not available to continue the process. The versions that exist as of Spring 2009 are still used by some departments.

Two two-hour professional development days over the past three years have been devoted entirely to technology training.

Action Plan #2: Improve student achievement.

Tasks included:

- a) the implementation and expansion of classes and programs to address remediation, study skills and students' tool kits: CAHSEE Workshop, English Workshop, Algebra 1 20:1, Summer School After School, AVID and Geometry Workshop;
- b) 9th/10th Grade Task Force created Personalized Learning Plans that incorporate skills essential to student success based on the analysis of research-based strategies/elements found in high performing schools. Targeted students are those who are earning Ds, Fs and/or experiencing social challenges. A staff member runs the Biggest Winners group making individual connection with students who have a GPA at or below 1.0. She brings them into the program to build a foundation for feeling good at school and building towards success.
- c) and implementation of a more effective use of tutorial. The use of tutorial has not been addressed school-wide but detention has been renamed "School-After-School" in order to reinforce the use of this time for assignment completion.

This addresses Critical Areas for Follow-Up #2 & 3

Students who do not pass the CAHSEE are automatically enrolled in the Academic Support/CAHSEE Workshop class. English Workshop supports non-SPED students with low reading scores. Summer School-After-School was offered in 2007-08 and 2008-09 but was discontinued in 2009-10 due to budget cuts.

The 9th/10th Grade Task Force was a districtwide initiative that convened in 2007-08 to identify successful academic programs from across the nation. The Task Force identified nine research-based strategies/elements found in high performing schools and outstanding ninth grade programs that are essential to the success of high school students. These elements were included in the 9th/10th Grade Personalized Learning Plans written and revised for the 2008-09, 2009-10, and 2010-11 school years.

Tutoring was not addressed schoolwide.

Action Plan #3: Improve student support services and communication among the school community.

Tasks included:

- a) holding SST meetings as interventions for failing students;
- b) increasing contact between students and guidance counselors;
- c) incorporating student goal setting and monitoring into the curriculum;
- d) expanding resources in order to more fully address social-emotional support for students, and
- e) improving communication for students, parents, community and faculty primarily through the implementation of School Loop.

This addresses Critical Areas for Follow-Up #2 & 3

Students with 504 plans or SSTs (Student Study Team) have seen an increase in support through the efforts of the faculty.

A new program called the Biggest Winners was started in 2008-09 to support low-performing students. Any student with below a 1.0 GPA was pulled into the group, which met during school and was led by a Dean.

Despite the loss of Guidance Advisor positions in recent years, students seem slightly more satisfied with guidance services.

Goal-setting was a primary focus for Leigh teachers in 2007-08 and 2008-09 when the staff was concentrating on

research-based instructional strategies (Marzano strategies). The full extent of the incorporation of student goal setting is unknown, though, because teachers were never surveyed on the subject.

The SOS program is still in place despite cutbacks in funding that shut down the Teen and Family Counselor Center, the organization that had been providing therapists to Leigh. This year Leigh has contracted through the district office with Eastfield Ming Quong (EMQ) to provide eight hours of therapists per week.

Communication about academic and personal support services has improved since the last full self-study. Guidance Advisors restructured Parent Nights by combining freshmen with sophomores and juniors with seniors. Ninth/10th Grade Parent Night includes information on study skills, graduation requirements, college entrance requirements, and the PSAT.

Leigh has just published a simplified 4-Year Plan with class choices and graduation requirements all on one page. The Leigh website is undergoing a major overhaul to make information easier to find.

Incoming freshmen go through orientation with Link Crew. During the orientation process, students receive guidance from counselors, and Link Crew Leaders give small groups tours of campus and provide information about how to contact the right person at Leigh, whether for personal or academic help. Communication between Leigh and students' families has increased because of the staff's more consistent use of School Loop.

Action Plan #4: Incorporate ESLRs into the culture of the school.

[This addresses Critical Area for Follow-Up #1]

While ESLRs are posted in all classrooms and many teachers have included them in their course information sheets, Leigh staff had planned to incorporate them into curriculum guides and a matrix for student review but these efforts have not been implemented. There is a monthly student recognition process that focuses the "award" on the ESLR that was embodied.

- "Individuals of Integrity" has been addressed through efforts to reduce tardies and truancy and widening the outreach of campus groups. Link Leaders and the TOPS class are successful examples.
- "Effective Communicators" has not been addressed.
- "Global Participants" has been addressed through campus clean-up and recycling but the efforts are limited in scope.
- One social science teacher implements a rubric for her students featuring the ESLRs at three levels for each area. Student progress is assessed every three weeks.

Summary of Significant Progress

Leigh High School is very proud of the work and accomplishments it has achieved in the last several years. Despite fiscal issues, Leigh has capitalized on its energetic staff, enthusiastic parents and community to accomplish the following:

- ◇ Established a Collaboration Team of multidisciplinary teachers who are committed to planning relevant and effective collaboration and professional development.
- ◇ Continue to develop a systematic approach to the assessment of curriculum and instruction which includes Differential Instruction in all curricular areas throughout the four-year program.
- ◇ Implement a communication program that informs parents and students of academic and co-curricular activities through the use of School Loop.
- ◇ Continue to implement and expand remediation classes and programs, as well as programs that focus on study skills and student's tool kits.

Additional Recommendations

The review committee makes NO additional recommendations.

Leigh High School has taken seriously its commitment to ensuring all students are prepared for life after high school. The Instructional Action Teams have made excellent progress in their assessment of student achievement. Students feel that their teachers care for them and will work tirelessly with them so that they can be successful. The staff is committed to their action plan serves and work together to analyze their progress, allocate resources and implement curriculum and programs that help their students succeed.