

**MID-CYCLE VISIT
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

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

FOR

PIONEER HIGH SCHOOL

**1400 Pioneer Avenue
Woodland, CA 95776**

Woodland Unified School District

Date of Original Visit: March 3-6, 2013

Date of Visit: March 6-8, 2016

Visiting Committee Members

Mrs. Karen R. Anderson, Visiting Committee Chair
Assistant Principal/Biology Teacher (Retired)
Tracy Unified School District

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Willows High School, Instructor
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I. Introduction

Include the following:

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

Pioneer High School is located in Woodland California and is the county seat of Yolo County, located in California's Central Valley. Woodland is located 20 miles northwest of Sacramento and opened for the 2003-2004 school year with freshmen and sophomores. The first four-year commencement was held in June of 2006.

Woodland was originally an agricultural town but is currently becoming an important manufacturing and distribution center. The heritage of the city is reflected in the historical buildings in the downtown area.

The Woodland Joint Unified District was formed in July 1965. Currently there are 21 schools or programs in the district, including two comprehensive high schools, Pioneer High School and Woodland High School.

There is strong community support for the school through both time and funding and students are required to complete forty hours of community service by May of their senior year as a graduation requirement.

There are twelve curricular departments in addition to counseling and library services available to support students. Advanced, Honors and Advanced Placement courses are available to students, and they also can take courses at Woodland Community College as part of their schedule of courses.

A full set of extracurricular and co-curricular activities are available, as well as a full range of competitive athletic sports for all students.

Enrollment is fairly consistent with a total of 1,526 students enrolled. There were 1,555 students enrolled in 2013 and the number is balanced between female and male students. Attendance is at 95.20% annually that includes a number of students who migrate in and out of the school with the local agriculture seasons and they do not show an effect on the total enrollment. The majority (973) of the students are Hispanic, 379 are White, and 118 are Asian. and reflect the highest numbers. A total of 180 students are EL eligible. 820 students are eligible for the Free/Reduced lunch program.

The school initiated an In-House school suspension program this current school year and numbers indicate a decline in out of school suspensions, but the Progress Report indicated an increase in tardy rates, 24.216% during the 2014-2015 school year. The school plans to address the tardy issue as their next goal.

In 2015-2016, 556 students were enrolled in AP classes and only 62% tested. Only 22 scored a 5 on the tests, while 93 scored a 3 and 125 scored less than 3, an indication that the rigor of courses must be increased in order to challenge students for high

ACS WASC Mid-cycle Visiting Committee Report

achievement. SAT scores for 2014-2015 resulted in Critical Reading 474, Math 476, and Writing 453 and the scores have remained approximately the same for the last four years. Only 37% of the students completed a-g courses in 2015 and 39% 2014. The above data supports a need to increase rigor throughout the curriculum to improve student achievement schoolwide..

Certificated staff are either fully credentialed or are in intern programs. 89% of the certificated staff have a bachelor's degree plus 30 units. The certificated staff indicated that 44 are White, 14 indicated Multiple/No Response, 7 indicated Hispanic, and the remainder Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native, or African American.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment given to 11th graders provided data that continues to indicate a need to support of English Learners in literacy skills and all students in math.

Surveys were given to both parents and students.

- **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.**
 - The district created a new district wide strategic plan and the school's LCAP is based on the new plan.
 - The staff continues to develop curriculum that is based on the California State Standards, aligned to Common Core and the state assessment blueprints, and organized into units of study.
 - The Mathematics department is piloting textbooks for the new Math I, II, III curriculum.
 - Math teachers are attending district training sessions facilitated by UC Davis.
 - Elimination of the CST (STAR) exams.
 - Introduction of the SBAC.
 - Moving from API.
 - All new District administration
 - Common Core training.
 - Elimination of the Small Learning Communities.
 - Three different principals in three years.
 - Replacement of the vice principal team.
 - Veteran teachers retirement.
 - Change in some classified positions.
 - Freshman Seminar class reduced to one section.
 - Started the After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens that has tutoring, credit recovery, study hall, clubs, and a Youth Council.
 - One section of PUENTE Project introduced in 2015-16 to increase number of educationally disadvantaged students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities.
 - Additional staff and programs that previously were cut.

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

The changes listed above are within the past two school years and as of yet, have not shown a change that is measurable.

- **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.**

During the 2013-2014 school year, the staff established a WASC site Leadership Team to begin to address the school action plan. In 2014-2015, the District restored department chairs who then joined the original WASC Leadership Team.

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

The WASC Leadership Team met twice per month breaking into groups, each working on various portions of the Action Plan to update it annually. The report does not list any other stakeholders, such as parents or students, that worked on the action plan.

During the 2015-2016 school year, surveys that focused on curriculum and course rigor, were given to students and parents. Results of the surveys were used to identify school goals for the LCAP.

The administration and WASC Visiting Committee chair worked together to establish a visit schedule and to discuss visit requirements. During the visit, the Visiting Committee found that the staff only partially addressed the Critical Areas for Follow Up and indirectly used them for the school's annual goals. After discussion, the site Leadership Team agreed to revise the school's action plan to incorporate the original WASC Critical Areas for Follow Up and align them with the site LCAP and the District goals.

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.**
- ***The District, administration and staff develop an on-going process to improve internal and external communication among all stakeholders to support and increase student achievement.***

In 2013-14 Pioneer High School established a site Leadership Team that met twice a month, composed of the principal, vice-principals, team leaders, WASC coordinators and unofficial department representatives. In 2014-15, official department chairs were restored to the team.

In 2013-14, advertising of parent and student use of the School Loop resulted in

ACS WASC Mid-cycle Visiting Committee Report

increased parent enrollment in the School Loop. 65% of parents are registered with the School Loop. The school's parent group and the student group enthusiastically endorse the usefulness of the School Loop to monitor grades and attendance.

In 2015-16, the principal implemented a weekly all-call announcement to all parents in English and Spanish regarding campus events and issues. The parent group praised the all-call announcement initiative for providing them with timely campus updates. The School Loop and all-call appears to be the main form of communication with parents.

At district level, a universal district strategic plan was developed. The teachers reported that the strategic plan was not shared at the site level. However, the district administrators report that the Strategic Plan has been available on the Internet.

The district administrators report that the district provides support to the school personnel through literacy and numeracy trainings to enhance Common Core implementation. However, only 50% of the faculty have participated in these training opportunities.

Communication between all stakeholders needs to continue to improve.

- ***The administration and staff develop and utilize a schoolwide systematic assessment program to collect, analyze, and interpret the data needed to make decisions about curriculum, teaching practices, staff development and program effectiveness.***

In 2013-14, all core academic departments were trained on Common Core Standards and all staff were trained on Illuminate for data collection and assessment. Teachers reported that they are still in the implementation stages in several departments. Not all elective departments have undergone Common Core Training. The school's leadership team reports that by 2017-2018, all common core training will be complete and assessments will be in place.

- ***The staff and site administration needs to implement established school norms for classroom student expectations in order to increase student engagement in all curricular areas.***

In 2013-14, the student handbooks/planners were revised with BEST practices embedded into the school routines. The student group share that they are aware of revised academic and behavioral expectations.

To help support behavioral expectations, the school is implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) approach.

The school's Leadership Team reports that due to the implementation of BEST, PBIS and Restorative Justice initiatives, the school's expulsion and suspension rates have decreased. However, the school report shows that while the Out of School Suspensions have decreased, the In School Suspensions have increased. Tardy rates have also increased. The Leadership team also shared

that student behavior has become more positive as a result of initiatives such as the Youth Development Institute trainings. This improved behavior was also observed by the Visiting Committee.

- ***The site administration and staff will create a long-range, comprehensive staff development plan focused on strengthening the rigor of the curriculum and the academic performance of all students to support the transition to Common Core Standards and to align with the critical schoolwide areas for follow-up.***

In 2013-14, all core academic departments received training on Common Core curriculum. Although some elective departments have not completed Common Core training, the school's Leadership Team reports that all Common Core training will be completed by 2017-2018.

The Curriculum Focus group created a teacher survey of Common Core needs list for 2014-15. It also created an "Expert Teacher" document generated from teacher feedback to help in the creation of a master schedule. The Expert teacher document has not been utilized in all departments.

The Curriculum Focus Group created a staff needs survey to determine training and materials needs for professional development in support of the successful implementation of Common Core. The integration plans, created on a departmental basis, ranged from highly structured guidelines to more generalized guidelines.

For 2014-15, all Common Core and professional development opportunities were scheduled and implemented at the District level.

While individual departments have started to address student achievement, a schoolwide staff development plan is not in place.

Student group reports that generally, the 'regular classes' are not challenging and the rigor of the courses depend on the instructor's teaching those courses. Also, the student group reports that the AP and Honors courses are challenging (e.g. the Virtual Stock Market project in the AP Economics/Government class).

- ***The staff and administration develop a plan to continue to build trust, respect, cohesiveness and professionalism amongst the staff in order to foster a more positive climate on campus.***

In 2013-14, the leadership team created a Wednesday collaboration calendar to facilitate staff meeting outside of their curricular areas.

The school culture group planned a carnival with community members to occur in the spring in place of the Open House. The event was put on hold and is planned for 2015-16.

As a result of the school climate survey, the ice breaker activities at monthly staff meetings were cancelled for 2014-15.

ACS WASC Mid-cycle Visiting Committee Report

The school is now supporting new teachers by partnering them with volunteer experienced teachers.

In 2015-16, over 10% of the teaching faculty are scheduled at 120% with the majority of the affected staff being in the Mathematics department. Not all teachers

were pleased to teach at 120%. The 2015-16 administration is making steps to avoid these practices for 2016-17.

Most efforts to address school culture have been lost during the transition from one principal to another.

- ***The staff and administration will continue to provide guidance services and programs that include a five-year plan that is reviewed annually, to better inform students of course selection and post-graduation planning beginning in the 9th grade, thereby not only increasing student completion of A-G requirements but also providing opportunities for career pathways, goals and objectives.***

In 2013-14, the school administration and site leaders created a 5 year school Advisory program to implement in Fall 2014. In 2014-15, the Woodland Joint Unified District discussed implementation of a district strategic plan that involves implementation of 5 year plans across the district for all high school students. To ensure that the site plan would be congruent with the district plan, the site based plan was put on indefinite hold.

Based on feedback from counselors, AP applications, were viewed as a possible hurdle, and have been eliminated to encourage student enrollment. Both the parent group and the student group state that this change is not an issue because students receive information about AP class enrollment through the counselors and the teachers. However, although the enrollment in AP classes has increased, the percentage of those tested has declined.

It is an expectation of WASC that all students have a four-year plan that begins in the eighth grade and is reviewed annually. During the 2013 WASC visit, it was determined that four-year plans were not in place and low student performance indicated a need to include the 5th year to support student plans after high school.

- ***Administration and staff participate in writing an annual progress report that addresses each of the WASC Critical Areas for Follow-Up, addresses each section of the action plan, includes steps to become familiar with all expectations of WASC and is shared with all stakeholders.***

The above Critical Area for Follow Up was not written as an action plan item. It was left out of all of the Self Study Mid-Term Progress Report reviewed by the Visiting Committee.

The Critical areas for follow-up in the schoolwide action plan are not complete. Sections of each critical area were generally addressed but did not include concrete steps to meet WASC expectations. The school's staff did not include Goal #7 in the report.

- **Note the evidence supporting the progress made and the impact made on student achievement.**
 - The school reported that specific direction and implementation of the strategic plan has not yet been shared at the site level. The site administration has been informed that the Strategic Plan is accessible via the Internet. At this point, the plan would appear to have minimal impact on student achievement.
 - There does not appear to be a development nor utilization school wide systemic assessment programs in place. For example, not all elective departments have undergone the Common Core training and have yet to adjust their data analysis practices accordingly. The school's Leadership Team reports that by 2017-18, all Common Core training will be complete and assessments will be in place. As a result, the impact of Goal #2 on student achievement will probably be incremental.
 - The flaws in the site consequence program have not yet been resolved and student expectations have not yet become an integral part of the school culture. However, the school's Leadership Team reports that there has been an increase of positive student behavior based on new initiatives such as the Youth Development Institute Trainings, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and Restorative Justice. Therefore, the increase in positive behavior will most likely influence an increase in student engagement.
 - There appears to be a lack of follow through with key plans (i.e. Common Core Trainings, implementation of the 'Expert Teacher' document, variations, by department, in Common Core integration plans). As a result of inconsistencies by departments, the rigor of curriculum and instruction and academic performance of students would probably be negatively affected.
 - There appears to be mixed outcomes. While key social activities, such as the spring fling, have been postponed, the school has introduced new activities. However, the school has yet to address the fact that over 10% of teaching faculty are scheduled at 120%. The goal for a more positive climate on campus is compromised. The school does not explain what steps will be implemented to address this issue.
 - The site based 5 year Advisory Plan is on hold to ensure congruence with a planned district plan. However, several students report that they have received 4 year mapping for classes from counselors. The students also report that they are aware of a-g requirement. But, the a-g completion rates have declined, and the SAT reading, math and writing averages have remained stagnant. It appears that student preparation for career and college will be adversely affected. In addition, the school does not describe the quality of the available student support services in comparison to the delayed 5 year plan.

- **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 faculty modified the school's 2015-2016 Action Plan shown in the Mid-Cycle Report listing partial areas of the critical needs for follow up as support goals to the district's and school's goals listed in the LCAP. Within the new design action plan, the full intent left by the 2013 Visiting Committee, were lost. The school leadership agreed to place the full critical area for follow-up left to the school by the 2013 Visiting Committee in the amended Action Plan to be submitted two weeks after this visit. (Mid-Cycle Report, Leadership Focus Group)

The WASC Leadership Team did not address Critical Area for Follow-Up #7: "Administration and staff participate in writing an annual progress report that addresses each of the WASC critical areas for follow up, addresses each section of the action plan, includes steps to become familiar with all expectations of WASC, and is shared with all stakeholders."

To fully understand the expectations and requirements of WASC, this Critical Area needs to be implemented by the school and its administration.

Note: The school's schoolwide action plan should have incorporated all the critical areas of follow-up or major recommendations that were stated in the last self-study visiting committee report.

To better align the WASC goals to the goals listed in the LCAP, the District's Strategic Plan and the Single Plan for Student Achievement, the action plan critical needs were reduced losing their original intent. After discussing this issue with the WASC school's leadership committee, they agreed to restore all critical areas for follow-up to their original wording to the school's action plan.

III. Commendations and Recommendations

A. 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.**
 1. The new Administrative staff is dedicated to student centered education.
 2. The teachers support students
 3. Principal's Sunday Night All-Call
 4. The use of School Loop to inform parents of grades and attendance
 5. The students, staff, and parents value and respect the principal
 6. Positive campus culture is evolving

B. Recommendations:

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

As stated above, the Critical Areas have not been fully implemented to date. There is a commitment by the staff to support high achievement for all students. The Visiting Committee is under the impression that with the leadership of the site administration and support from the district, the instructional staff will fully implement the Critical Areas for Follow Up during the next three years. Once implemented, all students will be supported and given the opportunity to reach high academic achievement, therefore there will be no additional Critical Areas for Follow Up.