

Western Association of Schools and Colleges

**POTTER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL
THREE-YEAR TERM
PROGRESS REPORT**

**10401 Main Street
Potter Valley, CA. 95469**

Potter Valley Community Unified School District

February 24 – 26, 2013

**Accrediting Commission for Schools
Western Association of Schools and Colleges**

Visiting Committee Members

**James Mazzaferro, Chairperson
Teacher, Sheldon High School**

**Donald Leydig
Principal (retired), San Mateo, CA.**

I. Introduction

Potter Valley High School, part of the Potter Valley Community Unified School District, is located in rural Mendocino County. It is approximately 17 miles northeast of the city of Ukiah, the county seat and home of Mendocino Community College. The Potter Valley Schools, which include a community day school, a continuation high school, an elementary school, and a junior high, serve an area of approximately 300 square miles and a population of 3,000 people. PVCUSD is a declining enrollment district. From 110 students in 2000, the high school population fell to 90 in 2010. Currently there are 96 students registered at the high school. Major subgroup ethnic distributions have remained fairly constant over the three years since the last self-study. The same is true for the population of English Language Learners and the proportion of Special Education students receiving services. A significant number of students (approximately 52% of the student population) is identified as SES. As the school evaluates student performance and the need for interventions, it must be aware of the impact of economic factors that affects students.

Student Sub-group Distribution

Year	Population	White	Hispanic	ELL	SPED	SES
2009-2010	90	67	18	2	14	40
2010-2011	92	68	18	3	22	43
2011-2012	86	61	17	1	8	55
2012-2013	96	65	23	5	15	49

Even though the growth in the student population has been positive, there is a concern that economic challenges make it difficult for young families to afford living in Potter Valley. The district has lost students to neighboring areas due to parent employment in those districts or because of class or program offerings. Concerted efforts have been made to retain and attract students to the high school, and at the same time provide additional educational opportunities for all students. These options include on-line learning, independent study, designing and implementing Advanced Placement and Honors level courses, a summer Algebra Academy program, concurrent enrollment at Mendocino Community College, Career and Technical training, and supporting the inclusion of Visual and Performing Arts programs.

The school receives funding from a variety of federal, state, and local sources. These include: Agricultural Vocational Education Program, Regional Occupation Program, Special Education, Title I, Title II, and Tier III revenues. The funding supports expenditures for salaries, books, supplies, classroom materials, equipment, professional development, and student transportation. Changes in expenditure guidelines have provided greater flexibility in the use of some categorical funds, and Potter Valley has taken advantage of this change to better serve students.

As a comprehensive high school, and to meet the needs of a diverse student population, Potter Valley has an academic program tailored for the ability level of each student. The core program includes classes in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, History/Social Science, Life and Physical Science, Visual and Performing Arts, Health, Physical Education, and Vocational Education. Additional learning opportunities are provided through field trips, college campus visits, and guest speakers. Advanced coursework can be pursued through the Plato Academy or concurrent enrollment at Mendocino Community College. Identified special education students are integrated into the general education program with instructional support as appropriate. Bilingual/ELL students are supported by a part-time Bilingual resource teacher. Vocational course offerings include woodworking, welding, landscaping, business, and computers. Students are also encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities as well.

Activities take the form of clubs (FFA, Multi-Cultural Club) and inter-scholastic sports (football, basketball, soccer, volleyball, baseball, and softball). All students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities regardless of skill level or ability.

Students who are preparing for post-secondary education are encouraged to take the PSAT offered in October of their 10th grade year. Results of this test are used to target specific areas of growth for each student. In addition, the students establish their college quick-start account through College Board. The account provides more detailed information regarding interests, careers associated with those interests, degrees needed, and the colleges and universities that offer those particular degrees. Each student, along with the school counselor, utilizes this information to formulate and amend an individualized 4 year educational plan. The plan is used to guide students in selecting courses as they relate to post-secondary goals. The SAT Prep section is vital in getting students ready for the SAT with both the SAT and ACT taken by Potter Valley students.

The current staff is comprised of 14 certificated teachers, 3 of whom teach part-time, having other duties and responsibilities within the district. These teachers provide all levels of instruction for all students in grades 7-12. In addition to the teaching staff, there is a full-time Principal/Counselor and a part-time Assistant Principal (one of the part-time teaching staff). The support staff is comprised of 6 classified personnel who provide clerical, custodial, and instructional support.

In order to achieve the school's goals, time has been set aside each week so the staff has the opportunity to review student data, discuss concerns related to individual and group student achievement, and evaluate practices as they relate to potential areas of professional development. An early dismissal Friday schedule was adopted and implemented in 2010-2011. Students attend a traditional 7 period day Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, students attend all 7 classes, but dismissal time is 12:35. Collaboration time begins at 12:45 and teachers may meet to

dialogue and receive training regarding those concerns stated above. This time is used to begin and implement a Cycle of Inquiry approach to evaluate teaching practices as they relate to student achievement and reshape the school’s student assistance model into one that more systematically targets areas of student need.

API/APY

Potter Valley High School’s API index has remained fairly constant over the last three years. Growth has been negative in three of the last four years, even though growth targets were met in 2010 and 2011.

Conversely, the AYP index for the same period of time reflects the fact that AYP growth goals were met in all years except for 2012. This positive trend was due to a perfect participation score, a graduation rate of 100%, and meeting target goals in both English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

While the small student population and the impact that small shifts of students have on the data complicate identifying trends, it can be determined that academic support efforts need to continue their emphasis on the mastery of essential standards in Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra 2 , and implement more strategic interventions in the area of English/Language Arts.

Potter Valley High School Multi-year Student Achievement Data

Academic Performance Index (API)

Year	API Base	API Growth	Growth	Growth Met
2008-2009	718	698	-20	No
2009-2010	697	693	-4	Yes
2010-2011	690	755	65	Yes
2011-2012	748	725	-23	No

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Year	% Part ELA	% Part Math	% Prof ELA	% Prof Math	API Growth	Grad Rate	Made AYP
2008-2009	100	100	52.4	61.9	698	100%	Yes
2009-2010	100	100	56.2	43.8	693	NA	Yes
2010-2011	100	100	56.5	43.5	690	100%	Yes
2011-2012	100	100	50	62.5	748	100%	No

California State High School Exit Exam (CASHEE)

The following tables indicate performance levels by 10th grade census groups beginning in 2009 (year of initial self-study) through June of 2012. While there was a smaller than

normal number of students who took the CASHEE in 2009-2010, the number of students successfully completing one or both portions of the exam remained comparable to prior and subsequent years. Students entering their senior year have met both the ELA and Mathematics graduation requirement. Analysis of cluster scores from both the CSTs and CASHEE are used to target specific areas of instruction with the end result being improved student performance on the CST end of term tests and the CASHEE.

California High School Exit Exam – 10th Grade Census

English/Language Arts

Year	#Tested	#Passing	%Passing	#Not Passing	%Not Passing
2008-2009	22	17	77	5	23
2009-2010	17	12	71	5	29
2010-2011	24	23	96	1	4
2011-2012	24	19	79	5	21

California High School Exit Exam – 10th Grade Census

Mathematics

Year	#Tested	#Passing	%Passing	#Not Passing	% Not Passing
2008-2009	22	18	82	4	18
2009-2010	17	14	82	3	18
2010-2011	24	20	83	4	17
2011-2012	24	23	96	1	4

CST-English/Language Arts

While the proportion of students scoring at the Proficient level or higher has remained stable at the 37% mark (three year average), and the number of students scoring at the advanced level has increased, there is a continued need to reduce the number of students performing at the Basic and Below Basic levels (approximately half of all students tested). A primary focus of the school’s intervention plans has as its main goal the reduction of

students performing at Basic levels or lower.

Multi-Year Comparisons – CST/ELA

Year	Adv.	Prof.	Basic	BB	FBB	Total
2009-10	6/9%	16/24%	22/32%	17/25%	7/10%	68
2010-11	13/19%	14/21%	17/25%	20/29%	4/6%	68
2011-12	11/16%	15/22%	22/32%	9/13%	12/17%	69

CST-Mathematics

Math results over the previous three years indicate that approximately 40% of Potter Valley students attained Proficient or higher (high of 46%; low of 38%) However, almost 30% of students placed either in the Below Basic or Far Below Basic ranges. As with English/Language Arts, strategic interventions, targeted instruction based on cluster score analysis, and a review of teaching practices as they relate to student access to and mastery of content must be implemented in a more consistent and concentrated manner.

Multi-Year Comparisons – CST Mathematics

Year	Adv.	Prof.	Basic	BB	FBB	Total
2009-10	2/5%	17/40%	12/29%	6/14%	6/14%	43
2010-11	7/17%	12/29%	10/24%	9/22%	3/7%	41
2011-12	8/16%	11/22%	17/34%	5/10%	9/18%	50

Significant Changes

Organizations change in order to meet the needs of their constituents. This is both positive and beneficial. When this change is unforeseen or the result of shifting economic factors, a substantial stress is placed on the organization. Such has been the case in Potter Valley Community Unified School District. The staff has seen a major transition, not only in the faculty, but in the administration as well. Of the original faculty who took part in the 2009 self- study, only three remain, making it difficult to build a sense of identity and to establish any kind of continuity of practice. This was further exacerbated by the fact that the current superintendent is entering her second year with the district, and is the second superintendent in three years. The principal of the high school assumed his responsibilities in mid-October and is the third high school principal since the 2009 report. Building any type of organizational systems and putting in place methods to evaluate student achievement has been made much more challenging.

The school has reorganized its schedule into a more traditional five-day, seven classes per day instructional week from a four day per week format. This includes three afternoons a week of Academic Assistance where students can access teachers for additional tutorial support, and an early dismissal on Friday for the purposes of providing teachers with time for collaboration and for professional development.

While the school's student demographics have remained stable over the last three years, there is a shift in the ELL population in the elementary school. This cluster of students is presently receiving appropriate levels of support. What the impact of these interventions will be and what impact these students will have on the high school has yet to be determined. Their progress is being monitored with the goal of preparing them for a successful transition to high school.

Finally, as with all school districts, the school is currently making determinations as to how to best train the staff as they look to implement elements of the Common Core. Initial orientation has begun with more specific training to be scheduled as the Professional Calendar is more fully developed.

II. Action Plan and Critical Areas for Follow-Up Accomplishments

In the Spring of 2009, the school's Action Plan was revised based on the recommendation of the Visiting Team and submitted for approval. Approval was granted along with the six-year term and the Action Plan was implemented with the Fall of 2009. As part of its report to the WASC Commission, the 2009 Visiting Team made the following recommendations regarding school-wide critical areas. These included:

- 1. There is a need to improve the alignment of instruction and course content to essential state standards to improve student learning and achievement (Action Plan #1).**
- 2. There is a need to improve decision making through data analysis by implementing appropriate assessments, both formative and summative, that are aligned to essential state standards (Action Plan #2).**

Beginning in the Fall of 2009 and continuing through the 2010-2011 school year, the staff addressed the alignment of instruction to content standards. Essential standards were identified in each of the core content areas including Art and Foreign Language. Using collaboration time on Fridays and Monday faculty meetings, pacing guides were developed for all English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies classes. In addition to

end of term CST tests in these same content areas, benchmark exams were written based on content mapping and essential standards in order to determine students' progress to mastering essential standards. In October, December, and January of the current school year, pacing guides and benchmark exams were reviewed and appropriate adjustments made. This review was the first step in establishing a "Cycle of Inquiry" approach to evaluating and assessing student performance on identified multiple measures (CST and CAHSEE results, and student performance on content exams particular to an individual teacher, and benchmark exams, specific to general content areas), and identifying areas of growth. Information gleaned from these measurements will also be used to evaluate practice, focus instruction, determine intervention strategies, and adjust instructional practice. Subject to changes that will be brought about by implementing Common Core Standards, ~~this recommendation has been completed. These two recommendations have been completed.~~

3. There is a need to improve collaboration and professional development that is focused on improving student learning and achievement and is measurable both on internal and external assessments (Action Plan #3).

Instructional minutes have been preserved as per state guidelines, and time has been provided for ongoing staff collaboration and professional development. Monday through Thursday, students have seven periods of approximately 55 minutes each. On Friday, students still attend all seven periods, but the single period duration is 34 minutes. Dismissal is 12:35 PM. Teacher activities begin at 12:45 and are related to professional development or review of student data.

4. There is a need to not only improve student achievement as measured on standardized tests, but to also look for ways to continue to improve student achievement in areas that will fully equip them with skills needed to successfully participate in a democratic society (Action Plan #4).

Meetings have been held with teachers of Senior English to establish parameters for the Senior Project. Guidelines and expectations for what each senior will be required to produce have been established for the Class of 2013. More extensive plans will be made during the Spring to create a more uniform and complete criteria for the Senior Project that will go into effect with the Class of 2014.

5. There is a need to revise the current action plan, not by content or intent, but in the area of focused specificity in all areas to ensure the successful implementation of the action plan.

The following areas of concern have been identified by staff in their collaboration times

and/or are part of the action plan that was developed in 2009 and need to be adjusted and implemented. Beginning in early November of 2012, the staff met to review the Visiting Team Report, most particularly the recommendations. At the same time, the 2009 Action Plans was distributed for the purpose of determining what had been accomplished, what was being addressed, currently, and what still needed to be done. Portions of faculty meetings and collaboration time during November and December were allocated for this process. The following areas of concern emerged from these meetings, and have been identified by staff as components of an adjusted Action Plan.

Work is scheduled to begin on this process in March with a new Action Plan developed and set for implementation for the 2013-2014 school year. Some of the components of the school's Action Plan going forward include:

- Creating a schedule for professional development activities that relate to increasing student achievement and implementing best instructional practices (Action Plan #3)
- Developing a professional development activities calendar according to priority and sequence appropriately (Action Plan #3)
- Finalize components of the Senior Project to be implemented 2013-2014 (Action Plan #4)
- Creating systems and criteria for the referral and placement of students in academic interventions
- Adjusting the present structure of the Academic Assistance process so that it can offer targeted, focused instruction to students in areas of greatest need, most notably in the areas of Language Arts and Mathematics.
- Assess and evaluate school climate and culture as it relates to
 1. Student Discipline (amend present model to meet current needs).
 2. Clearly stated academic expectations that convey and emphasize academic rigor and high student performance.
 3. ~~Through~~ The use of career exploration, interest inventories, and the development of Individual Learning Plans to prepare students to pursue multiple options for career training and education after high school.
 4. The development of an updated Student/Parent Handbook that includes policies and procedures and academic and behavioral expectations.

- The development of Parent Compact as it relates to the expectations placed on all shareholders (student, parent, teachers, and community) for attaining behavioral and academic goals.

III. Recommendations

The Visiting Committee (VC) provides the following as critical areas for follow-up based upon Potter Valley High School's (PVHS's) self identified next steps and the VC's findings. It is the VC's expectation that the teachers, administrators, students, and all stakeholders of PVHS will be actively involved in the development and continuous modification of an action plan to implement these recommendations. All areas for follow-up are designed to address identified academic needs and to improve student achievement of PVHS's ESLRs and state standards.

1. Continue the school's implementation of PLCs and their utilization of data (statistical and observational) to identify, develop, implement and evaluate strategies that will improve instruction and increase levels of student achievement for all students.
2. Create a school culture of high expectations for college and career readiness that conveys and emphasizes academic rigor and high levels of student performance.
3. Involve the entire staff in developing, scheduling, and delivering a Professional Development Plan that is aligned with the school's Action Plan goals and which focuses on implementing best instructional practices and increasing student achievement.
4. Review student behavior policies and implement a progressive discipline policy that identifies staff responsibilities at all levels while also relying on the strong relationships made possible by PVHS's small size.
5. Involve all stakeholders in the development of an Action Plan that identifies the specific steps necessary for ongoing school improvement and that creates systems and procedures to ensure continuity of programs and the change process through the possible continuation of what has been an historical pattern of change.

IV. Commendations:

1. The entire PVHS community demonstrates a high level of commitment and support for the high school.
2. PVHS is a “small school” with enormous potential for leveraging its smallness for the benefit of its students.
3. Numerous stakeholders have protected the vision of PVHS through a period of enormous staffing changes at both the school and district levels.
4. Current school and district leadership articulate a clear vision for PVHS improvement.
5. Teachers demonstrate a willingness and ability to assume the significant workload required to provide necessary programs in a “small school” like Potter Valley High School.