

SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

**ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS,
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FOR**

SARATOGA HIGH SCHOOL

**20300 Herriman Avenue
Saratoga, California 95070**

Los Gatos Saratoga Union High School District

April 28-30, 2014

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Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

Saratoga High School (SHS) is a comprehensive high school in Saratoga, California, with an enrollment of approximately 1400. It is located in an upper middle class professional community in Silicon Valley and shares the Los Gatos Saratoga Unified High School District with one other high school: Los Gatos High School. Over 97% of the SHS graduates enroll in college. Twenty-nine percent of the current senior class are either semifinalists or commended students in the National Merit Scholarship Program. SHS has been recognized as a Distinguished California High School in 2013 and past years and was recognized as one of the top 100 high schools by US News in 2013. The student body in 2011-2012 was primarily Asian (54%), White (33%), with smaller numbers of Hispanic (5%), African American (4/1407), and students of other ethnic designation (7%).

Student Achievement Data

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
CAHSEE (10th grade)	ELA: 99% passed Math: 99% passed	ELA: 98% passed Math: 99% passed	
API	School-wide: 933 Asian: 970 Hispanic: 837 White: 893 With Disabilities: 674 English Learners: N/S	School-wide: 932 Asian: 974 Hispanic: 838 White: 885 With Disabilities: 693 English Learners: 850	School-wide: 938 Asian: 967 Hispanic: 838 White: 900 With Disabilities: 726 English Learners: 782
AP	Number of Exams: 1057 Qualifying Scores: 90%	Number of Exams: 1132 Qualifying Scores: 92%	
SAT (mean scores)	Reading: 630 Math: 664 Writing: 642	Reading: 633 Math: 673 Writing: 653	
Graduation Rate	97%	98%	

SHS Interpretation:

1. Asian students are achieving at significantly higher levels. This raises concerns that there may be a cultural division in student attitudes toward learning, and that Asian students may be exhibiting a hypercompetitive attitude toward learning, which may impact their own health and that of others.
2. English Learner API has decreased. This may be related to the increased number of newcomer students who are English Learners. This drop also matches a similar drop in the number of redesignated fluent English proficient students. Some students who would benefit from taking ELD classes are opting not to because support classes are stigmatized in the home culture.

VC Comment:

A great majority of SHS students are achieving at high levels, which is evidence of a strong educational programs that keep students improving from year to year. The school's analysis provided in the self-study demonstrates that the faculty is aware of the needs of particular identifiable groups of students and is concerned about addressing these needs.

Other Data

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Attendance Rate	97.95%	97.89%	98.08%
ELL Enrollment	11	12	14
Dropouts	2	2	
Class Size (average)	Applied Arts: 29.1 English: 28.8 Math: 29.2 PE: 36.9 Science: 29.7 Social Studies: 30.7 Special Education: 5.8 Visual Arts: 31.5 Performing Arts: 37.6 World Languages: 29.3	Applied Arts: 27.7 English: 27.7 Math: 29.3 PE: 36.8 Science: 29.1 Social Studies: 29.1 Special Education: 5.2 Visual Arts: 32.1 Performing Arts: 35.0 World Languages: 27.6	
Teacher Credentials		Meets NCLB: 97% In field of credential: 98% Full, clear credential: 97% Interns: several	
Student Clubs and Organizations		Number of clubs: 56 Participants: 1,174 (84%)	
Sports Teams			Participants: 1,048 GPA: 3.63

SHS Interpretation:

- SHS enjoys a minimum of attendance and discipline issues. The areas of highest need are tardies, cuts, and academic integrity violations. The interventions that have been put in place within the past two years have been effective in reducing the number of incidents of all three of these areas.
- Average class size has remained remarkably consistent during the difficult economic times of the past several years. It is a District priority to keep class sizes low.
- SHS students enjoy a varied and active social and co-curricular experience. The high average GPA for sports teams indicates that students maintain their academic excellence while pursuing their co-curricular interests.

VC Comment:

The consistently high attendance rate and low dropout numbers are evidence of a student body that is highly engaged with the school community. The high levels indicated in the achievement data are evidence that many students are engaged in the academic programs as well as the co-curricular and social activities at the school.

The school has identified critical learner needs that are appropriate for the student body indicated by the data. (1) Students need ongoing support in attaining high academic achievement through a variety of best

instructional and assessment strategies. (2) Students need to value learning over “doing school”. (3) Students need to be able to make healthy choices (balance). The focus on these three needs indicates that the school realizes that not all students are yet achieving at the same high levels as some, and that research into best instructional and assessment strategies needs to be ongoing. It is also clear that the school is aware of the need for academically competitive students to maintain a balance between preparing for tests and developing a well-rounded, healthy individuals.

Chapter II: Progress Report

SHS conducted its previous self-study in 2007-2008, and there was no requirement of a midterm report. Since that time, a number of major changes have occurred. The school welcomed a new principal in 2012-2013, as well as the promotion of a veteran teacher to assistant principal. One of the other two assistant principals has been at the school less than four years. Nearly 50% of the teaching staff joined the school since 2007. The school developed its Media Arts Program into a full 9-12 integrated interdisciplinary program and has implemented a redesigned physical fitness program, Falcon Fit. In recognition of the success of both programs, the school received Distinguished California High School status in 2013. Also, in 2013, the community passed a parcel tax for the schools that will provide consistent revenue for school programs and reduced class size. The school has implemented several new AP courses and math courses, and it has implemented a Community Based Instruction program for students with mild to moderate disabilities. SHS students have developed several peer support programs, and the school has begun work with the organization Counseling and Support Services for Youth (CASSY) to provide additional services. The Guidance Department also has increased the number of parent/student presentations throughout the year on a range of topics. The school and the district have been successful in assuring that each of these changes has had a positive impact on the school program and student learning by keeping channels of communication open and developing stronger structures for collaboration and assessment.

The chief structure for follow-up of the 2008 self-study and action plan has been the School Site Council (SSC), who annually develop the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA). Over these past six years, the SSC has developed a process of reviewing the analysis of student achievement data that is prepared by the departments. With representations from parents, teachers, students, and administration, the SSC adjusts the goals and the action plan in response to the data. The SPSA is then presented to the Board of Trustees who review the plan with a view toward alignment with the District Strategic Plan goals.

The 2008 Visiting Committee concurred with the three school-wide critical areas for follow-up that SHS had prioritized, plus an additional four areas for the school to strengthen:

1. Support best instructional practices for facilitating maximum academic development among all students, through a variety of instructional and assessment strategies.
2. Create an improved culture of support for and among students.
3. Provide support programs that maximize the physical and mental development and safety of all students.
4. Increase the explicit use of California State Standards and Frameworks in classroom lessons.
5. Increase the use of multiple sources of disaggregated data, such as CST and classroom formative and summative assessments to guide instruction to meet the needs of all students.
6. Ensure that all staff members implement a variety of instructional strategies to address the diverse learning needs of all students.
7. For health and safety reasons, establish a process which ensures consistent enforcement of policies on public access to facilities during school hours.

The school also continued to work on additional areas of growth, as had been identified by focus groups during the self-study process.

Accomplishment of School-wide Critical Areas for Follow-up

1. Support best instructional practices for facilitating maximum academic development among all students, through a variety of instructional and assessment strategies.

Through the work of the staff development team, teachers were provided training during their collaboration time in inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, support for struggling students, flip teaching, and using student portfolios. Departments have developed common summative tests and assessment methods so that students are beginning to see how skills are evaluated in the different disciplines. Through teachers' work in developing a common vocabulary about differentiation of instruction and increasing the methods used to differentiate, students are allowed to access content and skills and show mastery in a variety of

ways.

2. Create an improved culture of support for and among students.

Over the past six years, SHS students have worked together to develop ways to strengthen their bonds to the school. Programs such as “Just Be Kind”, Teen Truth Live speakers, Link Crew, Freshmen Focus, and Common Roots have had the effect of helping students feel less stressed and more connected, as shown through surveys. The Media Arts Program has participated in this effort through broadcasts about student events every Friday. The school is also addressing the pressures of social media and bullying through special activities and assemblies. The Link Crew and Freshmen Focus are designed to help incoming ninth graders make a successful transition to high school, both in terms of social connections and study skills and time management. All of these activities are popular and are having a positive effect as shown by survey results.

3. Provide support programs that maximize the physical and mental development and safety of all students.

The school has implemented a self-assessment protocol for all students in physical education classes, whereby students keep their own fitness log and then use the data to report fitness gains over the semester. They also complete a project using principles of fitness that they have learned. The school is also providing free Zumba classes, inter-class soccer matches, and a girls’ club that meets weekly to discuss women’s issues, including nutrition and substance abuse.

4. Increase the explicit use of California State Standards and Frameworks in classroom lessons.

Student achievement, as measured by the STAR testing and API, is uniformly high. The departments use standards-aligned textbooks and instructional materials. There is continued improvement in the frequency with which teachers refer explicitly to state standards in their daily agenda and learning objectives, with the effect that students are more clear about the standards they are achieving.

5. Increase the use of multiple sources of disaggregated data, such as CST and classroom formative and summative assessments to guide instruction to meet the needs of all students.

Departments annually review CST data, including analysis of cluster scores. Disaggregated state testing data is available to teachers, as is the grade level and student level school writing assessment data. This data is used to help students set learning goals and assess their own progress.

6. Ensure that all staff members implement a variety of instructional strategies to address the diverse learning needs of all students.

Through the Wednesday staff collaboration, staff explores together a variety of instructional strategies that address the needs of all students. Teachers are accountable for participating in and/or developing projects that are aligned with the school goals. Staff have enthusiastically endorsed the continuation of this model of collaboration. The expansion of teaching strategies has had the effect of connecting students positively to the school.

7. For health and safety reasons, establish a process which ensures consistent enforcement of policies on public access to facilities during school hours.

SHS continues to employ two campus supervisors who monitor the campus to ensure appropriate use of the facilities during the school day. Signage has been improved to assist visitors in reporting to the main office first. Parents are being requested to wait in the main office when a student needs to leave during the school day. All of these activities are having the effect that the disruptions to the learning environment have been reduced.

Chapter III: Self-Study Process

SHS's current School-wide Learner Outcomes (SLO's):

Saratoga High School will prepare its graduates to be:

- 1. Responsible, Self-Directed Adults who:**
 - 1.1. Make realistic choices/informed decisions based on factual knowledge and awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, and accept responsibility for those choices
 - 1.2. Are committed to life-long learning
 - 1.3. Exhibit study and work habits, including regular, punctual attendance and effective time management
 - 1.4. Explore a wide range of possible careers and are able to investigate the relationships between their education and their personal goals
 - 1.5. Participate in a wide-range of intellectual, artistic, practical, and physical activities/endeavors
- 2. Ethical/Effective Citizens who:**
 - 2.1. Respect cultural, physical, economic, intellectual, age, gender, religious and sexual diversity
 - 2.2. Adopt and value ethical principles and attitudes (i.e. honesty, integrity, responsibility, compassion) and apply them in their daily lives
 - 2.3. Recognize and value their responsibility to society and make positive contributions to their community (i.e. register to vote, care for the environment, drive responsibly, volunteer)
- 3. Healthy Individuals who:**
 - 3.1. Maintain a positive self-concept, recognizing the uniqueness and worth of themselves and others
 - 3.2. Resolve conflict through non-violent action
 - 3.3. Recognize the consequences of sexual behavior and make responsible choices
 - 3.4. Recognize the consequences of the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco and make responsible choices
 - 3.5. Recognize the need for and seek appropriate help as needed for mental health issues
 - 3.6. Plan and maintain a balanced approach to life and a commitment to proper nutrition, hygiene, and physical fitness
- 4. Complex/Critical Thinkers who:**
 - 4.1. Have mastered fundamentals of language, history, math, science, world language, and the arts, and use them effectively to enrich their daily life
 - 4.2. Demonstrate the ability to collect, analyze, and organize resources and information
 - 4.3. Effectively evaluate and analyze data from multiple sources to develop solutions to problems
 - 4.4. Use logical decision-making processes
 - 4.5. Demonstrate the ability to apply decisions or solutions to future situations by making predictions, connections, and/or recommendations
- 5. Effective Communicators who:**
 - 5.1. Read, write, speak, and listen analytically, thoughtfully, and reflectively
 - 5.2. Use technology thoughtfully, critically, and appropriately as a tool in communication (i.e. correspondence, display of information, expression of ideas, creative self-expression)
 - 5.3. Explore, develop, and demonstrate creative expression in a variety of forms
- 6. Collaborative Workers who:**
 - 6.1. Perform in a variety of roles as a member of a team: setting goals, facilitating group process and producing a high-quality product
 - 6.2. Demonstrate sensitivity to different cultural mores and work effectively with diverse populations in a variety of settings
 - 6.3. Provide and accept constructive criticism

Expected Outcomes of Self-Study

1. Involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders

Through the calendar and agenda for self-study activities, it is evident that many types of stakeholders began working together to gather data, analyze it, and recommend modifications that would more strongly support student achievement.

2. Clarification and measurement through SLO's and academic standards

SHS chose to focus on two SLO's during this self-study: 3. Healthy Individuals, and 6. Collaborative Workers. The school has facilitated student groups and collaborated with community groups in order to clarify the specific aspects of health that they intend to improve. The combined efforts of all constituents in the educational community at SHS have resulted in a multi-tiered program to safeguard and maximize the overall health of SHS students. In regard to the other selected SLO, the school has facilitated the development of Learning Communities of teachers who have explored various ways to develop group-work culture, such as project-based learning and effective team building. Subsequently, student group work has increased in amount and quality as evidenced in peer observation data.

3. Gathering and analyzing student achievement data

The self-study calendar and agenda provide evidence that all stakeholder groups were involved in the collection and analysis of data about SHS students and their achievement. This thorough analysis is provided in the self-study report.

4. Assessment of the entire school programs and impact on student learning

The self-study report provides evidence that the SHS stakeholders made a thorough assessment of the entire school programs, including governance, instruction, assessment, co-curricular activities, sports, social activities, academic interventions, and social-emotional interventions. Each section of the report describes the impact on student learning of the activities described.

5. Long-range action plan and accountability system

The self-study report includes an action plan that addresses the critical learner needs that the school has identified. The timeline provided in the action plan extends for two years, with room for revision and extension based on data in the coming years. Each task in the plan includes a means of assessment, and a designated individual or group who is responsible for receiving the reports and making the assessment.

Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

Part A: What Currently Exists

CATEGORY A. ORGANIZATION: VISION AND PURPOSE, GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND STAFF, AND RESOURCES

A1. Organization Criterion

To what extent does the school have a clearly stated vision or purpose based on its student needs, current educational research, and the belief that all students can achieve at high levels?

To what extent is the school's purpose supported by the governing board and the central administration and further by schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Vision – Schoolwide Learner Outcomes – Profile: The school has established a clear, coherent vision (purpose) of what students should know and perform; it is based upon high quality standards and is congruent with research, practices, the student/community profile data, and a belief that all students can learn.

Development/Refinement of Vision/Schoolwide Learner Outcomes: The processes to ensure involvement of representatives from the entire school community in the development/refinement of the vision and schoolwide learner outcomes are effective.

Understanding of Vision and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes: Students, parents, and other members of the school community demonstrate understanding of and commitment to the vision and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

Regular Review and Revision: The school is implementing an effective process for regular review/revision of the school purpose and the schoolwide learner outcomes based on student needs, global, national and local needs, and community conditions.

SHS reaffirmed its mission statement during the course of the 2012-2013 self-study. It is congruent with the student and community profile data, which shows that a great majority of the student body are high-achieving and benefit from reminders to be cautious about physical and mental stress. The mission statement provides a vision of students who handle the pressures of an academically competitive environment with personal integrity, social responsibility, and attention to good physical and mental health. Parents, students, staff, and district representatives were involved in the review of the mission statement and its alignment with the district's mission statement through the School Site Council and Leadership Team and the district's Strategic Planning Committee. This review and alignment process is done regularly. The Schoolwide Learner Outcomes were revised through a similar process that included staff, parents, and students. In order to increase the visibility and understanding of the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, the school recognizes a need for communicating them to the school community more frequently and integrate them more fully into classroom instruction and school practice.

A2. Governance Criterion

To what extent does the governing board have policies and bylaws that are aligned with the school's purpose and support the achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards based on data-driven instructional decisions for the school?

To what extent does the governing board delegate implementation of these policies to the professional staff?

To what extent does the governing board monitor regularly results and approve the single schoolwide action plan and its relationship to the Local Educational Agency (LEA) plan?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are

addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Governing Board: There is clarity of the policies and procedures regarding the selection, composition and specific duties of the governing board, including the frequency and regularity of board meetings.

Relationship of Governance to Vision, Mission, and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes: The governing board's policies are directly connected to the school's vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes.

Understanding Role of Governing Board: The school community understands the governing board's role, including how parents can participate in the school's governance.

Governing Board's Involvement in Review and Refinement: The governing board is involved in the regular review and refinement of the school's vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes.

Professional Staff and Governing Board: There is clear understanding about the relationship between the governing board and the responsibilities of the professional staff.

Board's Evaluation/Monitoring Procedures: There is clarity of the evaluation and monitoring procedures carried out by the governing board, including review of student performance, overall school operations, and the fiscal health of the school.

Complaint and Conflict Resolution Procedures: The established governing board/school's complaint and conflict resolution procedures as they apply to the school's shareholders are effective.

The Board of Trustees of the Los Gatos Saratoga Union High School District publicizes its meeting dates in advance and makes its notes of public meetings available. It subscribes to the Agenda OnLine system to provide easier access to board meeting agendas, minutes, and documents, and it maintains video recordings of regular board meetings. Through the Strategic Planning Committee, the board regularly reviews and aligns the mission statements of the school and the district.

The Board Governance Handbook provides a clear delineation of the relationship between the Trustees and the professional staff: "Trustees will always work through the superintendent and copy the board president when requesting information/reports. The request will include clarification about what is being requested, why it is being requested and the relation/alignment with the district goals." The board requests regular presentations from all departments; however, departments indicated that their reports could be more thorough if they are provided more advance notice in which to prepare. Board members attend school-related activities and classrooms, providing reports on these visits at each board meeting. There is an ongoing conversation regarding the prioritization of educational improvements at the school and how best to achieve development of the student as a whole person as well as development of college readiness. A continued focus on identified critical learner needs is expected to move this conversation forward.

The extent to which the goals in the district's Strategic Plan are being met are reviewed annually. The Board has a clear grievance process for issues and a uniform complaint procedure.

A3. Leadership and Staff Criterion

To what extent based on student achievement data, does the school leadership and staff make decisions and initiate activities that focus on all students achieving the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards?

To what extent does the school leadership and staff annually monitor and refine the single schoolwide action plan based on analysis of data to ensure alignment with student needs?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Broad-Based and Collaborative: The school's planning process is broad-based, collaborative, and has commitment of the stakeholders, including the staff, students, and parents.

School Plan Correlated to Student Learning: The school's Single Plan for Student Achievement is directly correlated to the analysis of student achievement about the critical academic needs, schoolwide learner outcomes, and academic standards.

Correlation between All Resources, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, and Plan: There is correlation between allocation of time/fiscal/personnel/material resources and the implementation, monitoring, and accomplishing of the Single Plan for Student Achievement.

The School Site Council undertakes a monthly review of the Single Plan for Student Achievement, addressing specific sections of the plan each month. Staff, students, and parents on the SSC have the opportunity to provide input on the plan through the SSC. Through this review, several departments have been given support to develop innovative programs. In addition, the teachers use weekly morning collaboration time to discuss school-wide outcomes in relation to the plan. Parents who have been involved in the self-study process also have expressed interest in other opportunities to be involved in decision-making regarding school standards.

Specific curriculum development and professional learning projects are undertaken during the collaboration time. Approval of these undertakings is decided by school administration and is dependent on their being linked to state standards, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, and the Single Plan for Student Achievement.

A4. Leadership and Staff Criterion

To what extent does a qualified staff facilitates achievement of the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes through a system of preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Employment Policies/Practices: The school has clear employment policies/practices related to qualification requirements of staff.

Qualifications of Staff: The school has procedures to ensure that staff members are qualified based on staff background, training and preparation.

Maximum Use of Staff Expertise: The school has a process to assign staff members and provide appropriate orientation for all assignments, including online instruction and specialized programs so that the expertise of the staff members is maximized in relation to the impact on quality student learning.

Defining and Understanding Practices/Relationships: The school has clear administrator and faculty written policies, charts, and handbooks that define responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff.

Internal Communication and Planning: The school has effective existing structures for internal communication, planning, and resolving differences.

Staff Actions/Accountability to Support Learning: The school evaluates the effectiveness of the processes and procedures for involving staff in shared responsibility, actions, and accountability to support student learning throughout all programs. This includes an evaluation of the collegial strategies used to implement innovations and encourage improvement, such as shadowing, coaching, observation, mentoring, group presentations.

Evaluation of Existing Processes: The school leadership regularly reviews the existing processes to determine the degree to which actions of the leadership and staff focus on successful student learning.

The intake process of new staff includes a thorough interview process, with panel interviews and observations of short lessons. This is followed by induction activities that are coordinated by the department chairs, with some new staff being assigned mentors. New staff also participate in the district's BTSA program. SHS has a mixed-block bell schedule, within which every effort is made to accommodate faculty interest and student need. Alternative scheduling models have been discussed, as well.

The school has various individual policies and a number of understood procedures that address certain aspects of the school programs, although it does not have an operational staff handbook at this time. The decision-making process for program changes includes a request that is vetted by the department chairs. Staff are typically given an opportunity to vote on such changes.

Communication throughout the school occurs through extensive use of email and face-to-face meetings. Administrators have an open-door policy that encourages the airing of concerns. In addition, the school provides opportunities through the SHS Forum, weekly collaboration time, and monthly faculty department chair meetings. The Visiting Committee has observed that the staff works together very closely.

A5. Leadership and Staff Criterion

To what extent are leadership and staff involved in ongoing research or data-based correlated professional development that focuses on identified student learning needs?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Support of Professional Development: The school effectively supports professional development/learning with time, personnel, material, and fiscal resources to facilitate all students achieving the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

Supervision and Evaluation: The school implements effective supervision and evaluation procedures in order to promote professional growth of staff.

Measurable Effect of Professional Development: There are effective operating processes that determine the measurable effect of professional development, coaching, and mentoring on student performance.

SHS leadership and staff have agreed to use weekly collaborative time on Wednesday morning for professional development. Teacher groups develop plans for new instructional strategies which are clearly based on current research and the potential for improvement of all students' achievement of the state standards and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes. Approval of the plans is made by school administration on those bases. Teachers have the opportunity to request resources for their collaborative, group work, and they report that these requests are generally fulfilled. The supervision and evaluation of the staff include procedures to address professional growth and the application of professional development in instruction. The student achievement data remains high, and achievement data is gathered for students affected by new instructional strategies.

A6. Resources Criterion

To what extent are the human, material, physical, and financial resources sufficient and utilized effectively and appropriately in accordance with the legal intent of the program(s) to support students in accomplishing the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Allocation Decisions: There is a relationship between the decisions about resource allocations, the school's vision, mission, and student achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards. The school leadership and staff are involved in the resource allocation decisions.

Practices: There are processes operating in relationship to district practices for developing an annual budget, conducting an annual audit, and at all times conducting quality business and accounting practices, including protections against mishandling of institutional funds. (Note: Some of this may be more district-based than school-based.)

Facilities: The school's facilities are adequate to meet the school's vision, mission, schoolwide learner outcomes, the educational program, and are safe, functional, and well maintained.

Instructional Materials and Equipment: The policies and procedures for acquiring and maintaining adequate instructional materials and equipment, such as textbooks, other printed materials, audio-visual, support technology, manipulatives, and laboratory materials are effective.

Well-Qualified Staff: Resources are available to enable the hiring, nurturing, and ongoing professional development of a well-qualified staff for all programs such as online instruction and college/career.

Long-Range Planning: The district and school's processes for regularly and effectively examining a

long-range plan ensures the continual availability and coordination of appropriate resources supports students' achievement of the critical learner needs, the academic standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

School leadership at SHS regularly solicits teacher input in decisions regarding the allocation of resources. These decisions are always made in reference to the school's mission and the achievement by students of the state standards and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes. Interviews with district and site leadership have confirmed that the annual budget process, long-range planning process, and auditing, business, and accounting practices are well-established and include protections against mishandling of institutional funds.

Interviews confirm that the school's facilities are currently adequate to support the school program, mission, and vision, although the location of some music classrooms presents a logistical challenge. SHS has a state-of-the-art facility for its Media Arts Program. However, projections indicate that additional classrooms will be needed in the near future, and the district is seeking the passage of a General Obligation bond to provide for these resources. Instructional materials are adequate, as is the process for acquiring additional materials. Resources are available for hiring, nurturing, and developing a well-qualified staff, and many qualified applicants are available for any openings that occur.

A range of stakeholders participate in the formation of the district's long-range plan, which forms the basis for the school's long-range plan. This process ensures the continuity and availability of resources for the school program.

CATEGORY A: ORGANIZATION: VISION AND PURPOSE, GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND STAFF, AND RESOURCES

Areas of strength for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership and Staff, and Resources (if any):

- The school and the district have aligned their mission statements and long-range planning documents. They have clear and congruent Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.
- The school has state-of-the-art facilities for its Media Arts Program building.
- The school has committed time each week for collaborative professional development, and there is an effective structure for designing, implementing, and evaluating the work that is done during that time.
- The school has a highly qualified staff and strong processes in place for integrating new teachers into the school community.
- The school has an active and committed School Site Council, including student participation, that regularly reviews data in the decision-making process.

Key issues for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership and Staff, and Resources (if any):

- The Visiting Committee acknowledges that the communication of the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes to parents and the integration of these into school practices was identified in the self-study as an area of growth.
- It will be very important for the school to compile a faculty handbook using existing policies and procedures. As conversations regarding topics such as the use of the tutorial period are undertaken, it will be important to include interim policies and procedures in order to assure the clear understanding of the school program by all staff.
- The Visiting Committee acknowledges that increased participation by parents and students in the revision and communication of school standards was identified in the self-study as an area of growth.

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- Report of Focus Group A in the Self-Study
- Interviews with Focus Group A
- Interviews with department Home Groups
- Interview with Parent Home Group
- Observations of classrooms and facilities during the visit

CATEGORY B. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: CURRICULUM

B1. Curriculum Criterion

To what extent do all students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-based curriculum that supports the achievement of the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

To what extent through standards-based learning (what is taught and how it is taught), are the schoolwide learner outcomes accomplished?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Current Educational Research and Thinking: The school provides examples that document the use of current educational research related to the curricular areas in order to maintain a viable, meaningful instructional program for students.

Academic Standards for Each Area: The school has defined academic standards for each subject area, course, and/or program, and where, applicable, expectations within the courses that meet the UC “a-g” requirements.

Congruence: There is congruence between the actual concepts and skills taught, the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

Student Work — Engagement in Learning: The school's examination of representative samples of student work and snapshots of student engagement in learning demonstrate the implementation of a standards-based curriculum and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

Accessibility of All Students to Curriculum: A rigorous, relevant, and coherent curriculum to all students is accessible to all students through all courses/programs offered. The school examines the demographics and situation of students throughout the class offerings. The school's instructional practices and other activities facilitate access and success for special needs students.

Integration among Disciplines: There is integration among disciplines at the school and where applicable, integration of outsourced curriculum into the program so that curricular integrity, reliability, and security are maintained.

Curricular Development, Evaluation, and Revisions: The school assesses its curriculum review and evaluation processes for each program area, including graduation requirements, credits, grading policies, and homework policy, to ensure student needs are met through a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum. This includes the degree to which there is involvement of key stakeholders (governing board members, teachers, parents, and students).

Policies — Rigorous, Relevant, Coherent Curriculum: The school assesses the curriculum and its rigor, relevancy, and coherency after examination of policies regarding course completion, credits, grading policies, homework, etc.

Articulation and Follow-up Studies: The school articulates regularly with feeder schools and local colleges and universities. The school uses follow-up studies of graduates and others to learn about the effectiveness of the curricular program.

Saratoga High School developed new programs such as the MAP program that was designed to implement the 21st Century Skills model into the classroom. There are defined academic standards, and there is a move to work on Common Core State Standards (CCSS). All College Preparatory courses have been approved by UC as meeting a-g requirements and the College Board approves all AP courses. The California Standards Tests (CST) guide the instructions in addition to teacher discussions of the curriculum versus standards. The school introduced a new STEM program with hands on exploration in science and math; the curriculum is based on Project Lead the Way. The PE Falcon Fit program is a fitness-based model more than sports survey.

There are two online classes: Cyber High (special education, and regular education students who failed the class or needs the extra support) and APEX (seniors /recovery credits) that meet state academic standards. APEX is provided by the district and offers college prep UC approved courses. There is no online lab science class offered for credit recovery.

SHS currently offers a wide array of honors and AP courses. Over the last ten years, SHS has implemented open access to these rigorous courses in five academic disciplines. The special education students are mainstreamed into regular education classes. Special and regular education teachers are working collaboratively to implement the student accommodations according to their plan (Algebra 1 and Special education piloting program). Integration of subjects is happening in the MAP program with the English and History departments.

Through department and team level collaboration, each discipline defines the essential skills that need to be taught at a particular level, learning objectives are difficult to measure; however, the school administered the Project Cornerstone Survey at regular intervals to assess these objectives. There are no standardized grading policies among subjects or departments, however, the staff at Saratoga evaluates curriculum. There is an ongoing articulation between the feeder school and Saratoga High.

B2. Curriculum Criterion

To what extent do all students have equal access to the school's entire program and assistance with a personal learning plan to prepare them for the pursuit of their academic, personal, and school-to-career goals?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Variety of Programs — Full Range of Choices: All students have opportunities to make appropriate choices and pursue a full range of realistic college/career and/or other educational options. The school provides for career exploration, preparation for postsecondary education, and pre-technical training for all students.

Student-Parent-Staff Collaboration: Parents, students, and staff collaborate in developing and monitoring a student's personal learning plan, based upon a student's learning style and college/career, and/or other educational goals. (This includes the evaluation of whether online instruction matches the student's learning style.)

Monitoring/Changing Student Plans: The school implements processes for monitoring and making appropriate changes in students' personal learning plans (e.g., classes and programs) and regularly evaluates them.

Post High School Transitions: The school implements strategies and programs to facilitate transitions to post high school options and regularly evaluates their effectiveness.

All students have equal access to the school's entire program and assistance with a personal learning plan to prepare them for the pursuit of their academic, personal, and school-to-career goals. Students meet with their counselors at least twice a year. The counselors design an individualized plan for each student, and students select their courses based on their plans. Counselors communicate with the parents to ensure the correct placement of their student, however, the student can enroll in a class even if they are not prepared if they are interested. In addition to these services, counselors also provide a high level of support to students with their college applications.

The focus of the curricular programs is not only preparing students for the rigors of four year post-secondary education but to provide support to students who may fall short of meeting A-G requirements. Students who are not progressing well are met with the counselors, and multiple measures of intervention are placed. If all of these interventions do not work out, students can attend summer school, community college or online courses.

An evening parent meeting is held twice a year for each grade level to review grade appropriate information with the parent. Following these meetings, counselors meet with their students to discuss progress towards their stated goals. Only at risks students are provided with formal written plans. The Community Based Instruction (CBI) provides opportunities for students in the Special Day Classes to learn skills necessary to function in the community.

There are a many programs offered at SHS such as the 4 years MAP, Drama, Music, and the new established STEM programs. Students have open access to Honors and AP classes; they can double science courses in their junior and senior years; and they can double English courses in their senior year. English, Science and Social Studies have created a number of videos/documents to help student choose whether or not to register in Honors or AP classes. There are some career technical education classes (for example, child development, media arts, and stage tech); however, if a student has an interest in a certain field they may enroll at the Central Coast Occupational Center (CCOC).

The PE department transitioned to a fitness based model four years ago and has been recognized by the California Distinguished School panel that visited last school year. Every student can participate at his or her own level and it allows special education students the opportunity to be part of a mainstream class. The Physical Education department has been recognized by the various state agencies as having a model program for differentiated instruction. The program was also presented at the California Association of Physical Education & Health (CAHPERD). However, not all ninth graders are required to enroll in a standards-based PE class. This may be depriving them of important skills of maintaining a good physical and mental health, as well as effective stress management techniques.

This year, based on input from the community, the school created an engineering program that allows students to get hands-on experience in the fields of math and science. In the school year 2006-07, the Media Arts program was created, and has grown steadily. It now offers a wide array of opportunities, including live broadcasting, sports filming, and broadcast journalism course which will allow students to provide play-by-play to an audience via the internet. The Saratoga music program is well attended by students beginning their freshman year. Students enroll in the various music courses and the parents are strongly supportive of the program.

SHS offers presentations/conversations with workers in various industries during Career Day that happens every two years. In addition, the College and Career Center hosts presentations from a wide variety of colleges.

Students utilize various tools such as the personality profiles, college acceptance scatter charts within Naviance (online college and career readiness platform) to optimize student success. The student can take "learning style" or "personality type" questionnaire. Counselors are using the results to guide students to a career and to collect data on student achievement.

The staff collaborates weekly on Wednesdays where best practices, struggling students, differentiated instruction are discussed. The staff uses email to communicate if a specific strategy worked with struggling students so it can be documented as one of the best practices on campus.

B3. Curriculum Criterion

To what extent are students able to meet all the requirements of graduation upon completion of the high school program?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Real World Applications — Curriculum: All students have access to real world applications of their educational interests in relationship to a rigorous, standards-based curriculum.

Meeting Graduation Requirements: The school implements academic support programs to ensure

students are meeting all requirements, including the CAHSEE.

SHS has incorporated various programs to address real world applications within a standards-based curriculum using music and media arts (MAP). The school has more than 250 students enrolled in marching band who perform numerous times throughout the year and work towards receiving credits in PE. The school has CAHSEE passing rate of 99%. There are a large number of students enrolled in AP classes. Many of the special education students are enrolled in regular education classes. There is a Testing and Learning center to help students with an IEP or 504 plan. There is also an academic tutoring program where upperclassmen help other students in their subjects of need.

CATEGORY B: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: CURRICULUM

Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum (if any):

- Flexible curriculum and class offerings based on student and community goals.
- Courses expectations have clearly defined academic standards including the classes that do and do not meet A-G requirements.
- Strong and dedicated guidance department.
- A number of teachers and programs illustrate effective differentiated instruction programs.

Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum (if any):

- Increase focus on depth rather than breadth in the curriculum (CCSS)
- Create better strategies to help students choose realistic course loads
- Offer more electives courses
- Increase cross-curricular collaboration
- Increase articulation with other feeder schools in the districts
- Establish priorities for curricular changes that reflect the importance of mental and physical health of all students
- Strongly consider establishing a standards-based ninth grade PE required class

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- Report of Focus Group B in the Self-Study
- Interviews with Focus Group B
- Interviews with department Home Groups
- Interview with Parent Home Group
- Observations of classrooms and facilities during the visit

CATEGORY C. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: INSTRUCTION

C1. Instruction Criterion

To what extent are all students involved in challenging learning experiences to achieve the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Results of Student Observations and Examining Work: The school's observations of student working and the examining of student work provide information on the degree to which all students are involved in challenging learning to assist them in achieving the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes. The school, particularly, has evaluated the degree of involvement in the learning of students with diverse backgrounds and abilities and modified approaches based on findings.

Student Understanding of Performance Levels: The students know beforehand the standards/expected performance levels for each area of study.

Differentiation of Instruction: The school's instructional staff members differentiate instruction, including integrating multimedia and technology, and evaluate its impact on student learning.

Student Perceptions: The students understand the expected level of performance based on the standards and the schoolwide learning results. Through interviews and dialogue with students that represent the school populations, the school learns about the students' perceptions of their learning experiences, including all specialized programs such as college/career readiness and online instruction regarding the opportunity for teacher-student interaction to reduce isolation and encourage skill transference.

SHS has a variety of evidence to show that their students are engaged in project-based learning that prepares them for postsecondary studies and future careers. The staff has had multiple discussions and planning sessions to prepare for more project-based learning as they transition to the CCSS. They seek to expand this practice between subject areas and will continue to allot collaboration and planning time to move these ideas forward. The students are engaged in self-assessment, goal-setting, reflection, collaboration and critical thinking. The process of self-assessment is guided by personal reflection, peer review and teacher feedback. Teachers meet within their departments to discuss assessments and make adjustments to curriculum planning as needed. The SHS master schedule features a variety of course offerings that reflect the interests of the student population. There has been an evolution in course offerings over the years as student interest has changed. New elective courses have been created to meet a growing interest in a variety of technologies (i.e. PLTW, Multimedia). The school data reflects an increase in AP offerings, AP tests with qualifying scores, and students enrolling in these courses. The extracurricular activities available at SHS reflect an equal focus on student life beyond academics. The extensive club and athletic offerings are geared to meet the interests of students.

SHS students are introduced to new learning through course syllabi, grading period calendars and unit essential questions. Teachers have started utilizing websites as well to post class information and assignments. Teachers are interested in increasing their use of grading and curriculum organizing websites through site collaboration and professional development. Students are able to access documents at the beginning of units that preview the unit goals and objectives, major assignments, goals for learning and rubrics for the unit. Understanding the stress that can come with a heavy academic course load, students are given the information that they need to plan ahead for completion of major projects in multiple classes. Teachers also engage the students in different forms of pre-assessment and goal-setting that help the students and teachers determine prior knowledge and to set intentions for the unit. In some courses students are given long-term rubrics or benchmarks that highlight the appropriate progression in skills that they should master to eventually reach proficiency in the subject matter.

Departments on campus have written differentiated units where students have a menu of project options to complete during or in completion of a unit. These menus not only adapt coursework to the needs of the

students but in some cases also serve to provide the students with choice in their assignments. SHS has pockets of differentiation in which the students are able to manage aspects of their learning. For example, some courses on campus utilize a differentiated curriculum where students are able to develop their culminating projects. The process of learning and assessment is more open ended to acknowledge student interest and to provide independence as students get older or master a particular concept. This is an important skill for postsecondary schooling and their future careers.

Some programs on campus have specialized technology that provides the students opportunities for instruction and culminating projects that are not the norm. For example, students that create short films, collaborative online documents or televised recordings demonstrate their learning through technology focused project-based learning. The school is interested in providing teachers with training and collaboration time to incorporate more technologies into the curriculum.

The student home survey given at SHS demonstrates that the majority of students feel their teachers clearly communicate the performance expectations for each unit of study with them. This is done in a variety of ways including: teacher observation and feedback, quizzes, surveys, discussions, exit slips, learning logs, peer/self-assessment, presentations, feedback on notes and homework. The staff and parents would like for the feedback given to students to transfer to the parents as well. Parents feel as though feedback given to students can be lost or misunderstood so parents are not aware of the best ways to support their child in their studies.

The school community is aware of the pressure that SHS students feel about preparing for college. Often the student perception is that they need to take as many advanced courses as possible to compete with other students for college entrance. The school has implemented CASSY, a counseling and support program for their students, which assists students in managing the stress and isolation that students have shared they feel from trying to balance advanced coursework and extracurricular activities. In preparation for the next school year, students had to complete the Falcon Wheel when they made their course selections. This wheel assists students in understanding the workload they are undertaking, so that they will make necessary changes early and not become overwhelmed with balancing their lives the following school year.

C2. Instruction Criterion

To what extent do all teachers use a variety of strategies and resources, including technology and experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom that actively engage students, emphasize higher order thinking skills, and help them succeed at high levels?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Current Knowledge: Teachers are current in the instructional content taught and research-based instructional methodology, including the integrated use of multimedia and technology.

Teachers as Coaches: Teachers work as coaches to facilitate learning for all students.

Examination of Student Work: Representative samples of student work demonstrate: a) structured learning so that students organize, access and apply knowledge they already have acquired; b) that students have the tools to gather and create knowledge and have opportunities to use these tools to research, inquire, gather, discover, and invent knowledge on their own and communicate this.

Representative samples of student work demonstrate that students are able to think, reason, and problem solve in group and individual activities, project, discussions, and debates and inquiries related to investigation.

Representative samples of student work demonstrate that students use technology to assist them in achieving the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

Representative samples of student work demonstrate student use of materials and resources beyond the

textbook, such as use and availability of library/multimedia resources and services; availability of and opportunities to access data-based, original source documents and computer information networks; and experiences, activities and resources which link students to the real world.

Real World Experiences: Opportunities for shadowing, apprenticeship, community projects and other real world experiences and applications are available to all students.

The MAP at SHS is a program that should be highlighted for regularly utilizing a variety of technology for instruction, communication with students and families, and differentiating instruction to better suit individual learning strengths. Students utilize technology to extend their learning and to complete many class assignments or final projects. Peer review is incorporated as a step in multimedia and traditional projects that the students complete. More departments are interested in creating similar assignments that incorporate technology and student choice. To assist more teachers in their use of technology and multimedia in their instruction, the district hosts a yearly teacher-led conference, "Festival of Learning," to promote technology in the classroom. Teachers from SHS helped to begin the conference, led workshops and continued assisting colleagues at SHS after the conference. District and site staff would like the conference to continue and expand over time to meet the growing need for more technology and multimedia in the classroom.

Most of the classrooms are outfitted with technology such as projectors, document cameras and access to online streaming videos. The teachers and students utilize a variety of popular software for instruction and presentations (i.e Power Point, Prezi). Other technology needs that are met by the school are a wireless network on campus and online textbooks that staff and students can access. The library supports a new digital era with databases for research and personal interests, the school staff have web pages that students and their parents can access. SHS can grow in this area with a dedicated fund for technology needs and effective implementation.

The teachers at SHS plan their instruction to incorporate collaborative work. This frees up the teachers to coach small groups of students as they work together on a variety of projects. Students are also able to spend time with teachers to receive additional support for understanding course content during the tutorial time set aside in the schedule. Parents and staff would like students to plan better use of their tutorial, so that they are not waiting until the last tutorial before a test to get assistance. When students fail to plan ahead it is difficult for teachers to assist students individually or in small groups with their learning.

There are a variety of projects where teachers serve as coaches to students. Some of these are second nature to programs such as journalism, drama, art and music. In other subject areas teachers are seeking more opportunities to coach students through inquiry-based learning. Projects that have already been implemented include: science labs, Socratic seminars and small group collaboration on writing assignments.

Students at SHS have a variety of formats to demonstrate their learning. Culminating activities can include portfolios, presentations, formal assessment, writing assignments and digital projects. These activities are often introduced to students with a rubric that outlines what is expected of the students. The expectation of culminating assignments is that students will demonstrate a variety of competencies by critically reflecting on the results of their learning and drawing conclusions. In the student surveys, the students pointed out that some teachers provide sample work in order to guide the students in their understanding of what is expected of them.

The English department has developed a process in which they collect student writing throughout the school year. Each writing piece is reviewed with students through peer review and/or teacher review for feedback. Students, parents and teachers then have a collection of student products that can be reviewed to identify strengths and needs of students in writing. These portfolios are passed between teachers from year to year in order to continue tracking student growth throughout their high school career. Student writing pieces are also available as examples that students can submit to universities to demonstrate their abilities. These portfolios include introductory and end of the year writing assessments that set the tone for instructional

needs at the beginning of the year and a review of progress at the end of the year.

Student work samples that have been collected and/or observed demonstrate that students are using technology to assist them in meeting the expectations of the learning goals and school wide learner outcomes. Some examples of this are: group collaboration on writing assignments utilizing Google docs, powerpoint/Prezi presentations, creation of short films or documentaries, recording the school bulletin in the multimedia center, creating animation shorts, uploading assignments to turnitin.com, programming apps, utilizing graphing calculators and/or completing articles for the online school newspaper. Though the use of technology is expanding among all teachers, there is a need to provide continued exposure to available technology, funds to purchase needed technologies, professional development for implementation and time for planning and collaboration of new technology.

One school wide day of service is highlighted in the school report, the MLK Day of Service. Students have the day off from school but many attend a variety of volunteer activities to promote serving the community. SHS acknowledges that more service projects should be considered for the school. A College and Career Center is available on site to assist students with preparation for postsecondary schooling. These activities include: applications, speakers, scholarship assistance, internship opportunities and a school wide Career Day. The MAP provides a variety of field studies for students. One opportunity is the LA trip which allows students to see the media industry first hand, visit colleges, visit studios and meet industry professionals.

CATEGORY C: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: INSTRUCTION

Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction (if any):

- The school has project-based learning that prepares students for postsecondary studies and careers. The staff has had multiple discussions and planning sessions to prepare for more project-based learning as they transition to the CCSS.
- Teachers work with students to engage them in self-assessment, goal-setting, reflection, collaboration and critical thinking.
- The school has a master schedule which features a variety of course offerings and adapts offerings to meet the interests and needs of students. This includes new elective courses that meet a growing interest in a variety of technologies.
- The school is using a variety of technologies for instruction, student assessment and to share course syllabi, grading period calendars, unit essential questions, rubrics, etc. The school is exploring further technologies to purchase and train staff in, in order to increase use across the campus.
- Departments on campus have written differentiated units where students have a menu of project options to complete during or in completion of a unit. These menus not only adapt coursework to the needs of the students but in some cases also serve to provide the students with choice in their assignments.
- Teachers plan their instruction to incorporate collaborative work. This frees up the teachers to coach small groups of students as they work together on a variety of projects.
- Students at SHS have a variety of formats to demonstrate their learning. Culminating activities can include portfolios, presentations, formal assessment, writing assignments and digital projects. These activities are often introduced to students with a rubric that outlines what is expected of the students.

Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction (if any):

- Continue on-site professional development and provide time for teachers to collaborate and incorporate new strategies into instruction
- Increase training and instructional support to incorporate new and innovative technology
- Promote ways to engage students in more inquiry-based learning

- Explore more opportunities for service learning
- Explore strategies to assist communication from students to parents of the feedback given regarding student coursework

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- Report of Focus Group C in the Self-Study Report
- Interviews with Administration, Teachers, Students and Parents
- Observations of a variety of classroom environments and instruction
- Master Schedule
- Data reports in the Self-Study Report
- English writing folders
- CCSS lesson plan binders
- Collaboration records
- Results of student survey
- Review of student work samples

CATEGORY D. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

D1. Assessment and Accountability Criterion

To what extent does the school use a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, analyze, and report student performance data to the school staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders of the school community?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Professionally Acceptable Assessment Process: The school staff uses effective assessment processes to collect, disaggregate, analyze, and report student performance data to all stakeholders.

Basis for Determination of Performance Levels: The school staff has determined the basis upon which students' grades and their growth and performance levels are determined and uses that information to strengthen high achievement of all students.

Appropriate Assessment Strategies: Teachers use appropriate assessment strategies to measure student progress toward acquiring a specific body of knowledge or skills such as essays, portfolios, individual or group projects, tests, etc.

Demonstration of Student Achievement: A range of examples of student work and other assessments demonstrate student achievement of the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes, including those with special needs.

Saratoga High School uses California Standards Tests (CST), California High School Exit Exams (CAHSEE), graduation rate, as well as national assessments, such as SAT and AP assessments to collect, disaggregate, analyze and report student performance data to the parents and other shareholders of the community.

Examining the last three years' data, Saratoga High School has performed well on the academic performance assessments. The school's API has been over 900, three years in a row, much higher than the state standard of 800. The school has consistently met the federal AYP standards. The CAHSEE ELA passing rate was over 96% and the math over 97%. Many of the students took AP classes, and over 90% achieved qualifying scores. A great percent of students, over 90%, took SAT tests. The average mean scores for the year of 2012 were 633 for critical reading, 673 for math, and 653 for writing, with an increasing trend from the previous two years. The school had exceptional high college attendance rates in the last three years, though with a slightly down trend, with 99%, 98%, and 97% respectively in 2010, 2011, and 2012.

Each department at the school has determined the basis upon which students' grades and their growth and performance levels are determined. The criteria, grading rubrics and other grading systems, are clearly stated in teacher's syllabi of the subject he/she teaches. The school administration reviews all standard test results for the school, and the data and the information was shared with school staff, parents and community stakeholders.

Other than the statewide and nationwide standard tests, teachers and staff at SHS also use a variety of other assessment strategies to measure students' progress. Student individual and group work on projects, class presentations, portfolios, rubrics, and formative tests are common strategies teachers use to check whether students have acquired and mastered the knowledge aligned with the curriculum. Placement tests or self-assessments are also administered to help students sign up for appropriate course levels.

The school has an effective system to monitor all students' progress toward meeting the academic standards and school-wide learner outcomes.

Teachers use tests and students' portfolio work, either on the web, or in paper folder to show students' progress. For example, in the English classes, students collect their work for the semester in paper portfolios, select the best three for evaluation at the end of the semester, and carry the portfolio to the next grade level.

D2. Assessment and Accountability Criterion

To what extent do teachers employ a variety of strategies to evaluate student learning?

To what extent do students and teachers use assessment results to enhance the educational progress of every student?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Curriculum-Embedded Assessments: The school regularly examines standards-based curriculum embedded assessments in English language and math, including performance examination of students whose primary language is not English, and uses that information to modify the teaching/learning process.

Student Feedback: Student feedback is an important part of monitoring student progress over time based on the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

Modification of the Teaching/Learning Process: Assessment data is collected, analyzed, and used as the basis to make decisions and changes in the curricular and instructional approaches.

Monitoring of Student Growth: The school has an effective system to monitor all students' progress toward meeting the academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes.

SHS teachers regularly assess students. Interviews with focus groups show that teachers conduct assessments in class to check student understanding. Such assessments include teachers' observation of student hand-on projects, students' writings and summarizing unit contents. Based on these assessments and student work, teachers will identify and reteach areas of need.

The school regularly examines standards-based curriculum embedded assessments in English language and math, including performance examination of students whose primary language is not English, and uses that information to modify the teaching/learning process. The School Site Council, comprised of administrators, teachers, students and parents, monitors school progress and practice relative to curriculum. Assessment data is collected, analyzed, and used as the basis to make decisions and changes in the curricular and instructional approaches.

All of the core curricular departments and the world languages department are putting great efforts aligning curriculum and assessment with the CCSS. They are also examining the test items of this year's field tests so that they can make modification of their formative assessment in class.

Student feedback is an important part of monitoring student progress over time. Teachers use various assessment strategies to monitor student progress on a continuous basis. Some teachers gave surveys after each unit test asking students' feedback about test difficulty, fairness, and how they felt they did on the tests. Some teachers talk with students about their performance on the assessment.

Based on the test results and information collected, teachers make changes for instructional approaches and material covered. For example, if many students miss certain questions on a test, the teacher will spend time re-teaching that concept. Teachers regularly use formative assessment to quickly re-adjust schedules, homework, and instruction.

Student growth is monitored on a continuous basis. Teachers constantly check students' understanding and mastery of knowledge, either in class, or through various assessment strategies. Student work is kept in portfolios, electronically or in paper folder. Students are also encouraged to check their work with the rubrics

that applies. The final grade is a combination of various components of regular assessments. It is easy for students and parents to check their grades on the web using the Aeries Portal, and the information is used to strengthen high achievement of all students.

D3. Assessment and Accountability Criterion

To what extent does the school, with the support of the district and community, have an assessment and monitoring system to determine student progress toward achievement of the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Assessment and Monitoring Process: The following stakeholders are involved in the assessment and monitoring process of student progress: district, board, staff, students, and parents.

Reporting Student Progress: There are effective processes to keep district, board, and parents informed about student progress toward achieving the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

The following stakeholders are involved in the assessment and monitoring process of student progress: district, board, staff, students and parents. Results of statewide standard tests are tracked and reported. Teachers monitor students' progress through various assessment strategies. Freshman Focus Leaders, which consist of teaching staff and Link Crew leaders, have frequent meetings with freshmen for the first year helping them with their time management, checking their grades, providing help with organizational strategies that will help students with their success across all classes.

The district Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction reports results of statewide standard tests to district and school boards. Parents are informed about student progress toward achieving the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes. The administration analyzes standardized test results and gives the information to the school staff, the board, and other stakeholders. Student progress reports are distributed and student grades are mailed home. The overall school results are reported in local newspapers. Parents can easily check grades on the Aeries program.

D4. Assessment and Accountability Criterion

To what extent does the assessment of student achievement in relation to the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes drive the school's program, its regular evaluation and improvement, and the allocation and usage of resources?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Modifications Based on Assessment Results: The school uses assessment results to make changes in the school program, professional development activities, and resource allocations demonstrating a results-driven continuous process.

The school uses assessment results to make changes in the school program, professional development activities and resource allocations, demonstrating a results-driven continuous process. Based on the summative and formative assessment results, teachers revise teaching plans, improve pedagogical strategies, and modify the order of their curriculum. School counselors meet with a student when there appears to be a grade problem, and may and hold meetings with parents. At the student focus group, some students told stories of how helpful school staff was in such situations.

The faculty of different departments are working together to develop curriculum and instruction strategies to implement with the CCSS courses and assessments. Projects across departments have been designed to train students. For example, the English department and Social Science department have been collaborating to work on a scholarly essay writing project about government and American history. The English department develops the rubrics for essay assessment; and the Social Science department

provides video, audio, and other materials for student to use.

CATEGORY D: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability (if any):

- Students performed well on statewide and nationwide standard tests.
- Other assessment strategies are used to examine students' mastery of knowledge and progress.
- Project based assessment are used in some classes.
- Teachers are developing assessments aligned with CCSS.

Key issues for Standards-Based Accountability (if any): Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability (if any)

- Speeding up feedback of quiz and classroom test results that would help students to prepare for other higher level exams.
- Standardizing grading system among similar subjects taught by different teachers
- Develop site level assessments based on CCSS
- Identify current purposeful use of formative assessment and ways to improve their use

Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- The school's API scores are traditionally high
- CAHSEE passing rates are high for both in ELA and Math
- High percentage of students taking AP courses and getting qualified scores
- High SAT scores
- Electronic and paper folder portfolios are available
- Report of category D in the Self-Study
- Interviews with faculty members
- Interview with Parent Home Group
- Observations of classrooms and facilities during the visit

CATEGORY E. SCHOOL CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

E1. School Culture and Student Support Criterion

To what extent does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to encourage parental and community involvement, especially with the teaching/learning process?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Regular Parent Involvement: The school implements strategies and processes for the regular involvement of parents and the community, including being active partners in the teaching/learning process. The school involves non-English speaking parents.

Use of Community Resources: The school uses community resources to support students, such as professional services, business partnerships, and speakers.

Parent/Community and Student Achievement: The school ensures that the parents and school community understand student achievement of the academic standards/schoolwide learner outcomes through the curricular/co-curricular program.

SHS has a level of parental and community involvement that would be the envy of most schools. The Parent-Teacher-Student-Organization (PTSO), their umbrella parent educational support organization, boasts over one thousand members. Additionally there are a number of special interest groups where parents and community can directly support their student's particular endeavors. There are the usual groups supporting each sport, but SHS also has parent/community support groups for Media Arts Program, Drama, Music, Speech and Debate. Additionally the Saratoga High Foundation raises a great deal of funding for capital outlay projects, including athletic field improvements, computer labs, general facility improvements, and one must mention the McAfee Performing Arts Center shared by both the school and the community. The principal is using a newsletter to improve communication with students, staff and parents.

The school is still looking for ways to better involve their non-native speakers in the school activities, and help that population feel more comfortable at SHS. The staff is still trying to find ways to better recognize the achievements of the underclassmen.

E2. School Culture and Student Support Criterion

To what extent is the school a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning?

To what extent is the culture of the school characterized by trust, professionalism, high expectations for all students, and a focus on continuous school improvement?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Safe, Clean, and Orderly Environment: The school has existing policies, regulations and uses its resources to ensure a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning, including internet safety.

High Expectations/Concern for Students: The school demonstrates caring, concern, and high expectations for students in an environment that honors individual differences and is conducive to learning.

Atmosphere of Trust, Respect, and Professionalism: The school has an atmosphere of trust, respect, and professionalism.

Safe, Clean, Orderly Environment

SHS is at once functional and beautiful, reflecting the pride the students, staff, and community take in their school. The grounds are attractive, well kept, and mostly free of litter. However, the staff reports the students are in the habit of leaving quite a bit of litter in the eating areas after lunch, and the visiting committee has observed the staff working diligently to clean the affected areas. There seemed to be no graffiti on the campus, and the maintenance staff is quick to remove any that may appear.

As in the previous WASC visitation, some staff expressed concern over security on the campus. There have been no known incidents, however the campus is fairly open and parents and community members often are on campus during school hours without the knowledge of the school.

The staff is trained in first aid and other safety procedures, and show a real concern for the welfare of their students.

The district has a clear internet use policy, and goes further by giving every 9th grader a unit on internet safety and responsibility, and is proactive in dealing with cyberbullying. The school has created and implemented a formal and workable Bullying Response Protocol.

Classrooms decorations appear welcoming and interesting. Most teachers have their own classrooms, so they can decorate them to suit their subject and personalities. The campus is organized by departments, making it natural for department members to interact on a regular basis, promoting collegiality and sharing.

High Expectations / Concern for Students

SHS has high expectations for all their students. Further, the community and students themselves demand a high level of achievement. The archetypal SHS student is not so much worried about getting into college, as he or she is concerned about getting into the “right” college or university. SHS provides a panoply of opportunities, and the staff often find they need to help the student manage high expectations in the context of a healthy life.

The SHS support for achievement applies not only to the many AP level scholars, but infuses all cohorts of students. Their regular level courses evidence both rigor and depth, and even in their special education classes students are studying and learning at a higher level than one might expect. The school provides a number of pathways to provide all students access to meaningful learning, and the support the student may need to succeed. The particular systems are discussed in the following sections.

Atmosphere of Trust, Respect and Professionalism

The SHS staff is proud of their students and their school, and seem to support each other in continual improvement. The committee found a close relationship and mutual appreciation for the people and the roles they play to be clearly evident between all groups - classified staff, teaching staff, administration, and students.

The school provides collaborative time for all teachers every Wednesday morning both within and between curriculum groups, and curriculum time over the summer break. The staff shows an eagerness to collaborate with each other, both within and between departments to an extent indicative of mutual trust, respect and professionalism; there is a willingness to risk being open with each other and to work for the benefit of the students without fear of ridicule or criticism. The administration trusts the staff to be creative professionals; teachers report they are free to innovate and try new things without worrying about reprisals from administration. That has engendered a mutual trust and respect between administrative and teaching staff. The staff clearly shows they respect and care for each other as professionals and a community of people.

In visiting campus it was clear the students trust and respect their teachers, and the teachers trust and respect their students. Students feel comfortable speaking with their teachers about concerns, and most students are connected to the school through some program and/or staff member.

E3. School Culture and Student Support Criterion

To what extent do all students receive appropriate support along with an individualized learning plan to help ensure academic success?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Adequate Personalized Support: The school has available adequate services, including referral services, to support students in such areas as health, career and personal counseling, and academic assistance, including an individualized learning plan.

Direct Connections: The school demonstrates direct connections between academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes and the allocation of resources to student support services, such as counseling/advisory services, articulation services, and psychological and health services, or referral services.

Strategies Used for Student Growth/Development: Strategies are used by the school leadership and staff to develop personalized approaches to learning and alternative instructional options which allow access to and progress in the rigorous standards-based curriculum. Examples of strategies include: level of teacher involvement with all students, a curriculum that promotes inclusion, processes for regular review of student and schoolwide profiles, and processes and procedures for interventions that address retention and redirection.

Support Services and Learning: The school leadership and staff ensure that the support services and related activities have a direct relationship to student involvement in learning, e.g., within and outside the classroom, for all students, including the EL, GATE, special education, and other programs.

Equal Access to Curriculum and Support: All students have access to a challenging, relevant, and coherent curriculum to all students. Schools regularly examine the demographics and distribution of students throughout the class offerings (e.g., master class schedule and class enrollments) and the types of alternative schedules available for repeat or accelerated classes (e.g., summer, class periods beyond the traditional school day).

SHS has a history of being aware of the stresses to which students are subject, and of taking concrete positive actions to assist. They believe that reducing some of the social and emotional obstacles which can interfere with the school experience will give their students a chance to get the maximum benefit from the opportunities available at SHS. SHS provides an unusually large number of programs to give students the emotional support they may need, and to promote a school culture that supports learning and personal growth. To name only a few:

Guidance Counselors – There are four guidance counselors for the 1400 or so students, and they see each student at least twice a year, and some much more frequently.

Freshman Focus – links students with both staff and older students. Starting with Freshman Orientation at the beginning of each school year, Freshman Focus then carries on by assigning each student to a teacher who they will see during the first Monday tutorial session of every month where they will see presentations and get advice on adapting to high school, and do grade check-ups with their assigned staff member.

CASSY – SHS has partnered with the non-profit Counseling and Support Services for Youth to provide highly qualified post-graduate therapists on the school campus. Without the barriers of cost

or inconvenience, more students can come in to get assistance. SHS reports that upwards of 20% their students will meet with a CASSY counselor at least once in a year.

Common Roots – a peer-run peer counseling program for students during lunch.

TeenTruth Live – part of the respect / anti-bullying program.

Girls for Change – to support young women in making thoughtful and healthy decisions for their lives in what often is a difficult time.

Just Be Kind – a school wide week of activities to encourage students to be mindful that every individual is a valued part of the SHS family.

In addition to the support programs, the design of the campus lends itself to students finding places to gather and socialize in safe and comfortable groups. Students report they are comfortable asking staff for help with both academic and personal issues.

The schedule provides for three tutorial periods every week where the student can receive extra help with academics, or with preparing for upcoming assessments. Students with D's or F's sit for a discussion with their counselor to explore possible solutions. The tutorial times are effective, and the staff is looking for ways to make them more so.

The school has programs in place to help new students transition to SHS, including Freshman Focus and an orientation and barbeque for incoming students. Every new student meets with their counselor to develop a personalized educational plan, and counselors meet again with the students to keep the plan updated. Classroom teachers are diligent in helping students select appropriate classes that fit their abilities and educational goals. The school has an open access policy for classes so after counseling by guidance and subject teachers, students may enroll in whichever class they feel best suits their needs.

There are multiple pathways for student success. The Cyber High program is an online high school alternative and/or a path for credit recovery for special education students, and APEX learning is used for general education credit recovery. SHS offers CCOC for students interested in more technical training, NOVA for students who need a more individualized setting, Middle College for those who feel ready to transition into a community college, and Independent Study for those students who find that model best fits their needs.

The staff self-study set out a concern about involving and connecting with the school's non-native speakers, and another about increasing recognition for the achievements of underclassmen in both academic and non-academic areas. It is reported that one student expressed the desire for ESL classes for the parents, and one staff member is currently offering such a class of her own accord. The principal has started sending out weekly news items to all stakeholders which highlight student achievement, such as the chess club winning national recognition. The staff needs to continue their work in these two areas. Several groups reported that the principal has been improving communication and ties with the community and students since he was hired two years ago.

E4. School Culture and Student Support Criterion

To what extent do students have access to a system of personal support services, activities, and opportunities at the school and within the community?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Co-Curricular Activities: School leadership and staff link curricular and co-curricular activities to the

academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes.

Student Involvement in Curricular/Co-Curricular Activities: The school has an effective process for regularly evaluating the level of student involvement in curricular/co-curricular activities and student use of support services.

Student Perceptions: The school is aware of the student view of student support services through such approaches as interviewing and dialoguing with student representatives of the school population.

There is a wide range of co-curricular activities which are strong, well populated, and an integrated part of the culture at SHS. Many of the students see the co-curriculars as an important part of their identity, growth, and future. The school links the co-curriculars to the Schoolwide Learning Outcomes and a school culture of achievement, acceptance of others, collaboration, and school family.

The staff monitor the student's participation in co-curriculars, sometimes urging students to join the activities, or when overloaded (as happens often at SHS), to make healthy decisions regarding their goals, abilities, and a well balanced life. The Student Leadership team has taken the lead in designing, planning, and implementing a number of significant activities which address and bolster the school culture of tolerance, acceptance, mutual support, and citizenship.

SHS is purposefully in touch with student perceptions and needs through the Student Leadership Council, formal surveys of students, and informal discussions brought about by the close relationship of students with the caring staff. Administration monitors the participation in the activities, and staff reports that the principal seems to attend nearly every activity.

CATEGORY E: SCHOOL CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

Areas of strength for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth (if any):

- SHS has an extraordinary base of parent and community involvement and support.
- Large number of co-curricular activities, and strong participation by students.
- Highly motivated, responsible, and active student body.
- Caring staff who go above and beyond expectations to provide a rigorous and balanced high school experience for their students.
- The school has made a significant commitment to providing both guidance and emotional counseling resources their students.
- The facility is well designed and maintained.
- Students connect with staff on a personal level, and the school is working hard to increase the sense of school community.
- The staff is aware of and taking an active role in helping students handle the stress of the rigorous SHS environment, and of being teenagers in the modern world.
- A wide variety of rigorous and engaging electives are open to the non-AP students.

Key issues for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth (if any):

- Increase student awareness and use of student support services including CASSY, Common Roots, Girls Courage for Change, Freshman Focus, SHS Bullying Protocols, Guidance Counselors, peer academic tutoring, and tutorial periods.
- Increase parent and student understanding and acceptance of process over product, so stakeholders are less focused on a single score and/or grade, and understand the importance of the process of demonstrating knowledge.
- Increase parent and student awareness of the importance of making healthy choices for a balanced and successful life.

- Look for creative ways to increase the availability and efficacy of tutorial times for students.
- Increase the feedback to students and parents as reasonable, while communicating to them the limitations on immediate feedback.

Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- SHS PTSO and booster clubs
- SHS Foundation
- Guidance, tutorial, per counseling, and CASSY usage statistics
- Rosters of Clubs, co-curricular curricular activities
- Visiting Committee observations

Part B: Schoolwide Strengths and Critical Areas for Follow-up

Saratoga High School is a community of learners and teachers who daily devote a significant amount of energy to building and maintaining a strong program. The remarkable number of strengths of the program can be seen throughout the school. The school has identified and prioritized a number of areas of growth in the self-study. The Visiting Committee supports the school in continuing to pursue each of these areas; however, in light of its interviews and observations, the committee is limiting its critical areas for follow-up to the seven identified below.

Schoolwide Areas of Strength

1. The school and the district have aligned their mission statements and long-range planning documents. They have clear and congruent Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.
2. The school has state-of-the-art facilities for its Media Arts Program building.
3. The school has committed time each week for collaborative professional development, and there is an effective structure for designing, implementing, and evaluating the work that is done during that time.
4. The school has a highly qualified staff and strong processes in place for integrating new teachers into the school community.
5. The school has an active and committed School Site Council, including student participation, that regularly reviews data in the decision-making process.
6. Flexible curriculum and class offerings based on student and community goals.
7. Courses expectations have clearly defined academic standards including the classes that do and do not meet A-G requirements.
8. Strong and dedicated guidance department.
9. A number of teachers and programs illustrate effective differentiated instruction programs.
10. The school has project-based learning that prepares students for postsecondary studies and careers. The staff has had multiple discussions and planning sessions to prepare for more project-based learning as they transition to the CCSS.
11. Teachers work with students to engage them in self-assessment, goal-setting, reflection, collaboration and critical thinking.
12. The school has a master schedule which features a variety of course offerings and adapts offerings to meet the interests and needs of students. This includes new elective courses that meet a growing interest in a variety of technologies.
13. The school is using a variety of technologies for instruction, student assessment and to share course syllabi, grading period calendars, unit essential questions, rubrics, etc. The school is exploring further technologies to purchase and train staff in, in order to increase use across the campus.
14. Departments on campus have written differentiated units where students have a menu of project options to complete during or in completion of a unit. These menus not only adapt coursework to the needs of the students but in some cases also serve to provide the students with choice in their assignments.
15. Teachers plan their instruction to incorporate collaborative work. This frees up the teachers to coach small groups of students as they work together on a variety of projects.
16. Students at SHS have a variety of formats to demonstrate their learning. Culminating activities can include portfolios, presentations, formal assessment, writing assignments and digital projects. These activities are often introduced to students with a rubric that outlines what is expected of the students.
17. Students performed well on statewide and nationwide standard tests.
18. Other assessment strategies are used to examine students' mastery of knowledge and progress.
19. Project based assessment are used in some classes.
20. Teachers are developing assessments aligned with CCSS.
21. SHS has an extraordinary base of parent and community involvement and support.
22. Large number of co-curricular activities, and strong participation by students.

23. Highly motivated, responsible, and active student body.
24. Caring staff who go above and beyond expectations to provide a rigorous and balanced high school experience for their students.
25. The school has made a significant commitment to providing both guidance and emotional counseling resources their students.
26. The facility is well designed and maintained.
27. Students connect with staff on a personal level, and the school is working hard to increase the sense of school community.
28. The staff is aware of and taking an active role in helping students handle the stress of the rigorous SHS environment, and of being teenagers in the modern world.
29. A wide variety of rigorous and engaging electives are open to the non-AP students.

Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up

1. The Visiting Committee acknowledges that the school, in its Action Plan, identified and prioritized the need to investigate how the tutorial can be better utilized to meet student needs (access to teachers, remediation, and instruction in study skills). It will be very important for all staff to continue this work in order to support high levels of achievement for all students.
2. The Visiting Committee acknowledges that the school, in its Action Plan, identified and prioritized the need to develop a site professional development plan that includes: cross-curricular collaboration, sharing of best practices, and collaboration to achieve consistency of curriculum, rigor, and assessment. The Visiting Committee also acknowledges the related needs identified in the Action Plan (a) to review course curricula in light of the Common Core State Standards, (b) to learn more about formative assessment, (c) to evaluate the consistency of teacher grading policies, and (d) to implement increased opportunities for project-based and inquiry-based learning. It will be important for the school to continue its commendable progress toward implementing the school vision and 21st century learning in these ways, utilizing its existing assets of built-in professional development and collaboration time, strong and engaged staff and parent groups, and cross-curricular collaboration. This promises to move the school forward in its goal to provide ongoing support to all students in attaining high academic achievement.
3. The Visiting Committee acknowledges that the school, in its Action Plan, identified and prioritized the need to promote physical activity and exercise among students. The school will need to strengthen the Action Plan by including the consideration of a required standards-based ninth grade PE class in order to provide all students with basic skills in maintaining good physical and mental health.
4. The Visiting Committee acknowledges that the school, in its self-study, identified and prioritized the need to increase student awareness and use of student support services, including CASSY, Common Roots, Girls Courage for Change, Freshman Focus, SHS Bullying Protocols, Guidance Counselors, peer academic tutoring, and tutorial periods. It will be very important for the school to more clearly address this area for follow-up in it Action Plan in order to meet its goal of helping all students learn to value their own health and make healthy choices.
5. It will be very important for the school to address another area identified by the Visiting Committee of compiling a faculty handbook using existing policies and procedures. As conversations regarding topics such as the use of the tutorial period are undertaken, it will be important to include interim policies and procedures in order to assure the clear understanding of the school program by all staff.

Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement (1–2 pages)

- **Include a brief summary of the schoolwide action plan**

The schoolwide action plan was developed by the Leadership Team, using an iterative process involving administration and departments. The final draft of the plan was reviewed by the entire staff. The plan addresses the WASC/CDE criteria, the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, and the critical learner needs identified in the self-study process. The three overarching goals of the plan are: (1) to provide ongoing support in attaining high academic achievement through a variety of best instructional and assessment strategies; (2) to value learning over “doing school”; and (3) to be able to make healthy choices (balance). The objectives and tasks that are identified in the plan provide a high degree of specificity about how the school will achieve its goals.

The sections of the Action Plan address four of the five critical areas for follow-up that the Visiting Committee identified. It is a user-friendly document that provides specific tasks that are easy to understand and implement. For the most part, the criteria for assessing the plan are included in the description of the tasks, although the school will need to review each task to assure that this is the case. The means to assess improvement are identified in the plan, and it is feasible to accomplish using the school’s existing resources. In conversations with a wide range of stakeholders, it was quickly evident that the entire school is committed to the goals described in the Action Plan, and this level of commitment will likely sustain the school in its complete accomplishment.

There is one critical area for follow-up that the school will need to add to its Action Plan. The school identified the creation of an operational faculty handbook as an area of growth but did not prioritize it as a part of the Action Plan. Although there is a good general understanding among the staff of established policies and procedures, the school is aware of a 50% turnover of staff over the past several years. The school also has identified policies and procedures for which there could be broader agreement. It is important that all staff be clear about the expectations and operation of the school so that they can communicate such clarity to students and parents in their words and actions.

Key factors already exist that will support the school’s improvement. The administration is insightful, committed, and hard-working. They are well-aware of the needs of Saratoga High students and demonstrate a high level of commitment to addressing those needs. The faculty and staff are equally insightful, committed, and hard-working, providing instruction that is challenging coupled with encouragement and support both in and outside of class. The board and district office both demonstrate their support of the school and its improvement through their decisions on policy and resource management. The students also demonstrate their strong preparation in elementary and middle school, and their consistent high achievement in the work and performances that they undertake at Saratoga High.

By contrast, there are other factors that the school will do well to monitor. The school community has identified student stress as a concern and student health as a priority. The tension between collecting as many good grades in honors and advanced courses as possible, and developing a well-rounded experience in high school (including non-academic experiences), is significant and will continue to be an ongoing topic of discussion. The school also will need to continue to assure that the needs of lower achieving students are as visible as those of the higher achieving students who are much more numerous.

Overall, the action plan includes a follow-up process that is sound. This is described in a concluding section under the heading: Implementing, Monitoring, Assessing, Adjusting, and Reporting. The school will need to assure that this section remains a part of the plan, even though it is provided in a different format than the goals, objectives, and tasks themselves. The plan will be monitored both by parent groups and by the School Site Council, in addition to the staff at regular times throughout the year.