

Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

John F. Kennedy High School is one of three high schools in the West Contra Costa Unified School District. All three high schools are located in the city of Richmond, approximately 15 miles north of the SF/Oakland Bay Bridge. Richmond is home to Chevron Oil, the Federal Social Security Administration, the United States Postal Service Bulk Mail Center and the California State Department of Health Services.

JFK's Student/Community Profile shows a school with many problems that are beyond its control but strategies need to be developed in order to solve these problems. Since the last WASC accreditation, the high rate of student transience has continued to be a problem, as has the high rate of faculty turnover. West Contra Costa Unified School District has been unable to recruit experienced, credentialed teachers for JFKHS. In addition, faculty absenteeism has increased while the availability of substitutes has decreased. Consequently, there are a large number of teachers on emergency credentials, teacher interns and pre-interns. Sixty five percent of the staff is in their first or second year of teaching.

More than 80% of the JFKHS students receive AFDC and qualify for free or reduced price lunch. Almost 15% of the student body receive special education services. Thirty six percent are considered Limited English Proficient. These numbers are an increase since the last accreditation and the number of students qualifying for the Gifted and Talented Education program have decreased. The school's ranking on the spring 1999 SAT 9 testing was at the lowest possible level.

The business community does offer scholarships for students and does participate in career shadow days and career fairs. There are no business partnerships.

The parent survey indicates that parents feel comfortable sending their children to JFKHS but would like more communication with their child's teachers. There appears to be dissatisfaction with the standards set for performance and with classroom management. One fourth of the parents feel that the school is not meeting their child's needs. Ninety-seven percent of the parents would like their child to continue his/her education following high school graduation at the college or university level. Their expectations do not coincide with their desires. Overall, two thirds of the parents who answered the survey indicated that they are satisfied with the school and an additional 7% say they are very satisfied.

The student survey indicates that the students have similar desires to their parents as to completion of college/university. Seventy percent say they will attend college and work following high school graduation. Eighty percent have already chosen a career goal.

School Community Profile Summary

John F. Kennedy High School is located in the urban community of Richmond California. Kennedy High School is part of the West Contra Costa Unified School District. The West Contra Costa Unified School District serves 31,000 students and has schools K- 12 located in Richmond, El Cerrito, Pinole, San Pablo, Hercules, and some unincorporated areas of Contra Costa County. Richmond is located 16 miles northeast of San Francisco and is considered part of the greater East Bay region. ABAG estimates place the population of Richmond at approximately 93,500 for the 1999-2000 year. The diverse population of Richmond is 43.8% African American, 36.2% Caucasian, 14.5% Hispanic, 11.8% Asian and Pacific Islander, .6% Native American, and other ethnicity's 7.6%. Schools in the city of Richmond reflect this diversity of population.

Richmond is a city in transition economically. Richmond has been a major port city and center of heavy industry for the West Contra Costa region since World War II. Since 1990 Richmond has been moving towards a more technology and light industry oriented economy. Chevron and Zenica Corporation (formerly Stauffer Chemical) are still major employers in Richmond and their expanding operations are significant in the City's economy. New firms are locating in Richmond, most notably in the areas of Biotechnology and technology. Pixar Entertainment and other technical companies have located in Richmond over the last five years. Large public sector employers include The City of Richmond, West Contra Costa Unified School District, the Federal Social Security Administration, the United States Postal Service Bulk Mail Center, and the California State Department of Health and Human services. The annual income of Richmond residents is still approximately \$25,000 per annum. Richmond has an unemployment rate that hovers between 8.5% and 9.5%. Richmond's economic future is improving but still lags behind other San Francisco-Bay Area communities in terms of both income and employment.

Kennedy High is one of three high schools located in the City of Richmond. Richmond High School and De Anza High School both have diverse student populations and currently have student bodies that number in excess of 1400 students. Kennedy High School serves 1050 students currently. Kennedy High School's enrollment has been increasing over the last three years. Students attending Kennedy High School reflect the both the diversity of population and the disparities of wealth found in the City of Richmond. Kennedy students come from middle and low-income families. Over 50% of Kennedy students come from families eligible for Cal Works benefits and over 50% of Kennedy students are eligible for free/reduced price meals. Kennedy High School is a Title I funded school with a School Plan in place.

Since the last W.A.S.C. self-study the Kennedy High School community has continued to address hurdles that impact student learning and success for all students. The transfer rate of students still remains very high. The high degree of student transiency impacts daily operations as well as legitimate long range planning. A high number students transferring to Kennedy High School are for disciplinary reasons. This fact coupled with the past practice of social promotions from the middle schools means that a significant percentage of Kennedy students are already at academic risk when they enroll at the school. Data gathered over the last six years indicates that students still are more likely to transfer in or out of the school than drop out. Grade 9 enrollment figures average between 400 and 350 students and grade 12 graduation classes still average from 150 to 125 students.

Most Kennedy students are in some way special needs students, either by designation or by performance. Populations that are recognized by district or state designation are served by appropriate programs. The LEP population is continuing to increase. N.S.H. and SH student populations also have grown and services are being matched to high standards. ESLR driven instruction is being integrated into all students' courses of study. The GATE student population is smaller than at the time of the last self-study. Parents and staff believe that a significant number of Kennedy students are under identified in this area. The school does provide A.P. and Honors level courses to serve these students. Many Kennedy students enroll at Kennedy High School reading well below grade level. Data from ITBS testing through 1997 indicated that students improved their reading skills over four years of instruction at Kennedy High School. The 1997-8 and 1998-9 SAT 9 testing shows language and reading skills improved but only marginally.

Student attendance and health issues seem to have a significant impact on student performance. Students with high rates of absenteeism are performing at a significantly lower rate for all grade levels and groups. Kennedy High School percentages of full day absences is 9.17 % (3,318), as compared to a district average of 17.7% (24,8240). Faculty absences have risen over the last three years and a shortage of available substitutes is having an adverse effect on many students' instructional time. Statistics indicate that prior to 1999-2000 student unexcused absence rates were greater than the state and district averages.

Student surveys indicate that they have a mixed perception of the school. Grade 9 and 10 students indicate that they are unsure of staff support and not clear about what is needed for success after graduation. These students agreed they were proud to go to Kennedy High School but only a few responses agreed very strongly that they were proud to go to Kennedy High School. This group indicated that they would like to have more say in decision making and a wider range of activities to be involved in. Grade 11 and 12 students seem to be more involved in the school and have a more positive view of the school in general. Students in this group also express concerns about courses and student support. Many were very concerned about receiving more career and college counseling. Students in this group also indicated they wanted to be involved more in decision making. The surveys also indicated a very high interest by almost every student in attending some type of advanced schooling following graduation. This is a significant change in student attitudes from the data gathered for the last self-study.

Parent surveys indicate that most parents were satisfied with school performance but expected more from the school and school district if Kennedy High School was to meet their expectations. The parents expressed concerns about teacher staffing but were positive about school curriculum. Every parent survey expressed that parents had high academic expectations for their children. Many surveys indicated that parents wanted more information from the school about student progress and available resources for students. Notably a majority of the parent surveys indicated that the issue of school safety was improving to some degree. A parent group has been formed this year and they have advocated school needs to the School Board and Central Office Administration. Certainly parent support has improved but much more must be encouraged if all students are to improve their academic and personal performance upon graduation.

Student performance data collected for the last three years reflects several significant facts. Testing data for ITBS, SAT 9 and SAT indicates that Kennedy students have performed well below both state and national norms. SAT 9 scores for 1997-98 and 1998-99 reflect little if no improvement. SAT scores for college entrance have also dropped over the last three years. Fewer students are taking A.P. tests. In 1998-99 more students did take the U.S. History A.P. test and students in A.P. courses this year have indicated they are going to sign up for more A.P. tests this year. More students are taking the SAT test than in past years. District data indicates that in 1998 62% of the Kennedy senior class was *U.C./C.S.U.* eligible.

The last district follow up survey on graduates was done in 1995. That survey indicated that 31% of the graduates responded to the survey. Respondents indicated that 10% were attending technical training schools, 38% community colleges, 20% were attending 4-year colleges and universities, and 37% went directly into the work force. The school must devise a way to access more up to date data in this area.

Students are served by many on campus programs. Basic financial support comes from the state based on average daily attendance. Additional funding comes from categorical and grant funding sources. Kennedy High School receives monies from Title I, SB 813 (10th grade counseling augmentation), staff development funding, and grants that include the SPEL Program (community funded at risk program), U.C. Access Program (Math Partnership with U.C. Berkeley), Mesa, Digital High School grant, and an Urban Debate grant. R.O.P. funds are used to provide students with career and occupational training (this currently is a small program that needs to expand to serve more students).

Kennedy High School students are served by 4 full time administrators, one counselor, 51 teachers and 10 to 15 aides and tutors. Class sizes at Kennedy High School average around 25 students per class. Teaching staff turn over is a major concern for the Kennedy community. Data indicates that many teachers are in the first two years of instruction at Kennedy High School (65%). A significant number of teaching staff are either emergency credentialed or are interns completing teacher training. Most teaching departments are anchored by one or two experienced teachers. In 1999 the staff developed department learning plans to assist new teachers more effectively serve students. These plans do reflect District, County, and State performance based criteria for instruction. The revision of school wide ESLRs this year is taking hold slowly in classroom instruction. They are measurable and should assist new instructors create positive learning situations for all students. All staff seem willing to participate in the needed reforms to improve student success at Kennedy High School.

The immediate community does support student learning at Kennedy High School. Local businesses do participate in career shadow days and career fairs organized by the community on a periodic basis. The City of Richmond has participated in the three million-dollar renovation of the city swimming pool adjacent to the Kennedy campus. Planning is under way for inclusion of swim instruction and competition on the part of Kennedy High School students. Local businesses and organizations provide scholarships for students to further their education. Parents serve on LEP, School Site Council, and the School Advisory Council. Traditional organizations such as the P.T.S.A. have not functioned effectively in recent years, however a parent group has been organized and meets regularly on campus. Partnerships with Contra Costa College, California State University at Hayward, and the University of California at Berkeley continue to mature and assist student learning.

The Superintendent of the school district has set a district wide goal of 50% of all students improving testing scores above the fiftieth percentile within five years. Community and district policies in theory support educational reform to meet these ends. The site administration, staff, students, and community recognize the challenge confronting the Kennedy community to reach positive outcomes for all students who attend Kennedy High School. The process of building a school community that serves all students effectively starts with heightened expectations and sound execution of an improvement plan that is adaptable and measurable. The potential for success is very evident, however the improvement process must also be sustainable. The next several years will be very important in improving student achievement for each student attending Kennedy High School.

John F. Kennedy High School
Expected School wide Learning Results for all Students

All students graduating from Kennedy High School will meet high academic standards and will be powerful performers as

Independent Lifelong Learners

indicators: (Our community will know this when students ...)

- * access information and utilize it effectively
- * set goals; plan and act effectively to realize their completion
- * build and develop personal skills to effectively meet challenges
- * attend school regularly and on time

Effective Decision Makers

indicators: (Our community will know this when students ...)

- * develop solid situational decision making skills
- * develop processes to make positive decisions
- * gather and use data from modern resources to understand the consequences of decisions
- * collaborate with others to build consensus and effective actions

Builders of Personal Career and Life Skills Pathways

indicators: (Our community will know this when students ...)

- * develop a four year academic career plan that will lead to broader career choices
- * acquire the appropriate skills to achieve and prepare for career goals
(i.e. College, Vocational School, Apprenticeships)
- * acquire advanced technology skills applicable to the work place

Effective Communicators in Writing, Speaking / Listening, and through Technology

indicators: (Our community will know this when students ...)

- * appropriately use language to express themselves in a wide range of settings
- * develop interpersonal skills that will allow effective cross cultural communication
- * develop and use a wide range of written and technological sources

Responsible, Self-directed Citizens

indicators: (Our community will know this when students ...)

- * are concerned active positive participants in our school, community, and environment
- * will act with personal and ethical integrity and respect the rights of all people
- * demonstrate tolerance and value the beliefs and cultures of a diverse society
- * conduct themselves in a manner that will result in a safe physical environment

Definitions:

- Indicators will be measurable for each student through a wide range of assessment that will include student behavior, acquired skills, and ongoing student performance.
- Assessment will be based on high content and skills standards
- Our community includes our students, professional staff, parents and the concerned public
- High academic achievement is an ongoing expectation of all Kennedy High School students

Chapter II: Progress Report

The major change that has taken place since the 1997 review has been the revision of the ESLR's. This was not completed until November of this school year. It does not appear that there is a designated committee to oversee the implementation of the previous action plans. All of the previously existing factors that should have supported school improvement are still in place. The impediments listed by the previous visiting committee also still exist and have not been minimized.

The four target areas/ action plans were: 1. Review and integrate ESLR's annually (School Vision), 2. Write and implement schoolwide subject area performance standards, 3. Plan for inclusion of all stakeholders in site-based decision-making, 4. Create a plan for staff support and training.

Plan 1 is only partially completed. Integration of the ESLR's into the curriculum has yet to occur.

Plan 2 to write and implement performance standards. The staff has developed learning plans for instructing all students. A common format is needed as well as curriculum standards and student performance standards.

Plan 3 is also partially completed. All stakeholders are included at some level in the decision making process. There does not appear to be a "central clearing house" at the site. This particular area, a central place for decision making that is accessible for all staff underlies the problems with the accomplishment of all of the action plans. There is a separate committee for each need, i.e., Title I, Digital High School, etc.

Plan 4 doesn't appear to have been begun. There has been staff support and training but it has been done in a haphazard manner. Admittedly, the majority of staff development during the 1999-2000 school year has been spent on Focus on Learning. This is an area that needs much work in the coming year.

The needs of this school are many and the time allotted for staff development is minimal to meet these needs. The previous Critical Areas for Follow Through have not been completed and the SAT 9 scores have remained level.

Chapter III: Self-Study Process

1. *The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement*

According to the written Focus on Learning self-study, all persons involved in the student learning process were involved in this process. It appears that parents and students were not involved in the five focus group areas. The Leadership Team did much work on the completion of the report.

2. *The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through expected schoolwide learning results and academic standards*
3. *The gathering and analyzing of data about students and student achievement*
4. *The assessment of the entire school program and its impact on student learning in relation to expected schoolwide learning results, academic standards and WASC/CDE criteria.*

The start of the self-study process was delayed by the revision of the ESLRs. One of the main problems in the completion of this process was the lack of knowledge by the staff about the self-study process as well as their knowledge of teaching and assessment practices within the school. With the majority of teachers new to the job, their focus was divided between the Focus on Learning process and class control and curriculum issues.

The staff and students were very thorough about the collection of data. The students were very involved in this process and presented their findings to teachers during a staff meeting. All staff conducted interviews with students, teachers and administrators. Parents and students completed questionnaires. The school identified a communication problem between the focus groups so that individual focus groups evaluated the school in isolation. From the report the Visiting Team cannot evaluate the specific knowledge of the staff of accepted reform documents.

The collected evidence showed the many needs of this school. The strength of the school lies in the young, enthusiastic faculty. With adequate time for staff development, the staff should be able to integrate the ESLRs into the curriculum and improve the student performance. At present, there is no consensus on judging student's performance in relation to the ESLRs. Nor is there consensus on the standards for student performance.

5. *The alignment of a long-range action plan to the school's areas of need; the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the plan*

The Action Plans as written cover the areas that need to be addressed. They need more form and structure to achieve the desired goals. There does not appear to be an accountability system for monitoring the ongoing work on the action plan. It is the opinion of the Visiting Committee that this area was lacking following the last accreditation visit and one of the reasons that the previous action plans were not accomplished.

John F. Kennedy High School
Expected School wide Learning Results for all Students

All students graduating from Kennedy High School will meet high academic standards and will be powerful performers as

Independent Lifelong Learners

indicators: (Our community will know this when students ...)

- * access information and utilize it effectively
- * set goals; plan and act effectively to realize their completion
- * build and develop personal skills to effectively meet challenges
- * attend school regularly and on time

Effective Decision Makers

indicators: (Our community will know this when students ...)

- * develop solid situational decision making skills
- * develop processes to make positive decisions
- * gather and use data from modern resources to understand the consequences of decisions
- * collaborate with others to build consensus and effective actions

Builders of Personal Career and Life Skills Pathways

indicators: (Our community will know this when students ...)

- * develop a four year academic career plan that will lead to broader career choices
- * acquire the appropriate skills to achieve and prepare for career goals
(i.e. College, Vocational School, Apprenticeships)
- * acquire advanced technology skills applicable to the work place

Effective Communicators in Writing, Speaking / Listening, and through Technology

indicators: (Our community will know this when students ...)

- * appropriately use language to express themselves in a wide range of settings
- * develop interpersonal skills that will allow effective cross cultural communication
- * develop and use a wide range of written and technological sources

Responsible, Self-directed Citizens

indicators: (Our community will know this when students ...)

- * are concerned active positive participants in our school, community, and environment
- * will act with personal and ethical integrity and respect the rights of all people
- * demonstrate tolerance and value the beliefs and cultures of a diverse society
- * conduct themselves in a manner that will result in a safe physical environment

Definitions:

- Indicators will be measurable for each student through a wide range of assessment that will include student behavior, acquired skills, and ongoing student performance.
- Assessment will be based on high content and skills standards
- Our community includes our students, professional staff, parents and the concerned public
- High academic achievement is an ongoing expectation of all Kennedy High School students

Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

Vision, Leadership and Culture

- A1 *To what extent does the school have a clearly stated vision based upon its beliefs, student needs, and current educational research?
To what extent is the vision supported by the governing board and the central administration?
To what extent is the school's purpose defined by expected schoolwide learning results (ESLRs)?*

The school has a stated vision. Its stakeholders have worked to build positive learning opportunities for all students. School improvement plans began in the spring of 1997. The school community received a new administrative team in the fall of 1997. The site administration has supported some school improvement processes. They have worked hard in trying to include the input and efforts of all stakeholders.

All stakeholders reviewed the school's ESLRs from 1997 and determined that they should be rewritten to focus on higher standards and increased achievement. A tentative ESLRs revision was completed in June of 1999. However, it is not clear whether all stakeholders have a coherent understanding of the school's vision as well as the school's newly adopted ESLRs. Neither student nor parent surveys indicated whether they are aware of the school's vision or its ESLRs.

According to the self-study, district personnel and board members did not assume an active role in creating the vision, but interviews suggest that their expectations for student outcomes are congruent with the school's.

The school's new ESLRs emphasize students to accessing information, utilizing it effectively, using appropriate language to express themselves in different settings, and acting with personal and ethical integrity. Therefore, the ESLRs serve as a logical extension of the school's vision. The goals established for each subject reflect at least some of the schoolwide ESLRs.

- A2 *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions and initiate activities that focus on all students achieving the ESLRs?
To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

It does not appear at this time that the school leadership has initiated activities that focus on all students achieving the ESLRs. Decision making is top down. Also, there is no systematic plan or process in place to communicate with the school community.

The school has partnerships with UC Berkeley, SF State and Cal State Hayward.

8. Develop more effective systems to ensure administration and staff follow through with commitments, such as writing up the minutes of meetings and distributing them to staff the next day
9. Support additional team building efforts, such as pot luck lunches, theme days, and assemblies
10. Develop processes to increase both intra and inter-district collaboration on matters of teaching and learning
11. Implement (and revise) schoolwide staff development plan
12. Implement shadowing and mentoring programs, and require teachers to share what they have learned with colleagues
13. Recruit substitute teachers to support staff development efforts and raise morale
14. Improve monitoring systems to facilitate teacher development
15. Carry out suggestions of student leadership committee concerns.
16. Hold more Saturday clean-up events, with students, parents, staff, community and School Board members
17. Create better systems to facilitate communication between site supervisors and teachers
18. Establish additional support systems and strategies to promote a positive school culture

Curricular Paths

B1 To what extent do all students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent curriculum that supports the achievement of the ESLRs?

A strong effort is being made to evaluate and increase all students' participation in a comprehensive standards and ESLR-based curriculum which assures each student many post-secondary options. The committee has taken an honest and careful look at the curriculum from both the students and the staff perspectives. All students do not participate in a curriculum that is based on both content standards and the expected school wide learning results. The amount to which both these components are a foundation for instruction and content vary by teacher and subject area. The Social Science and English curricula have the most alignment between the use of state standards and JFK's ESLRs as evident in the departmental learning plans. Through projects, integration of other subject matter, and the infusion of higher order thinking skills into some assignments, these departments are trying to provide students with the opportunity to achieve the ESLRs. Both the Science and Math departments have endured high staff turnover which has affected the variety of teaching strategies used, depth of content, and overall design of the curriculum. Neither the Computer Literacy nor the Foreign Language departments offer students a state standards-based curriculum and adequate instruction to allow students to attain the ESLRs. In most classrooms the learning is based on subject-area work packets, and

- A3 *To what extent is the staff supported, utilized and monitored to facilitate student achievement of ESLRs?
To what extent are leadership and staff a part of an organized structure that is committed to professional development?*

There are opportunities for staff development, based on student needs and current research. Much of the training is targeted toward new teachers or math and science teachers. Some staff development opportunities exist for all teachers, such as conference attendance. The Vice-Principal meets with new teachers once a month to discuss classroom management and instruction. This approach helps to provide morai support. The district provides new teachers with two days per year to observe classrooms in other schools.

- A4 *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?*

The self-study states that the district provides the school with six supervisors who do an effective job of maintaining order, under the circumstances. The principal has assumed an active role in curtailing discipline problems. However, the aesthetic condition of the school makes it difficult for many students and teachers to have a sense of ownership. For example, bathrooms are not often clean or equipped with enough supplies. Graffiti is ever present. Many teachers and students believe the poor condition of the buildings and grounds has a negative effect on school climate and student performance.

Again, the self-study states that problems exist in regards to the school's culture. While the majority of the teachers hold high expectations for students, some inevitably do not. The student report suggests that both teachers and students need to make a more concerted effort to respect each other. Currently no systems or strategies exist to facilitate the sharing of educational research or discussion thereof.

Key Issues:

1. Continue to revise formal vision statement to reflect the values and priorities of students and community
2. Create systems to facilitate communication with parents, especially non-native English speakers
3. Improve communication within administration
4. Continue to revise curricula and goals to ensure students achieve ESLRs
5. Set up more processes that increase teacher accountability in a non-threatening and constructive way
6. Provide additional support programs for new teachers
7. Continue to keep teachers informed via open communication in decision making process

emphasizes the memorization of facts and the acquisition and practice of basic skills.

Several barriers keep more cross-departmental discussions and integration of ESLRs out of reach: inadequate allocation of teachers and materials, high staff turnover and the lack of time to collaborate. Due to this, minimal achievement of the ESLRs occurred. Also, the use of substitute teachers has created problems in the master schedule when some classes have been held throughout the year without a consistent teacher. Although staff members are interested in integration and development of more challenging curriculum, the large number of staff who are without certification and training makes offering more challenging classes difficult.

B2: To what extent do all students have access to the school curricular paths, assistance with the development and on-going adjustment of a personal learning plan and knowledge of post-secondary opportunities.

All students do have access to the college preparatory curricular path. However, only a few students are recruited for the AP and Honors classes. For those students not academically prepared to participate in college preparatory coursework, there is no cohesive curricular path. Both the science and social studies departments are working on creating more rigorous classes to prepare students for college preparatory courses. Also a new Broadcast Journalism course has been developed, but currently only offers bookwork even though a fully equipped lab is available for skill application. This course, along with a variety of electives, are only options and not cohesive paths. There is a strong interest in opening a pathway that would emphasize the construction trades and lead to an apprenticeship program. Students receive little assistance in developing and adjusting their learning plans. Since there is only one counselor for over 1,000 students, students and parents must take responsibility for picking courses that fit their individual goals and needs. Career and college information is discussed by students and the counselor during the 9th, 10th, and 12th grades, but students are left to pick their courses without the guidance counselor. This minimizes students' ability to access viable resources and programs.

A variety of programs such as AVID, MESA, Upward Bound and others are offered but again students must choose these programs. Few students understand and utilize these opportunities. Although a myriad of programs are offered and information is disseminated through classes, a system does not exist to assist students in monitoring and customizing their learning plans, so that they may attain their post-secondary goals. Also, all staff members are not aware of the programs available to their students.

B3: To what extent are all students prepared upon graduation to continue their academic and occupational goals.

Even with the majority of students taking college prep courses, graduates often are not fully prepared for post-secondary options either academically or in the applied skills. In part this is due to some classes remaining without an assigned teacher for the majority of the year. Since taking advantage of the various programs is seen as the responsibility of the students, few participate. There are few elective courses that allow students to change their schedule as their interests change. Even within the core academic areas, teacher absenteeism, student absenteeism, and minimal usage of effective teaching strategies hinders the depth of students' preparedness. There are few courses that offer technical training and opportunities for students to apply their knowledge. Technology training and resources are acute areas of need both for students and staff. Since there is not a system to track graduates of JFK, information about the success of students is minimal.

Areas of Strength:

1. Several programs that could provide more students with academic help, college information and career information.
2. Strong curriculum in both the Social Science and English departments.
3. Math, Science, Foreign Language, Computer Literacy and Special Education departments that are developing curriculum that integrates academic standards and the ESLRs.
4. A committed staff

Key Issues:

1. The development, maintenance and monitoring of a strong staff development program especially for new uncredentialed teachers. This would aid in both retention of staff and the development of teaching skills and knowledge.
2. Putting together a system by which students can receive more individualized support in planning their future options and current courses.
3. More staff support in the counseling department to provide deeper services to students and parents. Also there is a need to organize the multitude of programs so they may be used more efficiently and help more students.
4. Creating a system to use the Digital High school grant monies to effectively distribute and integrate technology into all courses.
5. Maintaining a focus on the many growth needs listed in the self-study.

Powerful Teaching and Learning

C1 To what extent are all students involved in challenging learning experiences to achieve the ESLRs?

According to the school report, "some, but not all, students are involved in challenging learning experiences to achieve the ESLRs." A majority of teachers use activities to advance "independent lifelong learners". There are expectations for students to be on time, responsible and organized. Teachers encourage students to work toward the goal of becoming responsible, self-directed citizens by nurturing tolerance, integrity and respect in the classroom, especially in Social Studies, English and Foreign Language classes. These activities certainly do encourage some of the school ESLRs, but leave out others. The ESLRs need to be incorporated into the curricula of more courses.

Some teachers teach to a variety of learning styles. This needs to be encouraged more widely. A wide range of teaching methodologies needs to be employed to engage students in their courses. There is limited technology available to bring students up to possessing present-day skills using computers. Steps for action in this area need to be taken. Staff training in technology use on site needs to be carried out on a regular basis. Then, what teachers learn can be incorporated into student projects. Long-term plans need to be made which deal with maintenance and ongoing help for staff in the use of computer systems.

The school library materials need to be updated so students will not have to rely as heavily on the Richmond Public Library system. Funds allocated specifically for the library need to be released in a timely manner for this purpose. In addition, resources, *i.e.*, classrooms and equipment that is on campus, need to be opened to student use instead of remaining vacant. Most important is the fact that there is not a full teaching staff on board. Too many students pass through long periods of time without permanent teachers. Obviously, these students do not receive a challenging learning experience in those classrooms.

*C2 To what extent do all students experience learning opportunities that emphasize higher order thinking skills and integrate academic and applied content?
To what extent does collaboration occur 1) among staff, 2) between staff and students, 3) among students, and 4) between school and community?*

Staff holds regular department meetings. The PE Department has intra-staff collaboration, and uses team teaching methods. Informally, faculty members help each other and give each other professional support. Students expressed a desire for more time outside class with their teachers. Clubs and interdepartmental study halls could be set up. Students also wanted more school activities that would serve to increase student morale: assemblies, rallies, oral presentations to younger schoolmates.

C3 *To what extent do students routinely use a variety of resources for learning and engage in learning experiences beyond the textbook and classroom?*

A few students are involved in the EOP Program. Some visit College Fairs, participate in job shadowing, and go on field trips. Many more learning experiences need to be arranged for students to have opportunities to realize that learning takes place in a myriad of ways. Links with the community at large should be set up to bring in people that could help give Kennedy students greater access to real-world learning.

Areas of Strength:

1. Care and concern shown by some teachers towards students, leading to students being engaged in their classes
2. Careful planning and powerful teaching carried out by several faculty members
3. Clear thinking and mature expression by upper-level students and those in the Leadership Class

Key Issues:

1. Support needed for low-achieving students to increase performance levels
2. Time allotment for mentoring program for staff
3. Effective and timely ways in which parent/community meetings are announced
4. Resources not being extended to students on a daily basis
5. Poor management of in-class teaching time on the part of some teachers
6. Alternatives lacking to straight class lectures and "book work"

Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

D1 *To what extent do all students receive appropriate support to help ensure academic success?*

Kennedy High School offers a variety of support programs in which a number of students participate. These programs include AVID, Special Education, Title 1, SPEL and Making Waves. According to the staff and students, the programs are a major means of support for students who need one-on-one attention as well as tutorial service and assistance with personal and career concerns. However, the amount of students services by these programs is limited due to fiscal, personnel and systemic constraints that include the hiring of a full complement of staff to start the academic year.

According to the Self-Study not all students are receiving appropriate support to help ensure academic success. This is due to the fact that some students, such

as possible GATE students, have not been identified. Thus, services to them have not been determined. Furthermore, though classes are diverse, there is no indication that all students have access to an integrated, meaning centered curriculum that 1) has adequate instructional library resources, 2) employs strategies to promote individual learning, 3) allows access to and progress through a rigorous core program.

Finally, it is clear that the school does not support all students in access to a rigorous core curriculum since details, such as ethnicity, gender, ELD, GATE or Special Education status are not given to teachers so that instruction can be modified to address the learning needs of the students. Also, the alternative learning schedules provided support collaborative and interdisciplinary teacher planning. This time has been used this year for WASC preparation.

The staff recognizes the need for further engagement of staff and students in developing action plans that will help accomplish their goals of providing adequate support for all students to achieve academically and develop socially; and has plans to use this collaboration time for professional development in the area of literacy training.

D2 To what extent do students have access to a system of personal support services, activities and opportunities at the school and within the community?

According to the staff and students there are a variety of clubs and other after school activities in which students can participate. These range from athletics to rehearsals for plays and choral performances. Additionally, teachers provide academic and social support for students in after school tutorials and special club sponsorships. The Y-team, Community Worker, liaison and counselor provide after school support to families by conducting workshops and informational presentations on school programs in a setting that accommodates family schedules.

There is an admission from staff, students and Central Office Administration that many students do not receive support for academic success. Support is not systemic, so that there is consistent and equitable involvement of staff and students. According to the Student Survey, questions, 30, 31, and 32 the majority of students are involved in after school activities, although it is unclear as to which activities. Students and staff suggest that a few students are involved in a variety of activities rather than a large number of student being involved in any activity.

Additionally, there is no indication from students, staff or parents that a process for the regular review of student profiles exists. Thus, programs that would address academic and behavioral interventions for students in the areas of resiliency, retention, redirection and retrieval can not be established.

D3 To what extent does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to encourage parental and community involvement?

It appears, from the Self-Study and from interviews with staff and students that the school leadership employs a variety of strategies to encourage parental community involvement. These include BTSN, Open House, PTSA meetings and home visits. Additionally, a Community Worker liaison and Familias Unidas have been established to engage non-English speaking parents and families. It is unclear how local resources (outside of the restoration of a community pool) are identified and utilized collaboratively between the school and community.

*D4 To what extent are the human, material, and financial resources as well as facilities available to the school?
To what extent are these resources sufficient and effectively used to support all students in accomplishing the ESLRs?*

The Self-Study does not specifically address this area. However, there is evidence that there are human, material and financial resources available to the school to support student accomplishing the ESLRs. These resources include teachers and other staff, (Community Worker), a Title I School Plan, SB 813 funds, SB1882 funds, MESA (University of California, Berkeley), Digital High School funds, ROP offerings and the SPEL program. There is, though, no indication of a comprehensive plan for the allocation of these resources. Therefore, a plan that includes all stakeholders needs to be developed and implemented to ensure that the allocation of all resources, ie., fiscal human and material, are appropriately used to support the academic achievement and social growth of all students.

Areas of Strength

1. Kennedy High School has a staff that is passionately committed to ensuring that all students accomplish the ESLRs.
2. The students who comprise the Leadership Class understand the critical issues affecting Kennedy High School and are in process of developing a plan to engage students in the development and implementation of possible solutions.
3. Kennedy High School has available resources that may need to be reallocated to address the critical needs and emphasis areas of the school community. These resources include SB1882 funds, SB813 funds, Title 1 funds, Promotion and Retention funds and General Fund staffing allocations.

Key Issues:

1. The development and implementation of a plan that includes the collaborative engagement of staff, students, parents and community members in a decision-making process to facilitate schoolwide decisions that impact student achievement and attainment of the ESLRs.

2. The establishment of partnerships with local businesses to provide academic, social and vocational support to students that will assist in all students attaining the ESLRs.
3. The development and implementation of a process to annually review the allocation of resources to ensure that they provide the necessary support for improving student achievement to the state required levels on the SAT9 and attainment of the ESLRS by all students.
4. Work closely with the District in an all out effort to have a full complement of staff including teachers, clerks, custodians, etc. by the start of school in order to ensure that all students have access to the core curriculum and the necessary services required to improve student academic and social achievement and ESLRs attainment.
5. Review ordering procedures with the District and hold all accountable for acquiring necessary instructional materials be available to staff and students by the start of the academic year to ensure the development of lessons and provision of services to students that will enable them to improve academically and socially and to attain the ESLRs.

Assessment and Accountability

E 1: To what extent do teachers employ a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate students and to modify curriculum and instructional practices? To what extent do students use assessment results to modify their learning in order to enhance educational progress?

The teachers of John F. Kennedy High School use a variety of assessment strategies. These include objective tests, essays, journals, group projects, reports, presentations, reading logs and portfolios. Teachers select their own assessment strategies as well as the frequency and timing of assessment.

There is no schoolwide assessment plan nor is there a staff development plan to help teachers become more proficient in the area of student assessment. Two exceptions are noted: The ESL department (English Language Learners) takes direction from the district and implements a districtwide assessment plan for their students. The mathematics department is working collaboratively with the University of California, Berkeley to develop performance standards and end of course exams. The assessments include objective items as well as open-ended items that assess students in an authentic manner and should be expanded to other content areas. More authentic assessment and collaboration within and across departments will produce more frequent and richer discussions about student performance and, in turn, more powerful modifications in curriculum and instructional practices. Currently, curricular and instructional modifications based on assessment data is limited and is left up to individual teachers who work without the benefits of inservice, a clear common purpose, or peer collaboration.

Teachers do give frequent and regular feedback to students about their performance on classroom assessments. Most of this feedback is in the form of letter grades on objective tests. Some teachers are using rubrics and a few have even developed their own. The teachers express interest in developing rubrics so that they might offer students more meaningful feedback. Once again, this will require staff training and time for collaborative work.

E2: To what extent do the school, district and community regularly review student progress toward accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results? To what extent are assessment results reported to the entire school community?

The teaching staff uses traditional processes to monitor and report student progress. Report cards or progress reports are completed every five weeks. Schoolwide assessment information including SAT-9 data is shared with the community through reports to the School Site Council, School Advisory Council, Bilingual Parent Group and the PTSA. The school staff also makes use of events like Parent-Student Orientation, Back to School Night and Open House to inform students and parents about student achievement. These events however are not well attended.

Parents would like more assessment information and communication about their individual students.

Survey data indicates that 97% of the parents want more communication about their students' achievement. Only 45% say that teachers do a good job of communicating with them and only 35% believe that they receive enough information about their students' achievement levels.

The achievement data that is shared is not clearly tied to the ESLRs nor does it encompass all of them. The discussion about how to measure the ESLRs has not begun in earnest; and the type of performance based assessment that will be needed to measure them is limited at the school.

E3: To what extent does the assessment of the expected schoolwide learning results drive the school's program development and resource allocation?

There are staff efforts underway to identify gaps between district standards and the expected schoolwide learning results. The absence of instrumentation or any systematic process to assess the limited achievement data that does exist prohibits decisions about educational program or resource allocations to be made on the basis of the ESLRs.

Student achievement data on the SAT-9 has brought about limited changes to course offerings and course content only at the ninth grade. A special reading course is offered to ninth graders and the freshman life skills class now emphasizes applied reading, writing, and mathematics.

Key Issues:

1. Identify the benchmarks for the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results and develop schoolwide tools and strategies for those benchmarks.
2. Provide staff development that promotes the use of a wide variety of assessment strategies. Focus on strategies by content area, emphasizing the connection between content standards and assessment.
3. Identify and employ assessment tools and strategies that can help to identify student strengths as well as needs. Distinguishing between student mastery of content knowledge and concepts (e.g. democracy, biological change) and basic skills (i. e. reading, writing, computation) is critical.
4. Use assessment data to modify instructional strategies.
5. Use classroom assessment information to group for instruction, for re-teaching, and for additional tutorial instruction.
6. Improve the communication between parents and teachers about student achievement.
7. Offer students the opportunity to assess their own strengths and weaknesses as well as alternative ways in which they can demonstrate their learning.

Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

Schoolwide Action Plan

The John F. Kennedy High School Action Plans were developed with the help of the Visiting Team. The school wrote its initial action plans following criteria set at the district level. These criteria were meshed with the school's needs and WASC criteria to develop the attached action plans. The areas addressed in the action plans are: 1. Correlating Curriculum Standards, Benchmarks and Assessments to the School's ESLRs in order to create a uniform policy, identify and codify standards and to put in place an effective academic and career preparatory skills-based curriculum. 2. Put into place effective schoolwide decision-making processes in order to include all stakeholders in decisions that have students' accomplishment of the ESLRs as their primary focus. 3. Improve support services for students in order to create a supportive, positive, campus environment that personally connects students to the campus and community through school and after school activities. 4. Achievement – literacy has been identified as a critical component in school success at Kennedy High School. Students generally read below grade level. Improvement is necessary to produce increasingly knowledgeable, skilled readers and writers.

The school has some strengths.

1. The faculty is committed and open to new ideas.
2. Discipline appears to be under control in the hallways and in most classrooms.
3. There are committed parents and volunteers.
4. The Leadership Team was able to come together and work out acceptable action plans that if carried to completion, will move the school towards their goal of being an academic institution.

Key Issues:

1. Reallocation of time and resources in order to carry out the action plans
2. Ability to retain staff
3. Time needed for staff development
4. Low SAT 9 scores
5. Large number of students reading significantly below grade level

The Action Plans as written are a start on the very basic needs of this school. The perception of staff and the school community (including students) is that the District Office procedures and lack of follow-up hamper the school's ability to meet students needs (teachers, textbooks, substitute) or even keep the campus clean and well maintained. But – overriding this group is the group of young enthusiastic teachers who want to see changes take place and are willing to put in the extra effort.

Existing factors that support school improvement

The major existing factor that supports school improvement is the committed staff. The community also desires to see the school improve.

Impediments to school improvement

1. Staff perceptions that all must come from district office
2. The condition of the school plant
3. The continuous turnover of staff
4. The lack of time for staff development
5. The perceived lack of support from district personnel

Soundness of follow-up process to monitor accomplishment of schoolwide action plan

There is no process in place to monitor the accomplishment of the action plan. The Leadership Team from the Focus on Learning process appears to have the desire to follow through in this area but this is not in writing nor has there been a consensus reached that this will happen.

In summary, this is a school in trouble. They have been demoralized by the low SAT 9 scores and are aware of the needs of the students and the school. They see what needs to be done but are going to need a great deal of help to see these plans accomplished.

REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING COMMITTEE FOR
JOHN F. KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL
WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

Summation of Action Plans – John F. Kennedy High School

- I. Correlating curriculum standards, benchmarks and assessments to the school's ESLRs.
 - A. Develop interdepartmental format for department learning plans
 - B. Set benchmarks
 - C. Define teaching materials
 - D. Define assessment methods
 - E. Interdepartmental meetings

- II. Develop schoolwide decision-making processes
 - A. Define what now exists
 - B. Apply for shared decision making as per contract
 - C. Train all stakeholders in shared decision making
 - D. Put policy in place
 1. Select/recruit members
 2. Assign tasks
 3. Set meeting schedule
 4. Determine focus
 - E. Implement decision making team
 - F. Evaluate shared decision making processes and outcomes

- III. Improve support services for students
 - A. Determine what exists: inventory what programs exist, in what capacity they function and which stakeholders they address
 - B. Define what stakeholders want: poll students, teachers, staff, parents to determine what support programs they would like to see
 - C. Analyze results to begin planning and implementing programs

- IV. Increase student achievement
 - A. Define what exists
 1. AVID
 2. Literacy Cadre
 - B. Disseminate information to faculty
 1. AVID methods
 2. SSR – define
 3. Literacy Cadre – reading/writing
 - C. Train faculty in all three methods
 - D. Use assessment to define student needs
 - E. Implement programs to increase student achievement
 - F. Assess success of programs
 - G. Refine programs following redefined student needs