

Redwood High School

Focus On Learning

Visiting Committee Report

March 14-17, 1999

**REDWOOD HIGH SCHOOL
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT
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Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

Redwood High School is one of three comprehensive high schools, 9-12, within the Visalia Unified School District. The school was established in 1910 and is Visalia's oldest school. Originally known as Visalia Union High School, the school was renamed Redwood High School in 1954 when a second high school was opened. The school draws students from the northern, northwestern, and southwestern sections of the city. The enrollment at Redwood High School as of June 1998 was 1,1981 students. The school was last accredited in 1993 under the "Pursuing Excellence" model.

Redwood High School is comprised of an ethnically diverse population of students. The school continues to look at and implement programs to ensure the success of all its students. Since the last accreditation, the school has implemented such programs as AVID, Restart classes, Pipeline, Early Outreach, and sheltered English classes. There are on-going efforts on the part of the school/community to provide access to all students to extra and cocurricular programs. The ethnic breakdown of the school is 42.3% Hispanic, 40.7% Anglo, 14.3% Asian, 2.3% African-American, and 1.3% Pacific Islander, Filipino, or American Indian. For the past four years there has been an increase of 50 to 175 students at the start of each school year. Overall, the enrollment has increased by nearly 100 students each year. Currently, LEP students make-up approximately 25% of the population. The percentage of students receiving AFDC is 30.4%. The drop-out rate for Redwood High School for 1996 was 6 percent.

A major challenge faced by the school/community is the small/landlocked campus. The school is physically split between two separate campuses accessed during the day by a student/pedestrian bridge. Because of this physical separation, the staff struggles with communication issues. While facilities as a whole are rich in tradition, the site is in great need of modernization and reconstruction efforts. The District has tried on two occasions in the last two years to pass a general obligation bond to help procure funds for this purpose as well as other identified sites within the District. The District is making a third attempt in April, 1999.

The certificated staff at Redwood High School consists of 56 males and 46 females for a total of 102 certificated staff members. Of the certificated staff, 13 members hold bachelor's degrees only, 48 hold bachelor's degrees plus 30 units, 21 hold master's degrees, and 20 hold master's degrees plus 30 units. Included in this category are 1 principal, 1 assistant principal, 1 vice-principal, 4 instructional deans, and 4 guidance counselors.

The classified staff is comprised of 3 groundsman, 6 custodians, 2 gym custodians, 1 counseling secretary, 1 counseling aide, 1 attendance secretary, 3 attendance technicians, 1 community aide, 2 instructional dean/assistant principal secretaries, 1 principal secretary, 1 teacher secretary, 1 library assistant, 1 finance secretary, 3 special education aides, 2 sign language interpreters, and 3 campus supervisors. Additional resource personnel include a part-time nurse, school psychologist, and a part-time Youth Development Officer.

The school requires 220 credits for graduation; 35 in social studies; 30 in English, 20 in mathematics, 20 in physical education, 10 units in foreign language or fine arts, 20 units in science, 5 units in health, and remaining units selected from elective areas. In addition, students must pass proficiencies in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Chapter II: Progress Report

A. The School's Major Changes and Follow-up Process Since the Last Self-Study:

Redwood High School was last accredited in 1993 under the "Pursuing Excellence" model. The seven major recommendations included: 1) the development of a district philosophy with goals and objectives, 2) the use of student data in the implementation of an instructional improvement process, 3) the implementation of a process to help students understand the connections between disciplines, 4) instructional practices that stress active student participation and critical thinking, 5) implementing procedures to reduce truancies and unscheduled students, 6) increasing parent and community participation, and 7) the procurement of instructional materials that are current and reflect state frameworks.

B. The Progress Made on the Recommendations of the Last Visit:

1. That the Board, in collaboration with site administration, faculty, parents, and student representatives develop a district philosophy; with goals and objectives reflecting the changing student population, fiscal constraints, and issues of restructuring and ensure that all parties have input and commitment.

The District, with full inclusion of the Visalia community, has developed a "List of Agreements" that describe what every student should know and demonstrate as a successful graduate. These agreements became the basis of Redwood High School's ESLRs. The District put into a place a fiscal policy committee. The Board of Trustees provided funding as a result of specific action plans. The Board adopted high school reform as a goal. Each high school participated in a variety of events and activities that have led to the establishment of a scope and sequence of courses for career pathways, a review of block scheduling, a multiple assessment design committee, and a three year site plan prepared by each School Site Council and reviewed annually for progress toward achievement of goals.

2. That the school administration and staff analyze student performance data and use that data in the implementation of an instructional improvement process.

The staff has collected and reviewed data in order to improve student achievement. A 9th grade orientation program was revised beginning in 1995 and new formats were implemented in subsequent years. The site administrative team at each of the three comprehensive high schools was reorganized in order to provide a more personalized environment for freshmen.

Sheltered English classes have been added in social science, English, and science. Departments have discussed strategies for improving student performance. Of special note is the expansion of the AVID program and the implementation of a Freshmen Core Curriculum for students reading 3.5 years below grade level.

3. That the school administration and faculty develop and implement a process for interdepartmental cooperation to identify and integrate common curriculum in order to assist students in understanding the connections between disciplines.

The District's curriculum meetings encourage cooperation and sharing of information between departments of the three comprehensive high schools. Redwood High School received a grant to purchase two multimedia workstations. This has fostered interdisciplinary projects between the Language Arts and Social Studies departments. While the Phoenix Project was initiated as a way of providing more support for student success, the project ended in 1996. Although no formal structure exists for interdepartmental cooperation, some individual efforts are taking place between disciplines including projects involving Art and English, and English and Social Studies.

4. That the school administration and teachers expand and incorporate those instructional methodologies which stress active student participation and critical thinking.

Some staff activities have focused on instructional methodologies and approaches that stress critical thinking skills and active student participation. All new teachers attend a Clinical Teaching workshop. Departments have been involved in curriculum alignment and through formal and informal discussions some have shared successful strategies that focus on active learning for students.

5. That the site administration and staff develop and implement a procedure to reduce the number of truant and "unscheduled" students.

The District has implemented a policy whereby all high school students must be enrolled in six periods a day unless approved by an administrator. In addition, the campus has added two additional campus supervisors and enhanced communication through the use of walkie-talkies. Other programs that promote good attendance such as AVID, and

programs that deter truancy and bad attendance such as the after-school detention program, tardy sweeps, and Saturday School have helped to reduce the number of students who are truant.

6. That the school administration conduct outreach activities to increase participation of its multi cultural parent community through groups such as School Site Council, PTA, booster organizations, as well as other avenues of communication in order to address the challenges of the community's changing demographics.

The school formed a Bilingual Advisory committee in 1995. Additionally, parents and community members were asked to participate in a needs assessment which resulted in the school receiving a Healthy Start Planning Grant..

7. That the site administration, district administration, initiate a program to purchase up-to-date textbooks aligned with current frameworks to allow student learning to be contemporary and relevant.

The Board of Trustees approved a calendar for textbook adoption. Textbooks purchases are aligned with that calendar. The school has received additional funding from the District to augment state funding for textbook purchases.

Chapter III: Self-Study Process

Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs)

- Communication
- Interpersonal Skills
- Respect of Self and Others
- Life-Long Learner
- Effective Problem Solver and Decision Maker
- Goal Setter
- Personal, Civic, and Global Responsibility

A. The degree to which the outcomes are met

Redwood High School adopted the ESLRs in March of 1996. The ESLRs are an outcome of the District's "List of Agreements" that were published in 1994. An overview of the accreditation process to all staff was given in the spring of 1998 by the WASC coordinator. During an inservice day in March, staff reviewed progress made on the major recommendations from the 1993 accreditation report. Spring and summer months included parent and student meetings as well as time for departments to develop courses of study aligned to course content. Focus groups began meeting in the fall, 1998 on a weekly basis to discuss the WASC criteria and questions.

1. The involvement and collaboration of each stakeholder groups in the Self-Study

There is evidence that RHS made an effort to include all stakeholders to participate in the self-study process. However, on some of the committees such as Curricular Paths, Powerful Teaching and Learning, and Assessment and Accountability parent representation is minimal. In addition, it appears that a cross-section of the school is not always represented among parents and students on the various committees.

2. A better understanding about the impact of the program on student learning

It is evident that the development of the ESLRs in 1996 along with the current accreditation process has prompted much discussion around "what every student should be able to know, value, do, and understand in order to be successful upon graduating from Redwood High School" and what is actually happening in the classroom. As stated in the Curricular Paths and Powerful Teaching and Learning, it is evident that staff is aware of state frameworks and standards as the result of the self-study that measured the alignment of course content and ESLRs with state frameworks and standards.

3. The development, clarification, or refinement of Expected School-wide Learning Results

During 1995/96 a series of major discussions took place regarding the District's "List of Agreements." As a result of these discussions, Redwood High School adopted its own "list of agreements" that was renamed as the school's ESLRs. The site staff also developed indicators of success or descriptors toward each of the core elements. The final version of the ESLRs was adopted in March 1996.

4. A better understanding of specific disciplines/support programs compared to appropriate curricular references/current educational thinking

The Self-Study provides some limited evidence that portions of the school/community use current educational references and educational thinkings. Some staff members are familiar with and refer to programs and reports such "Second to None," State Standards in Science, and State frameworks. Articulation agreements with COS are noted.

5. The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria, the guide questions, and the rubrics

Redwood High School employs a variety of assessment tools throughout the disciplines. In the PTL section of the Self-Study, a chart identifies the various instructional practices used in the various departments and the frequency of each instructional practice. There is some evidence that assessment results are currently being reviewed by staff although the amount of time devoted to the task does not appear to be adequate in terms of using the information to modify instructional content or delivery. Additionally, it appears that staff need to identify those instructional strategies that promote student success and make a conscious effort to incorporate those strategies on a more frequent basis.

6. The development of a schoolwide action plan and correlated discipline/support program action steps to address identified growth needs

Redwood High School identified four areas of focus in their schoolwide action plan: Student Achievement; Articulation; Communication with Stakeholders; and Facilities. It appears that the action plan is consistent with the major strands identified in the Self-Study.

7. The development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan

Based on the Self-Study document, interviews with focus groups, as well as classroom observations, it is highly-evident that the four major areas: Student Achievement; Articulation; Communication with Stakeholders; and Facilities; represent the major areas of need or focus for Redwood High School. While specific steps are cited, there appears to be a lack of what exactly is going to be accomplished by the each of the steps (objectives). In addition, assessment statements need to be more specific in regard to

how certain activities are going to be measured as well as feedback to appropriate constituents, and appropriate modification if necessary. Also, whereas the role of administration and school leadership team personnel has been identified, it is not clear what the role of teachers, students, parents, and the community at large will have in monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan.

B. The accuracy of the Self-Study

The information presented in the Self-Study is supported by written documentation, interviews with focus groups, informal interviews with students and staff, as well as general observations. In general, most all of the stakeholders interviewed, reported that the WASC process has been a positive learning and team building experience. Several individuals felt that the Self-Study coordinator is to be commended for the extensive time and effort put forth in facilitating the process. In conclusion, the visiting team finds this Self-Study to be an accurate reflection of Redwood High School.

Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

A. *Vision, Leadership, and Culture*

The process of creating the Self Study document began with department meetings in the spring of 1998 to examine curriculum and determine its alignment with the ESLRs for Redwood High School. This information, along with data from student and parent surveys, provided the first evidence in the collection process. The Vision, Leadership and Culture Focus Group began meeting in the fall of 1998 to start the process of creating its report. Students, parents, staff and administration were all involved in the group and all contributed to the overall report. They met regularly throughout the fall to gather, discuss and evaluate the information collected.

A1 Does the school have a clearly stated vision based upon beliefs, student needs, and current educational research? Is the vision supported by the governing board and the central administration? Is the school's purpose defined by the expected schoolwide learning results?

The Visalia Unified School District began the process of creating mission and vision statements in 1994. With input from all of the stakeholders in the school community, they also developed a List of Agreements, which essentially became the ESLRs for Redwood High School in 1995. In addition, the school has developed a list of indicators of success for each of the areas of the ESLRs. The work of all the stakeholders at the District level had a direct result at the site level and helped garner support for the school's work. Both the District and the school community have worked hard to make the List of Agreements, or ESLRs the foundation of their philosophy. Students are aware of the ESLRs, and more particularly of the expectations they represent, and their work is guided by the desire to achieve those ESLRs.

The process undertaken by the District and Redwood High School to create mission and vision statements and ESLRs for the district and the school has resulted in a well-thought out and widely accepted set of ESLRs and a clear picture of the expectations for the school and its students. Work on the vision for Redwood High School was based on state frameworks, the CDE's *Second to None* and NASSP published, *Breaking Ranks*. The fact that the process originated with the District has made sure that they are supportive of the results at the school site. Both the school and the District revisit the mission and vision statements and the ESLRs to keep them fresh and focused on the students.

A2 Does the school leadership make decisions and initiate activities that focus on all students achieving the ESLRs? Does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation and shared responsibility for student learning?

The leadership at Redwood High School is supported by a series of groups and committees, including a Mission and Vision Team, a Bilingual Advisory Committee and a School Site Council, which inform the leadership in several different areas. These groups and committees represent a variety of different aspects of the school community and change as the nature and priorities of the school change. The Block Scheduling Committee, for example, studied the possibility of a block schedule and monitored its use at another school in the District, but was disbanded when it was decided not to use block scheduling in the District.

The school has made a concerted effort to bring the ESLRs to the attention of every student and make all students aware of the importance of the ESLRs in the curriculum. The ESLRs are posted in every classroom and students are exposed to the ESLRs every day in the school bulletin. Though not all students understand the acronym for the ESLRs, they understand how the ESLRs are linked to their learning and classroom experiences.

The school has investigated and implemented a number of programs in order to ensure success for all students and to promote and achieve the ESLRs. The AVID program has been added to make college entrance more accessible to all students at RHS. That program has doubled in sections, indicating its success as a tool for student success. The addition of sheltered English classes to the curriculum shows the need for more challenging classes for students as they are developing proficiency in English. The school encourages the participation of all stakeholders in planning and support, yet in the Parent Group meeting, it was not readily apparent that all stakeholders are represented.

Redwood High School has also taken an active part in promoting success for its students with special attention to the freshman class. The emphasis provides more contact with counseling and intervention early in a student's career, in the hope that that will make a difference as the student progresses through high school. It is anticipated that the approach will provide students with a solid start that will carry them through 4 years of high school.

A3 Is the staff supported, utilized and monitored to facilitate student achievement of ESLRs? Are leadership and staff a part of an organized structure committed to professional development?

Redwood High School creates a professional development plan for its staff each year through its Staff Leadership Team. This plan establishes needs and priorities in the area of staff development. In addition, the staff of RHS participates in a district-wide mentor program, a new teacher support program, a special collegial program and a number of outside professional development activities as a means of improving and achieving the

ESLRs. The mentor and new teacher support programs are provided through the District; the collegial days developed and implemented at the school site this year have provided time for staff to communicate, share and plan together.

Staff members have access to financial support for conference attendance and participation in subject matter projects. CLAD, SDAIE, Advanced Placement and GATE training and instruction are available to the staff.

A4 Is the school a safe, clean and orderly place that nurtures learning? Is the culture of the school characterized by trust, professionalism, high expectations for all students, and a focus on continuous improvement?

Both students and parents indicated their satisfaction with the environment at RHS. A number of improvements to the physical plant have been made in recent years, and though students expressed a need for more bathroom facilities and the increasing enrollment at the school has put a strain on the available facilities, the school has maintained a positive image. There are, however, ongoing concerns about District limitations on maintenance. Parents support the discipline and dress codes and last spring, the staff was involved in revision of the tardy policy to improve its efficiency.

Staff involvement with clubs and activities and their own continuing efforts at self-improvement indicate their commitment to the school. The majority of students and parents feel that the work is challenging in helping to prepare students for their futures. Students do not have as high a rate of approval for the staff, but parents for the most part agree that staff treat students with respect and dignity.

Areas of Strength:

- ESLRs are a clear expression of the school's vision for all students.
- Support is provided by the District, School Board and site administration for the achievement of ESLRs by all students.
- There is ongoing work of the staff to place the ESLRs at the core of learning for all students.
- Development of collegial time has provided time for the staff to communicate, share, and plan together.
- The Freshman program has been developed to aid students in their transition to high school and to encourage success from the start of their high school careers.

Key Issues:

- Many programs have been started with little evidence of a follow-up plan to determine the effectiveness of the program.
- There are problems with facilities' usage that need to be addressed, such as communication and the utilization of the Sierra Vista campus.
- Communicating with parents, especially those whose primary language is not English, is a concern.
- Communication is a concern between staff and administration in areas of scheduling, discipline and policy.

B. Curricular Paths

B1 Do all students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent curriculum that supports the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results

The staff has clearly developed a curriculum that aligns with the state frameworks, course content and ESLRs. All students have the opportunity for a relevant and coherent curriculum that supports achievement of the ESLRs. The challenges before the staff as stated in the Self-Study are student participation, infusing technology, aligning course content within each department, providing intervention strategies for students who fail academic courses (especially in the first two years), and increased support for students with reading and language barriers. Opportunities to apply knowledge across disciplines are available to students through some departments.

B2 Do all students have access to the school's curricular paths, assistance with the development and ongoing adjustment of a personal learning plan and knowledge of realistic post-secondary opportunities?

In the vocational education departments curricular paths are available to students who choose them along with 2 + 2 programs that connect students to the community college. Those departments also informally review their students' four year plans. A college night is offered at Redwood yearly and is open to all students.

The school site staff, parents, and students have clearly demonstrated the school's support in scheduling the appropriate classes for student placement. Counselors, who see each student at least once each year, review transcripts, schedule classes, plan and discuss career interests.

The Career Center provides assessment testing and maintains a career portfolio for each student. The Career Center provides portfolio reviews, information on the center for all 9th and 10th grade English students and in the junior year students have group instruction on pre-employment and educational opportunities after high school. The Career Center technician schedules a career portfolio review with all seniors.

B3 Are all students prepared upon graduation to continue the pursuit of their academic and occupational goals?

Redwood High School has programs where students have access to the community that help them to explore the connections between high school coursework and future opportunities. Examples are evident in some on-campus clubs; visual and performing arts classes, and vocational education classes. Some classes are geared towards college, like AP and journalism, and those students excel in postsecondary opportunities. Other programs such as Early Outreach, Talent Search, and AVID promote college access. Guest speakers can be found in some classrooms and in the Career Center.

High achieving students and students who have completed specialized training courses are well prepared for postsecondary options. A district wide graduate telephone survey was completed in 1997 and found that only 2.8% of the graduates were unemployed. More than 75% of graduates continue their education. Scores from the community college placement exam reveals 30% of the seniors can be placed in college English. Redwood students score comparably or higher than the national, state, and district averages on the SAT and ACT.

Areas of Strength:

- The school has 2+2 articulation agreements with the local community colleges.
- Sheltered, restart and such programs as AVID provide support and assistance to students.
- There has been a significant reduction in student non-participation in Physical Education.

Key Issues:

- There is a large percentage of 9th grade students receiving D's and F's in core academic areas.
- There is a need to develop a process for the completion of four year plans for all students.
- A transition plan for eighth grade students needs to be developed.
- There is a need for consistent and on-going communication between the school and major stakeholders including students and parents.
- Articulation between middle and high school needs to be improved.
- Reading levels for some groups of underrepresented students are low.

C. Powerful Teaching and Learning

The process to evaluate Powerful Teaching and Learning at Redwood High School was carried out by a Focus Group made up of students, parents, certificated and classified staff and administrators. The group analyzed school profile data, course outlines and student work to locate evidence of teaching strategies and learning experiences.

C1 Are all students involved in challenging learning experiences to achieve the ESLRs? Do teachers use a variety of strategies and resources, including technology, to engage students actively and help them succeed at high levels?

Teachers at Redwood High School involve some students in a multitude of challenging learning experiences to achieve the Redwood High School ESLRs. Department courses are aligned to the Visalia Unified School District's "List of Agreements" and the California Department of Education State frameworks. The Redwood High School master schedule has been revised to provide a focus on a more diverse student population. Sheltered classes are being infused into the curriculum to provide more success for students in the academic core. Technology is available in many classrooms and the library. With the implementation of the Digital High School Grant, technology will be more available for staff and students.

Math assist classes, migrant tutorial, and restart programs provide the necessary resources for students to be successful in their educational endeavors. The tutorial programs support the regular curriculum and provide for a comprehensive educational experience for students. Many teachers hold their own tutorial sessions before, during and after school. Graduation requirements are being modified to include Algebra I and Biology so that a greater number of students are enrolled in challenging courses. The staff is aware that students will require additional support to meet those requirements.

The instructional staff is developing a variety of instructional strategies and resources to actively engage students. Students are completing collaborative projects, labs and projects reflect real world application. An emphasis in some departments is being placed on developing the necessary skills for workplace success. A variety of extra and cocurricular activities are available for students.

C2 Do all students experience learning opportunities that emphasize higher order thinking skills and integrate academic and applied content? Does collaboration occur 1) among staff, 2) between staff and students, 3) among students, and 4) between school and community?

Teachers require students to utilize higher order thinking skills as they apply to their course work. Critical evaluation, analysis, interpretation, and application of knowledge are components of some classes. Redwood High School staff is enacting cross-curricular approaches in similar subject areas of the curriculum (e.g. science, social studies,

English, art). Department objectives and courses of study have been standardized throughout each department. There is strong evidence that focuses standardization of curriculum in subject matter throughout the Visalia Unified School District. At Redwood High School, peer coaching is evidenced in at least eight subject matter areas. Portfolio assessment is being embedded in some subject matter areas.

A sense of collaboration and collegiality is evident throughout the faculty at Redwood High School. Collaboration is made more difficult because some departments are split across two campuses. The entire Math Department as well as sections of other departments are located at the Sierra Vista campus. The block schedule concept was reviewed by Redwood High School but never implemented. Collegial time is critical to the continued development of challenging learning activities.

There is strong evidence to suggest the use of community resources in appropriate classroom settings. Some classes have tapped into the community, businesses and the College of Sequoias for infusion of new and relevant information in subject matter areas. In the vocational, business, and agricultural programs, advisory committees are in operation and contributing to reshaping the overall direction of the departments in the changing workplace. Co-curricular and extra curricular programs are actively supported in the community. Co-curricular and extra-curricular programs have experienced success at both the state and national levels of competition.

C3 Do students routinely use a variety of resources for learning and engage in learning and engage in learning experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom?

Students at Redwood High School are strongly encouraged to engage in learning experiences beyond the classroom. There is strong evidence that teachers provide students with opportunities to interact with the community. In addition to traditional methodologies, staff and students have access to the internet on computers in the library. Continued staff development will be important as the Digital High School grant is implemented. A process of refinement of regular and supplemental courses of study and adapting of new methodologies will boost chances of student success.

In all vocational arts and visual/performing arts classes, students present exhibitions, productions, and competitions to engage students in the application of concepts. In economics, statistics, industrial technology, social studies, and physics, students are required to go beyond the classroom to prepare projects and complete research. In English classes, students participate in speech tournaments, poetry competitions, and essay contests. Journalism and yearbook are run like businesses with established budgets. Students in these classes connect with local businesses by selling ads, meeting production deadlines, and marketing a finished product. In work experience classes, students receive credit for jobs in the actual workplace. Work experience students meet once a week to discuss issues and potential problems encountered in the everyday workplace.

In many departments at Redwood High School, students create their own resources by creating video presentations, newspapers and artistic productions that are presented to other students. The Career Center technician provides speakers for a "Career Fair" and a "Vocational Technology Fair." In addition to these two fairs, the Career Center technician organizes a job information database and vocational preference testing. By the senior year, a summary of students' vocational aptitudes, job seeking skills and potential career paths is provided to students. Students are also able to experience extra and co-curricular activities through athletic participation, Math Club, German Club, the Foreign Language Fair, the Engineering Team, Mock Trial, Youth in Government, HIV Peer counseling, Future Business Leaders of America and the Speech Club.

Areas of strength:

- Students are provided opportunities that go beyond the normal classroom experience.
- Local businesses are resources for the changing workplace.
- Redwood High School teachers have aligned courses with state frameworks.
- District high schools articulate on an informal basis to develop clear course standards and sequence.
- Collegial days provide avenues for teacher communication on key issues.
- Extra-curricular and co-curricular offerings are numerous and encompassing.
- Many students demonstrate the use of higher order thinking skills.
- Staff recognizes the need to accommodate students who lack prerequisite skills.

Key Issues:

- Communication among teachers, counselors and administrators is critical for student success.
- Information on incoming 8th grade students is not readily available to make proper placements.
- Many students are unwilling to do the work assigned in the classroom and for homework.
- The limitations of facilities inhibits collaboration and in some cases curricular offerings.
- Excessive absences and tardies limit the ability of staff to interact successfully with all students.
- Ongoing collegial time is necessary for integration of curriculum.
- Safety, communication and isolation are concerns at Sierra Vista campus.
- Students with low skills struggle to meet graduation requirements.
- Instructional staff and counselors need to collaborate to ensure proper student placement in courses.
- Teachers and administrators need to continue work on a consistent discipline and tardy policy.
- Classroom strategies need to be shared and discussed to address the unmotivated student.

D. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

D1 Do all students receive appropriate support to help ensure academic success?

Redwood High School administration and Visalia Unified School District support staff development. This year the school used three staff in-service days and 16 collegial days to meet the academic support needs of their students. Academic success begins in the classroom. Eighty percent of parent surveys and seventy-one percent of student surveys strongly agree or agree that teachers are interested in students succeeding academically. Teachers are available formally and informally to students as evidenced by the following:

- Math department office is staffed before school daily, and during the day in most every case;
- Foreign Language department arranges times for students to come in for additional support;
- Music teachers provide individual lessons;
- CADD lab is open at 7:00 a.m. for student use;
- All departments offer some case-by-case assistance by arrangement.

Some student support systems seem to be proactive and utilize community services. Both the University of California & California State University systems have programs that are readily available to recommended or underrepresented students at Redwood High School. Freshman Core Curriculum is designed to catch students who are at-risk along with three other programs, Special Education, PASS, and ELD, which work with already identified special needs students. There is a large AVID program at Redwood High School involving five sections and 123 students. This provides for support with study skills, goal setting, college searches and additional support twice weekly.

The student survey indicates 71% of the students feel their teachers are available and will offer help when requested. Tutoring is offered by a limited number of departments although students who need academic support are encouraged to ask teachers for help or tutoring. In addition, lists of student tutors in Math and Foreign Language are posted in many locations. The Visalia community library provides tutorial assistance upon referral by the school as well as student request.

The Library-Media Center is well equipped with books and is working to improve technology and internet access. It has a welcoming atmosphere and is open before school, at lunch, and after school. It offers a full compliment of technology resources including:

- On-line catalog;
- CD ROM's;
- Electric library on internet.
- Professional Collection room

All freshman English classes receive library instruction and many teachers use the library in a classroom period. Students also use the library extensively. The library hours are convenient and access for all students is provided. The student survey shows that 85% of the students are familiar with and know how to use the library. The parent survey shows that 68% of the parents are aware of the resources the library offers including the use of computers. It houses a full inventory of resources for students and teachers which reflect culture, language, and interests. Student work is regularly displayed.

Academic offerings are extensive and the master schedule is built based upon student demands and needs. Special programs are also in place to meet the needs of all students including special day, LEP, resource, and advanced.

Student performance drives selection at Redwood. All students have access or opportunity to enroll in courses, even AP, if they show the ability to be successful.

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

Eligibility and personal desire are the only obstacles to student involvement at Redwood. Students are recruited frequently by staff for participation in clubs, athletics, music, drama, etc. There are many opportunities for students to become active participants at RHS.

Competitive teams, performing groups, productions and leadership opportunities exist at all levels for students. Students experience many accolades and championships through their involvement. There is strong support among students, staff, parents, and community for involvement in a vast array of activities at Redwood. It is a constant challenge to students, staff, and parents to maintain the high level of excellence in all programs.

Guidance counselors focus mainly on scheduling, discipline, and attendance. A Career Center technician provides career information to 9th through 11th graders. A career portfolio exists in the Career Center for all students. For 12th graders the technician attempts a senior review for each student. Through observation and dialogue with students, staff, and focus groups there is strong evidence that the Career Center contributes to the successful preparation of students for life after high school.

As a result of administrative reorganization two years ago, Instructional Deans are responsible for all discipline, counseling, and scheduling of 9th graders. For grades 10-12 counselors assume the same responsibilities. The survey shows that 53% of the parents feel they receive accurate, clear, and timely advice from school and staff in choosing the right course of study for their student. The results of the parent focus group meeting indicated a high concern for additional information in the areas of senior activities, college counseling and application dates, career pathways, and testing dates.

There are additional resource personnel in the form of a school psychologist available one and a half days per week. Staff also makes referral to Visalia Youth Services. Limited time is available for student support services at Redwood in the form of a school psychologist, school nurse, and Youth Development Officer. Some staff indicated a need for more on-staff coaches.

D3 Does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to encourage parental and community involvement?

Communication is often conducted in appropriate languages. Examples include school newsletters and the graduation requirements published in Spanish, English, and sometimes Lao. Some instructional aides are bilingual including some who sign. These individuals help provide students and parents easier access to the school, as well as interpreting at many parent functions.

The business community participates regularly and often donates many hours to students and the school. Such activities include, career and vocational fairs, Mock Trial, FBLA job shadowing, athletic physicals, and guest speakers. Many other organizations donate money and resources through yearbook and newspaper advertisement, athletic equipment, and senior scholarships. Other student connections to community are evidenced through varied school activities organized by campus and community clubs.

Redwood High School has identified several parent community advisory boards. Although the depth and breadth of parent involvement is unclear it is apparent that a wide range of activities and purposes are covered and opportunities exist for parental input. In addition there are numerous ways for parents to involve themselves in the activities of the school including, booster organizations, volunteering at various events, and participation in the PTA.

D4 What are the human, material, and financial resources, as well as facilities available to the school? Are these sufficient and effectively used to support students in accomplishing the ESLRs?

The average length of service at Redwood High School among certificated staff is 18 years. Approximately 40% of the certificated staff hold a master's degree. The 102 credentialed employees are supported by 32 classified workers.

Three staff development days and 16 collegial days have provided opportunity to receive training and support aimed at improving student learning. Most new teachers are supported through the BTSA and/or PDS process. There is staff development money to "seed" teacher participation at conferences and subject matter projects.

All general funds are distributed by the principal through departments. Special funds are allocated based upon committee and designated funding sources. Some additional funds

have been received to augment funding for the library, textbooks, summer school enrichment, science, and industrial technology.

Redwood has submitted an application for Digital High School grant which will enable staff and students greater access to learning opportunities.

The unique challenges of a split landlocked campus have necessitated that the staff remain flexible and creative. The restrooms are of major concern for staff and students alike as evidenced by student surveys, focus group discussions, and student interviews. Some athletic and physical education facilities are at a premium due to the landlocked status of the campus.

Areas of Strength:

- The hours, personnel, and resources available in the Library/Media Center to students is an asset to the school.
- The Career Center and Guidance Technician provide valuable information to all students.
- The school has a large offering of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities
- There is exceptionally strong support by the parents and community for extra-curricular and co-curricular activities.

Key Issues:

- There is a need to improve the communication system particularly between the main campus and Sierra Vista campus.
- There is a need to review current coaching staff to determine the effectiveness of walk-on coaches versus on-staff coaches. Based upon the review, recommendations should be made and a plan established to implement the recommendations.
- Communication to parents needs to be more frequent and consistent in terms of the types of information parents feel is important; ie. college entrance information; grades.

E. Assessment and Accountability

- E1 Do teachers employ a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate students and to modify curriculum and instructional practices? Do students use assessment results to modify their learning in order to enhance their educational progress?

Based on the Self-Study, assessment is identified as an important part of the Redwood High School educational process. Redwood High School has a comprehensive program utilizing a wide variety of teacher developed assessment tools as evidenced during focus group meetings and observation of student performance including; individual and group tests and quizzes, variety of projects (both individual and group), essay and short exams, writing assignments from journals to research papers, oral presentations and performances, use of lab experiments and write-ups, and use of portfolios.

Teachers monitor students and modify curriculum and instruction based upon their observations of student learning. Examples of monitoring and adjusting curriculum and instruction are; creation of math assist classes, creation of sheltered instruction classes, implementation of the Jane Shaffer essay writing program, willingness of teachers to assist students in class and outside of class one-on-one, initiation of restart classes in English, math, and foreign language as evidenced by dialogue during the Curricular Paths committee meeting, review of the master schedule, and classroom observations.

District standards for assessment and accountability have begun as evidenced by the creation of the Visalia Comprehensive Assessment System (VCAS) during the 1998-99 school year. This program is designed to measure and report student performance in various areas including math, science, social science, and English. Additionally, during the Assessment and Accountability Focus Group meeting it was shared that common district exit exams are being developed for implementation in June, 2000. Redwood High School reports student progress on statewide standards as measured by SAT 9 and GSE. Nationally, scores for student performance in SAT, ACT, PSAT, and AP are reported.

Students are mostly involved in informal processes of assessment such as evaluation of other student work/projects, portfolios, or in analyzing course content and delivery through question, discussion, or survey. This was observed in some content areas including social science, science, agriculture mechanics, and CPM math.

As discussed in focus group, teachers would like to spend more collegial time interacting and developing strategies across disciplines to improve core academic skills in writing, computing, and higher order thinking skills. More time could be spent on analyzing assessment results.

E2 Do the school, district, and community regularly review student progress toward accomplishing the ESLRs? Are assessment results reported regularly to the entire school community?

Student progress is reviewed and reported by Redwood High School teachers and staff utilizing several traditional means as evidenced by classroom observations, focus group meeting, and school achievement data. These include computer generated grade sheets which are posted several times per quarter, progress reports completed midway through each quarter as stated during powerful teaching and learning committee meeting, and grade reporting every nine weeks. Teachers report that entry and exit level skills for 9th and 10th graders have been developed or are being developed in committee. In meeting with counselors it was evidenced that they provide continuous support for students in several ways including, face-to-face registration each year, 10th grade counseling for progress review, and ASVAB (optional for 11-12 graders).

Mandated tests are reported to various populations utilizing a variety of methods including, direct mailing to parents, schoolwide results published by the local newspaper, faculty/department meetings and inservices, PTA published newsletter, SSC review of data, and reports made to the district and governing board.

Informal methods to acquaint parents with student achievement are accomplished through parent nights (Back to School, Open House, AVID Parent Night, Family Math Night), and student performances (Band, Choir, Drama, Orchestra, Art exhibits).

Special needs parents are kept informed of student achievement additionally through IEP meetings, and ITP meetings.

E3 Does the assessment of ESLRs drive the school's program development and resource allocation?

There are many forces that effectively drive Redwood High School's program development and resource allocation. These include technology development, Digital High School application, increased offerings in sheltered instruction in English, Biology, Health, World and US History, Drivers Education, Math B Course I and Algebra I, restart classes, and Freshmen Core Curriculum

Teachers in focus group meetings and individual interviews have indicated that State standards, TIMSS report, SAT9 testing, and district standards all play a part in supporting student outcomes or ESLRs. Many funding sources are available for program development to support ESLRs. These include 1882 Staff Development monies, Special Education, GATE, and Carl Perkins/VEA.

Areas of Strength:

- The implementation of collegial time for departmental and interdisciplinary dialogue and data review of assessment results is seen as a major plus by staff.
- The implementation of VCAS as a district-wide assessment model with common exit exams will provide better data on individual student strengths as well as areas for improvement.
- There is a willingness among staff to work on improving student achievement of middle band of students (i.e. AVID).

Key Issues:

- There needs to be a linkage of mandated assessment results with teacher developed assessments.
- An allotment of time is necessary to continue to analyze data to allow for informed decision making and to align Content Standards (curriculum) to Performance Standards (assessment).
- There needs to be continued establishment of schoolwide benchmarks to monitor student achievement and growth in like courses.
- The implementation of a six week grading period would help to increase the frequency of communicating and reporting to students and parents.
- The re-establishment of articulation committees at the district level may help to ensure on-going dialog and consistency in the areas of curriculum development and alignment.

F. SCHOOLWIDE STRENGTHS

- F1 Synthesize the strength and key issues from all categories into schoolwide strengths and schoolwide critical areas for follow-up.**

Redwood High School provides quality educational experiences for students in several areas. The certificated, classified, and administrative staffs demonstrate a strong rapport, support, and bond with each other.

Schoolwide Strengths:

1. The students and staff at Redwood High School demonstrate strong loyalty and positive feelings toward the school.
2. Redwood High School staff provide exemplary co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for students. Examples of such include but not limited to: FBLA; Visual/Performing Arts; Journalism/school newspaper (Gigantea); Agriculture; and Athletic programs;
3. Redwood High School promotes academic achievement and excellence through such programs as Advanced Placement and Honors level courses.
4. Redwood High School has implemented a variety of programs to assist students who need extra support. Examples of such are: Math Assist; AVID; Pipeline; after-school tutoring; Restart classes; and the training for interested juniors and seniors in Link Crew, a program that will provide mentors for incoming freshmen.
5. Collegial days have provided opportunities for departments to meet and discuss issues related to the Self-Study. As a result, staff members have reported better communication among staff, the sharing of information regarding concerns and successes, and better articulation within and across departments.

Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-up:

1. The school has a solid foundation in a few major areas that could naturally lead to the implementation of career academies for students including but not limited to: Business; Agriculture; and Journalism.
2. Staff needs to focus on interdepartmental collaboration as a way of helping to promote the concept of curriculum integration and foster the articulation process. In addition, the opportunities to observe other colleagues in a classroom situation will help ensure consistency within a department as well as sharing creative and successful teaching strategies.

3. Academic achievement, particularly among Freshmen, should be examined on an on-going basis, and efforts implemented based on data, to ensure student success.
4. There is a need to continue collegial days to support school-wide efforts in curriculum development, alignment, review of schoolwide data, and consistency in grading and expectations throughout individual departments and across the curriculum. A comprehensive staff development plan should be developed to help define activities, workshops, and other events to support the efforts listed in the action plan.
5. The staff needs to implement the vision as reflected in their recently approved Digital High School grant to ensure that technology is incorporated in every program and classroom throughout the school.
6. Staff needs to continue to explore ways to enhance communication within and outside the campus. Being able to clearly define and adhere to a communications structure will promote better communication among staff members. In addition, communication efforts, such as the mailing home of school bulletins, should constantly be evaluated and revised to meet the information needs of students and parents.

The schoolwide strengths and critical areas for follow-up were identified through the Self-Study document and validated through focus group discussions, staff, student, and parent interviews, and from input from the site and district administration. The school has a strong history and culture that undisputedly contribute and influence the overall success of students in a variety of programs and venues. Staff is very aware that continued efforts for improvement need to take place in the area of academic success for all students. The critical areas for follow-up exemplify improving instruction for students and providing additional tools for learning.

The areas identified in Redwood High School's action plan: Student Achievement; Articulation; Communication with Stakeholders; and Facilities reflect the major areas that impact student achievement at the school. While the action plan lists specific steps that address the four major areas, more specificity is needed to help clearly define what it is the school desires to accomplish in each step. The assessment category defines what the end result might be, but lacks the actual assessment instrument(s) to be used to measure the effectiveness of each step. Finally, it is not clear what role other major stakeholders play (teachers, classified, students, and parents) in each of the steps.

Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

Action Plan No. 1 Student Achievement

Rationale: In order to accomplish the ESLRs, all students must improve performance on standardized and teacher-developed assessments.

Areas of Needed Improvement:

1. Coordinated system of analysis on assessment results
 2. Curricular adjustments and instructional methodologies
 3. Causes of student underachievement
- A. Adequacy of the School's Action Plan and the Degree to Which It Addresses the Critical Areas for Follow-up

Question 1: Does the action plan address the critical areas for follow-up?

While a good deal of the data and information has already been collected and some discussion has already occurred to this point, there is limited evidence that the plan includes any concrete action to use the data. There also does not appear to be mention of staff development activities to introduce and enhance instructional strategies. Because of the current availability of student data, staff should be able to revise the timeline to begin work in this area at an earlier date than stated.

The staff had instituted isolated programs and solutions, but a systemic approach coordinating all of these parts is lacking from the plan. Additionally, the role of teachers is not clearly defined.

Question 2: Will the action plan enhance student learning?

The plan should provide for a systemic approach to data collection and analysis. In addition, through the use of curricular adjustments and the enhancement of instructional methodologies more students should demonstrate success throughout the core curriculum.

Question 3: Is the action plan feasible within existing resources?

Although there appears to be sufficient resources to carry out the plan, there does need to be a commitment of time from the district and site to allow teachers ongoing dialogue and discussion.

Question 4: Is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?

Redwood High School staff appear to be firmly committed to establishing avenues for collegial dialogue and discussion as well as the utilization of student data to improve student success.

B. Existing factors that will support school improvement:

The staff has already begun some of the work in the plan and have a good support system within the school. A good understanding seems to exist of current programs and how such programs can be used to support the plan.

C. Impediments of school improvement:

There needs to be an ongoing commitment to allow staff time to address the key issues in the plan.

D. Soundness of the follow-up process:

There appears to be a need to more clearly define objectives for each of the steps in the action plan. In some areas the measures of effectiveness are not evident and the role of other major stakeholders, including teachers, students and parents is not clearly defined.

Action Plan No. 2
Articulation

Rationale: More effective articulation among the different segments of the educational community will enhance the likelihood of students accomplishing the ESLRs.

Areas of Needed Improvement:

1. Articulation among departments
2. Articulation across disciplines
3. Establish structure for articulation

A. Adequacy of the School's Action Plan and the Degree to Which It Addresses the Critical Areas for Follow-up

Question 1: Does the action plan address the critical areas for follow-up?

There is definitely a need to establish a formal structure and appropriate time for collegial interaction to accomplish these tasks. The efforts and the time spent by the staff on the Self Study has helped to define the structure and the necessary activities in this area. While there is mention of articulation within and across departments in the school, there also needs to be mention of how similar articulation will take place with the other two comprehensive high schools and with the District. Additionally, it is not clear what the role of teachers and other appropriate stakeholder groups play in this process.

Question 2: Will the action plan enhance student learning?

It is anticipated that through the coordination of curriculum throughout the departments and other comprehensive high schools in the district, the school will establish clearly stated standards and expectations for student achievement in the various curricular areas.

Question 3: Is the action plan feasible within existing resources?

It appears that resources exist to support such efforts with the commitment of ongoing staff release time/collegial days.

Question 4: Is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?

There is strong evidence to suggest that teachers, site administration, and district leadership support efforts in this area.

B. Existing factors that will support school improvement:

The current school structure consists of formalized departments with department chairpersons. Release time is provided for each department chair and during the 1998-99 school year collegial days were allocated to promote discussion and articulation within and among the departments.

C. Impediments of school improvement:

There needs to be an ongoing commitment to allow staff time to address the key issues in the plan.

D. Soundness of the follow-up process:

There appears to be a need to more clearly define objectives for each of the steps in the action plan. In some areas the measures of effectiveness are not evident. The role of teachers and other appropriate stakeholders is not clearly defined.

Action Plan No. 3
Communication with Stakeholders

Rationale: Increased and improved communications for the families, students, and staff of Redwood High School would enhance the understanding of the school program and policies, making the achievement of the ESLRs a common goal.

Areas of Needed Improvement:

1. Timely and frequent methods of communication
2. Improved methods for communicating graduation and postsecondary opportunities
3. Enhancement of daily communication systems

A. Adequacy of the School's Action Plan and the Degree to Which It Addresses the Critical Areas for Follow-up

Question 1: Does the action plan address the critical areas for follow-up?

Communication items are mentioned throughout the Self Study and through focus group discussions. Many focus group members mention the need for more frequent and clear communication within and among all groups. The plan for communication however, does not appear to address the school's population of Non-English speaking students and parents.

Question 2: Will the action plan enhance student learning?

The elements of the plan for communicating information regarding graduation requirements and postsecondary opportunities should provide students with better and more timely information to enhance individual success.

Question 3: Is the action plan feasible within existing resources?

It appears that existing resources along with the upcoming receipt of the Digital High School grant is sufficient to support efforts in this area.

Question 4: Is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?

There is strong evidence to suggest that teachers and the site administration support efforts in providing more information to major stakeholders.

B. Existing factors that will support school improvement:

While some current communication avenues already exist, the modification and revision of some of those items listed (i.e. the change in grading periods) as well as including a Freshman study skills program would need to be added to accomplish these steps.

C. Impediments of school improvement:

No impediments have been identified.

D. Soundness of the follow-up process:

There appears to be a need to more clearly define objectives for each of the steps in the action plan. In some areas the measures of effectiveness are not evident.

**Action Plan No. 4
Facilities**

Rationale: A school site that is properly maintained and continually improved leads to a school climate that is conducive to student learning and achievement of the ESLRs.

Areas of Needed Improvement:

1. Availability and cleanliness of restrooms
4. An emergency communication system
5. Technology
6. Overall facility improvement

A. Adequacy of the School's Action Plan and the Degree to Which It Addresses the Critical Areas for Follow-up

Question 1: Does the action plan address the critical areas for follow-up?

Based on evidence cited in the Self Study, discussions and focus groups, direct observations, and individual interviews, it is quite evident that the facilities at Redwood High School have a strong impact on availability to enhance and add new programs.

Question 2: Will the action plan enhance student learning?

With the receipt of the Digital High School grant, the use of technology by teachers and students should help to enhance the overall instructional program and individual student achievement. Improved communication systems will provide opportunity for staff and students to communicate clearly and effectively.

Question 3: Is the action plan feasible within existing resources?

The district has begun some minor renovations of current restroom facilities on site. In addition, the site will be receiving Digital High School grant funds which will assist staff in the implementation of the use of technology campus wide.

Question 4: Is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?

All major stakeholders involved in Redwood High School agree that major renovation of facilities including the enhancement of technology are key issues. It appears that there is strong support among the major stakeholder groups to support the procurement of outside financial resources (i.e. general obligation bond) to complete these projects.

B. Existing factors that will support school improvement:

There is a strong desire among all major stakeholder groups for the infusion of technology across the curriculum as well as the understanding that some type of formalized communication be developed for emergency situations.

C. Impediments of school improvement:

Outside funding sources for modernization and new construction need to be obtained.

D. Soundness of the follow-up process:

Areas of need have been clearly defined in such documents as the Digital High School grant and the districts plan for modernization of facilities.