

**Susan Miller Dorsey High School**  
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Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
**ACCREDITATION**  
March 19, 2001 through March 21, 2001

Visiting Committee Report

**Chapter I: Student Community Profile**

*Comments on significant findings revealed by the profile and/or pertinent items that were not included in the profile*

Demographic Data

Susan Miller Dorsey High School is a comprehensive high school built in 1937 in the inner city of Los Angeles, California. The school is located in a predominately residential area, with one boundary adjacent to a large city park/recreational complex. The community includes some affluent families with the majority of families earning lower than average incomes. Occupations of the populations range from blue collar to professional. Within the community, there are numerous churches, medical facilities, and a variety of professional and retail services, including a shopping mall. There are also many single-family residences, as well as a large number of multi-unit apartments and condominiums, with an increase in federally subsidized housing.

The student population consists of primarily two ethnic groups, Black, not Hispanic (63%), and Hispanic (36%). Currently, there are more than 1,800 students. These students consist of 21% English Language Learners, with two-thirds of the total student population are identified as economically disadvantaged. The mobility rate of 26%, demonstrates a continual decline in student enrollment from ninth to twelfth grade. The 2000 CBEDS report reflects a 14% high school drop out rate. In addition to the percent of students reported as drop outs, the loss of students from ninth to twelfth grades is a result of students leaving the area, transferring to alternative programs or magnet schools within the Los Angeles Unified School District.

The school is identified as a Title I school, receives EIA funds, and is in the first year of implementing three major grants, Healthy Start (geared to improve school attendance, academics, student health, and family support), Digital High School (designed to add technology and training for staff and students), and Intermediate Interventions Under-Performing Schools (for the purpose of raising API based on data analysis and developing and implementing an action plan).

The Special Education Department has seven RSP teachers, eleven SDC teachers, and one teacher serving multiple-handicapped students. During the past two years, the Special Education Department has grown from a staff of twelve teachers to nineteen. Special Education staff delivers instruction in all core areas, aligned to district and state standards. In addition, fifty students participate in the Transition Services Program which provides additional services for supporting school-to-career, subsidized employment opportunities, and ongoing training.

Ninety Gifted and talented students are served through differentiated instruction provided in honors and advanced placement offerings. Currently, the school provides seventeen advanced placement courses in English, Spanish, mathematics, science, and social studies.

English Language Learners receive support through English Language Development (ELD) instruction, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), Sheltered English Strategies, Structured English Immersion (LAS 1 and 2), and Advanced English Language Development (LAS 3 and 4). Ninety-six percent of staff serving English Language Learners have earned appropriate certificates/credentials.

In addition, Dorsey High School supports three magnet schools; Mathematics/Science/Technology, Law and Public Service, and Police Academy, serving approximately 500 students. Each magnet focuses in specific academic and extra-curricular areas and each has established public and private partnerships.

Parent, student and staff surveys indicate that Dorsey High School provides a safe learning environment. However, during interviews with parents and students they indicated that most students do not feel safe in the community outside Dorsey High School. Dorsey High School maintains two full time Los Angeles Unified School District police officers, and 3 full time and 1 part-time classified security personnel.

Dorsey High School's actual attendance rate is 84%, including those students excused due to illness and other reasons per Education Code. Truancy rates vary, with the highest number of truanancies occurring during first and sixth periods. The school has recently initiated a lock-out policy for students who do not arrive to class on time.

Sixty-eight percent of Dorsey High School's staff are fully credentialed, with 29 % of the teachers on emergency credentials (API/CBEDS DATA). The school staff is not representative of the Hispanic student population. Some teachers have participated in staff development, in service training, and specialized training programs for professional growth.

#### Outcome Data

The California Department of Education reported in 1999 an API base of 439 with a target growth of 18. The school grew one point for all subgroups, not meeting the expected growth target. This year the base is 440, with a target growth of 18. The school currently has a statewide rank of one with a similar school's ranking of three. The Hispanic or Latino subgroup exceeded its growth target by 1 point. The Black (non-Hispanic) subgroup did not demonstrate any growth, therefore, missing the target by 18 points. The socio-economic subgroup increased by 7 points. The number of students scoring above the 50% is below 26% (except for 11<sup>th</sup> grade social studies (36%)). Teachers generally agreed that they were teaching to the standards, but classroom visitations conducted by IIUSP contradict that position. Based on teacher surveys (27 faculty members returned the survey form), teachers agreed that they have high expectations for students, but more than 60% indicated that they do not collaborate with other teachers on developing units of student or assessments.

Classroom visitations, conducted by the IIUSP consultant and the school's principal, indicated that there is no consistent program in place for standards implementation or assessment of standards mastery. Based on these visitations, there was little evidence of standards-based instruction in the classrooms or examples of strong direct instruction.

The school staff has reviewed and discussed SAT-9 Desegregated Achievement Data during a presentation conducted by the principal of Dorsey High School. During this presentation, several major areas were identified as needing improvement. The areas identified were Reading and mathematics.

In addition to this staff development exercise, student achievement data has been shared within the Leadership Team, departments, and at grade level meetings. Student portfolios, projects and report cards are shared among staff members. Analysis of students receiving failing grades is shared at department meetings. A small percentage of students have completed a-g requirements. The school does not have a tracking system in place to identify how many students enter post-secondary programs.

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Chapter II: Progress Report

*Comments on the school's major changes and follow-up process since the last self-study*

Susan Miller Dorsey High School has addressed the school's critical areas for follow-up since the last accreditation visit using *Pursuing Excellence*. In this process, the school involved all stakeholders, students, staff, parents, and community, in addressing the recommendations. The school has identified several very positive outcomes as a result of this process. In the three-year progress report the school identified a need to further address two areas: 1) *The district and administration develop and implement a program that will provide a clean and appropriate physical facility, which should promote healthy conditions, enhance student learning and support school pride;* 2) *. . . Although the counselors strive to work with all students to formulate a four-year plan which includes choosing the path to achieve the student's individual goal, it is the opinion of the committee preparing this report that this is not practiced consistently. Additionally, the students need more regular counseling consisting of a review of their plan and assessment of their interest and level of success.*

Since the three-year visitation, the following has been accomplished.

To improve the physical facility to promote healthy conditions and enhance student learning:

- A time-task analysis has been completed to improve custodial services.
- An incentive program has been established to reduce work-related accidents.
- Weekly meetings are held with maintenance management.
- Additional maintenance work is being conducted on weekends.
- Ongoing review and evaluation of the site is in place involving maintenance staff.
- Coordinating student government to assist in keeping the campus clean.
- Enforcing school policies regarding campus cleanliness.

To formulate a four-year plan for all students:

- Graduation requirements are reviewed and checked as they are completed.
- Some parents meet with counselors during parent conferences to review their student's progress.
- Some ninth-grade students receive support through the Career Advisor.

*Does the observable evidence reflect a sampling of what all students are doing and producing with respect to the WASC/CDE criteria and the school's expected schoolwide learning results?*

The school provided information and evidence of what all students are doing in relationship to the criteria established. Evidence provided was a sampling of assignments, portfolios, standardized tests, and authentic assessments for selected students. This was an incomplete area in the self-study as to the full analysis of demographic, outcome and process data.

*Does the observable evidence support the school's identified areas for growth?*

The self-study and visit provided a great deal of information as to student achievement levels, program effectiveness, the collaborative process used by the school's learning community, and the alignment of key areas with the Action Plan.

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**Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program**

*Discussion of the school program and the school support for student learning through what currently exists.*

Susan Miller Dorsey High School's leadership is broad-based with multiple leaders in decision making and governance roles. The school's leadership is organized with a principal, four assistant principals, and an administrative assistant. Local Leadership Council – Principal and the UTLA Chapter Chair, Department Chairpersons for each discipline, and eleven standing committees (Scheduling, Attendance, Discipline, Technology, Staff Development, Curriculum Council, Facilities, Staff Selection, Alumni Affairs, Human Relations and Budget) – each with a chairperson, and participation of various parents on the Parent Advisory Committee, LLC, various standing committees, Parent Center, and Ad Hoc committees. In addition, the school was recently selected as an Immediate Intervention for Under Performing Schools (IIUPS) grant recipient, with a consultant working with the school's learning community to improve student achievement.

Leadership agreed upon six objectives which will be used to implement and guide instruction, assessment and instructional support in meeting the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results which will promote improved student learning.

- Improve reading comprehension, assessed by reading scores on the SAT 9;
- Improve mathematical computation ability and mathematical analysis skills, as evidenced by SAT 9 math scores;
- Improve school attendance;
- Increase the number of students receiving a grade of "C" or better in core academic subjects leading to high school graduation;
- Increase the number of students receiving a grade of "C" or better in A-G course requirements leading to college matriculation;
- Increase the number of students taking college admission examination and Advanced Placement examinations.

These areas for school improvement were based on data the school gathered from STAR/SAT - 9 data, Academic Performance Index Base Report, Attendance Reports, Grade Reports, and Advanced Placement results.

**A. 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?

The school's Vision Statement, "The Dorsey High School Learning Community will strive for academic excellence by providing rigorous curriculum, best educational practices, and extracurricular enrichment activities for all students. We will integrate technology throughout the curriculum and help train,

prepare and support teachers as they engage in ongoing assessment and reform of educational practices. We will work collaboratively to strengthen student, parent, staff, and community involvement," was developed through the Local Leadership Council with broad-range input from other stakeholders. The school leadership surveyed some students, staff, and parents in regards to the needs of students at Dorsey High School, and through examination of assessment data and other reports in the development of their Vision. It is believed that the Vision statement is not known or understood throughout the learning community, and direct connections have not been made with the Vision statement and the ongoing governance of the school. Dorsey High School leadership, staff, parents and students have occasionally used educational research in developing what the vision of the school should be, identifying learning outcomes/ESLRs, and establishing an awareness of what students should know and be able to do to be productive citizens in the twenty-first century.

To what extent is the vision supported by the governing board and the central administration?

Susan Miller Dorsey High School's leadership has adopted the principles of the Vision Statement to guide the school in its decision making process. It is the desire of the school's leadership to establish a focal point for improved student learning in all areas.

To what extent is the school's purpose defined by expected schoolwide learning results?

The school's purpose has been defined by the learning community's general beliefs that all students are capable of learning, that all individuals within the learning community are entitled to an environment conducive to learning, and that teachers and students benefit from ongoing professional development. The ESLRs are restated Learning Outcomes which were agreed upon by the learning community several years ago. The Focus on Learning process gave the school another opportunity to review and revise the Learning Outcomes to their present language. The full-cycle of all curricular areas, content and performance standards, course syllabi and outlines are in the initial stages of being developed and implemented. Some disciplines are further along in accomplishing this task.

A2

To what extent does the school leadership make decisions and initiate activities that focus on all students achieving the expected schoolwide learning results?

Susan Miller Dorsey High School's leadership is broad-based with multiple leaders in decision making and governance roles. School and district leadership have agreed upon objectives through the IIUSP which will be used to implement and guide instruction, assessment and instructional support in meeting the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results.

To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

The school has a shared decision making model in place which incorporates many aspects of the school's learning community. Some parents and community members participate on selected decision making groups, as well as on many of the standing committees and Ad Hoc committees. The school has worked hard to establish positive relationships in the community through the development of three academies, extracurricular activities and athletics to improve relationships and promote student learning. The leadership throughout the school has been empowered to guide, direct, and make decisions which can lead to improved student learning.

A3

**To what extent is the staff supported, utilized, and monitored to facilitate student achievement of expected schoolwide learning results?**

The school has been involved in several programs to improve student learning. LEARN, Local Leadership Council, New Teacher Development and parent involvement. The Stull process is the main vehicle in which administration monitors, reviews and assists teachers in improving student learning. The school has state and district performance and content standards to measure student progress. In addition, the school adheres to all regulations established under the Coordinated Compliance Review, Title I, ELA, and other entitlements received from the state. However, these have not yet been fully aligned to the ESLRs.

**To what extent are leadership and staff a part of an organized structure committed to professional development?**

The learning community has made a concerted effort to improve student learning at Dorsey High School through staff development. Teachers have participated in University of California training to gain skills necessary to more effectively teach reading, SSR training, College Board Training in Pre-AP/AP, Vertical Articulation, math, social studies, and PSAT and SAT. There are monthly training sessions for new teachers, and mentor support is provided on an ongoing basis. In addition, planned staff development programs are well attended during district in service days, buy back days, and during staff meetings. In addition, regular communications are prepared with the intent to improve learning for students.

A4

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

The maintenance staff at Dorsey High School regularly removes trash and debris from the campus grounds. Graffiti is removed on a daily basis. The school is currently being painted, lighting is being repaired and replaced, and interior window coverings are being replaced. The school has developed a Comprehensive Safe School Plan which addresses the key issues identified in Education Code. The school maintains 2 Deans who work in the area of student discipline, 4 counselors, 3 fulltime and 1 part-time campus supervisors, and two Los Angeles Unified School District Campus Police officers. The campus is monitored continuously. Administration has recommended additional staff to monitor and supervise the campus in order to maintain a high level of safety for students and staff.

**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 administration is characterized as open and honest in dealing with students and staff. There are many opportunities for staff and students to communicate, sharing ideas and concerns. There are organizational systems in place which have identified student expectations and areas throughout the school which are in need of improvement. There appears to be a high level of trust among parents, students, staff and the learning community.

Areas of Strength

The Susan Miller Dorsey High School has developed a Leadership Council that is representative of

some stakeholders of the school community:

- The leadership within the school has developed a vision, mission, and is organized to carry forward high expectations for all students.
- The leadership and governance of the school work together in a broad array of endeavors to facilitate student achievement academically and as members of society.

### Key Issues

- Improve reading comprehension, assessed by reading scores on the SAT 9;
- Improve mathematical computation ability and mathematical analysis skills, as evidenced by SAT 9 math scores;
- Increase the number of students receiving a grade of "C" or better in core academic subjects leading to high school graduation;
- Increase the number of students receiving a grade of "C" or better in A-G course requirements leading to college matriculation;
- Increase the number of students taking college admission examination and Advanced Placement examinations.
- Increase student enrollment in Learning Academies and develop the "Bridge" program.

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

- The self-study.
- The learning community surveys.
- Interviews with staff, students and parents.
- School and district support documents.
- Review of student assignments, portfolios, projects, and room environment.
- Visual of campus.



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**B. Curricular Paths**

**B1**

**To what extent do all students participate in rigorous, relevant and coherent curriculum that supports the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results?**

All ninth grade students who enter Dorsey High School are required to participate in a Life Skills class in which all students are to complete a resume and build a long-term educational plan/portfolio. Students will update their portfolio during their sophomore and junior year. The completed portfolio is a requirement for the student to participate in graduation exercises at which time the portfolio is presented to the student with the high school diploma. Students who enroll at the school at a later date are required to complete the course and update the portfolio prior to the completion of their senior year.

Courses are aligned with the established expected schoolwide learning results. Magnet programs currently exist at the school and are offered to all students. Magnet students are comprised of a small percentage of the school population. The magnet program offers a rigorous, challenging, relevant and coherent curriculum which supports the stated schoolwide learning results.

However, staff and students have realized that a greater emphasis is needed in the area of students demonstrating higher level thinking skills and basic reinforcement of key reading, writing and speaking skills. It is also recognized that more students need to participate in programs to meet these needs such as the sustained reading period (SSR), cross-curricular instruction, after school tutoring programs (COPS) and Saturday preparation classes.

**B2**

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

Students have access to the school's curricular paths. School counselors meet with students in a classroom setting to determine schedules and courses for the new semester. However evidence could not be found that all students have the same access. Student surveys indicated that an overwhelming majority of students (77%) have not met with a counselor to discuss college/career goals. A counselor is assigned to each magnet school program to monitor the student's curricular path. Limited course selections are available to students who wish to pursue additional years of math, science, foreign language vocational and elective offerings. Most extra curricular programs are utilized and designed for magnet school students and not that of the general population. As a result, non-magnet school students have limited access to the extra-curricular programs. The staff recognizes that although counselors and staff encourage students to challenge themselves with advanced planning, the master schedule does not provide much range to accommodate student choice or direct students to meaningful post secondary preparation in a particular career.

A Career center is available for student usage. Several curricular support programs such as Work Force Investment Act(WIA),UCLA student advisory program(SHAPE),are available at the Career Center. A majority of the student population as indicated via the student survey indicated that they have not utilized the career center to obtain information about college, careers, post secondary plans, etc.

B3

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

Dorsey High School's goal is to provide a rigorous curriculum and prepare students to continue their academic and occupational education. This is reflected in the schools stated ESLRs and other support documents. Many outstanding curricular opportunities are available to students who are motivated and seek to expand their curricular path opportunities. The College and Career Center, Dorsey Graduates Program and summer workshop for students at UCLA are examples of the opportunities available.

Students prior to graduation are required to complete their curricular/career portfolio. The portfolio is presented to the student during graduation exercises. Some Dorsey High School students are not sufficiently prepared to make the transition to Advance Placement or upper level classes although enrolled in courses which will lead to graduation from high school. Magnet school students attend post-secondary institutions of higher learning at a much higher frequency than those enrolled in non-magnet school programs at Dorsey High School, as is evidenced by the student survey. Interdisciplinary teams of teachers are attempting to remedy this situation by expanding projects across the curriculum, increased staff development and offering more challenging curriculum.

#### Areas of Strength

- The number of Magnet school students that attend college.
- The quality of curriculum delivery.
- Required senior portfolio.
- Extra curricular opportunities. (Dorsey Graduates, College/Career Center, summer student workshops)
- Collaborative efforts of a number of the Dorsey staff
- Tutorial opportunities offered to the students.
- Alignment of instruction with the ESLRs.
- The ongoing efforts of the Career/College Center.

#### Key Issues

- Increase offering and preparation for higher level curricular offerings.
- Individual student assistance and regular input toward career/post-secondary decisions.
- Opportunities to offer relevant electives to all students.
- Alignment of all instruction with state standards, district standards, and ESLRs.
- Collaboration efforts of all staff and disciplines.
- Students outside of the magnet programs need to participate in beyond the classroom experiences and thoroughly develop their professional goals and college objectives.

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

- Interviews with staff, parents, and students.
- Visiting team observations.
- Focus Group meetings
- Student work samples.
- Self study.

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C. Powerful Teaching and Learning

The Dorsey High School staff continues to work on teaching strategies and curriculum alignment to content standards in order to assure the involvement of students in challenging learning experiences. Magnet programs provide unique learning opportunities in addition to the traditional setting.

C1

To what extent are the students involved in challenging learning experiences to achieve the expected schoolwide learning results?

Teachers continue to utilize a variety of instructional strategies that involve students in challenging learning experiences. Students are engaged in projects that individualize the learning process through independent projects in various courses. Staff is not fully utilizing expected school-wide learning result aligned with curriculum content standards to involve all students in a challenging, rigorous and meaningful learning experiences. The implementation of technology via the Digital High School grant will expand student access to the curriculum.

C2

To what extent do all students experience learning opportunities that emphasize higher order thinking skills an integrate academic and applied content?

Higher level thinking skills are taught in many classes at Dorsey High School. The curriculum and teaching methodologies of most Advanced Placement, SAT preparatory, and Academic Decathlon courses reflect higher order thinking skills. Collaborative efforts among the various stakeholders are evident in the school's award winning newspaper and in a variety of course work content that enables the students to extend their skills into community life. Students also participate in challenging academic rigors such as Mock Trial and Academic Decathlon.

To what extent does collaboration occur (1) among staff, (2) between staff and students, (3) among students, and (4) between school and community?

Students collaborate in a variety of class projects and work cooperatively on some assignments. Collaborative efforts are demonstrated in playwriting workshops, clubs, interdisciplinary projects, and student government. Additionally, students are presented extra-curricular opportunities such as after school tutoring programs (LA COPS)

Cross Curricular teacher collaboration occurs on a limited basis during scheduled meetings and focus group discussions. Collaboration between school, community and staff and between community is minimal.

C3

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

The Dorsey High School staff is working to increase the variety of learning experiences provided to students beyond the textbook and the classroom. Students have access to learning resources through the media/television studio and magnet programs. Additional learning resources will be available such as technology access through the Digital High School grant, a Culinary Arts program and proposed ninth grade magnet programs.

#### Areas of Strength

- Teacher participation in staff development and professional conferences.
- After school tutorial program
- Magnet school programs

#### Key Issues

- Increase the usage of teaching methodologies that emphasize higher level thinking skills
- Provide challenging learning experiences for all students.
- Increase cross-curricular collaboration between disciplines
- Restructure proper class placement procedures for all students.

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

- Student work samples
- Classroom and student observations
- Interviews with students, parents, and staff
- Focus Group discussion

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**D. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth**

Susan Dorsey High School provides a variety of services and programs that support the academic success of its students. Students have access to professional support personnel within the school community.

D1

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

Students of Susan Miller Dorsey High School have the opportunity to participate in a variety of services and programs available directly through the school and community outreach programs such as ACCESS and COPS program. Student academic advisement is provided by three guidance counselors and two guidance advisors. An additional counseling support via a grant from UCLA (SHAPE) is also utilized. Counselors assist students in achieving academic success as well as conflict resolution and parent teacher consultations. A college counselor provides additional support for the college bound students. Presentations by college representatives are regularly scheduled along with classroom presentations and college campus visitations. A career advisor provides information about career pathways and job opportunities through the 9<sup>th</sup> grade Life Skills Class, and is responsible for disseminating and collecting information for student portfolios. Students also have access to ROP. There are a variety of support programs to provide opportunities for college bound students, including concurrent college enrollment. Academic support is provided for students in specially identified groups such as, GATE, ELL and special education. Students have access to tutoring and academic counseling staff. However, with the instruction of the Life Skills class, there has been evidence of the implementation of a student four year individualized learning plan. Classroom teachers are informed of mainstreamed special education students in their classes. Over 15% of students enrolled at Dorsey High School have been identified as special education students.

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?

Teachers at Dorsey High School offer tutoring to students before and after school. They often act as mediators for students with personal and family problems, and maintain communication with parents by phone and through written communication. Advanced Placement and honors classes are provided for approximately 90 students who are identified as gifted and talented education students. There are three magnet programs, providing curricular courses and activities designed to strengthen students' career goals. Approximately 25 percent of the student population are enrolled in magnet programs, which includes some special education students.

A college and career counseling office is available for student usage. However, a majority of the student population, as evidenced by the student survey do not visit the career center or utilize services offered. There are two deans who provide services for students in behavioral crisis. An attendance counselor is a liaison between home, school and community and helps students with attendance problems. The LA COPS program provides students with safe, violence and drug-free sites for after school study.

There is a full time pupil services and attendance counselor. Parents are notified of student absences

and tardiness by a phone master system. First period tardy sweeps are held daily with random sweeps throughout the day. As a result of career directed work experience, several businesses have partnered with Dorsey High School. Students also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of clubs and leadership organizations.

D3

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

Dorsey High School's Parent Center is open daily to encourage community involvement. The center serves as a resource for parenting skills and promotes various activities for parental and community involvement. As a LEARN (Los Angeles Alliance for Restructuring Now) school, Dorsey High has parent representation in the Leadership Council, who work collaboratively with administrative, certificated and classified staff in defining and restructuring school needs.

Parents have the formal opportunity to visit school during Open House, Back to School Night and scheduled Parent Conference Nights.

Dorsey High has received a grant to begin the Los Angeles Community Outreach Program, which provides support through after school tutoring and enrichment service. School-to-Career speakers from the community visit the campus regularly to make classroom presentations. Dorsey graduates are involved in developing strategies for increasing support for Dorsey's progress.

The community was invited to participate in an Academic Extravaganza, which was held on a Saturday. This gave parents and the community the opportunity to view student performances, projects and demonstrations. The community receives information about the school through a quarterly newsletter.

D4

To what extent are the human, materials, and financial resources as well as facilities available to the school?

The teaching staff at Dorsey High consists of four National Board certified teachers, with three additional teachers anticipation to apply during the next school year. The school nurse and school psychologist are responsible for a variety of duties. The psychologist is currently working with special education students 100% of the time.

The school has applied for a Healthy Start grant to better help facilitate the special needs of the students and community. An intervention program has been implemented to deal with behavioral challenges facing the student population. LA COPS is also available to assist students in striving for academic excellence.

Classes are offered to students to acquire technical skills necessary to be successful in most computer related businesses and careers. Digital High School grant implementation is slated for Fall 2001. Students also have access to vocational and academic programs that may assist them in transitioning from high school to work. Additional technology and supplemental library resource materials have been recently purchased resulting in the extension of library operating hours. Three new bungalows have been added to the campus this school year to accommodate student overcrowding.

#### Areas of Strength

- o College and Career Center

- Student Daily Attendance Improvement.
- The Parent Community Center.

**Key Issues that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.**

- Restructuring of academic counseling components.
- Maintenance of a clean and safe campus.
- Align special programs such as, ELL and Special Education with state and federal mandates.
- Provide timely and informative communication with all stakeholders.
- Provide a challenging and rigorous academic program for non magnet school students.

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

- Parent Focus Group Interviews.
- Observation
- Self Study



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5. Assessment and Accountability

E1

- o To what extent do teachers employ a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate students and to modify curriculum and instructional practices?

The staff at Dorsey High School utilizes a variety of formal and informal assessments ranging from Stanford 9, district Proficiency Tests and individual teacher rubrics. Staff via departmental meetings and school site leadership team meetings, discuss and recommend various means to improve student performance. To date, a formalized departmental or schoolwide action plan has yet to be implemented with the stated goal of improving student performance. There is minimal student involvement in looking at and modifying assessment results to enhance their educational program. Most students are not aware of nor actively involved in the creation of the stated schoolwide learning results or their implementation particularly in the area of assessing whether the stated schoolwide learning results were motivating students to make significant improvements resulting from assessment results.

However, the school has offered programs such as an after school tutoring program (LA COPS) and SAT Saturday workshops. Students who expressed interest and enrolled in these tutorial programs were primarily students enrolled in the school's magnet programs.

To what extent do students use assessment results to modify their learning in order to enhance their educational progress.

Some students apply their assessed knowledge and skills and complete real-life performance based tasks during their tenure as a student. Student portfolios, English as a Second Language simulations, and Dorsey student participation in the African Marketplace community event are noted examples.

E2

- o To what extent do the school, district, and community regularly review student progress toward accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results?

The school is making a concerted effort to regularly review and assess student progress. All faculty review Stanford 9 test results at the beginning of the year. Subject Discipline Departments select particular areas of strength and target areas for growth.

To what extent are assessment results reported regularly to the entire school community?

Information is shared with parents and the community via the Parent Center, Back to School Night, Open House, and two Parent Conference Nights. Dorsey High School has been awarded a Challenge Grant who allows for vertical teaming with the high school and the feeder middle schools to improve instruction and pre-Advance Placement and Advanced Placement Programs.

ES

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

Dorsey High School has made some attempts via assessment to drive the school's program development and resource allocation. After reviewing assessment data, Title I funding is being used to support the school's efforts to increase student literacy such as Reading classes. Language Arts teachers have incorporated a Silent Sustained Reading Program to increase reading fluency and stamina. Three periods of speech classes were added to the master schedule to improve student oral language skills/development. Although professional development is available, staff has indicated that more teachers at Dorsey High School need to incorporate effective teaching strategies in order to improve student achievement

#### Areas of Strength

- After school tutoring programs
- Graduation student portfolios
- Challenger Grant

#### Key Issues

- Implementation of a schoolwide action plan
- Minimal student involvement in preparation of action plans
- Need for further staff participation to incorporate effective teaching strategies

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

- Classroom observations
- Student interviews/surveys
- Teacher interviews
- Self-Study
- Parent. Community interviews

## Synthesis of Schoolwide Areas of Strength and Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-up

### General Comments

As a result of the self-study, some stakeholders feel there is a clearer understanding of how to achieve serious improvement at Susan Miller Dorsey High School.

The important evidence that supports both the schoolwide areas of strength and the critical areas for follow-up include: the school's self-study; conferences with members of all Schoolwide Focus groups, discipline/stakeholder groups and district office staff; observation of classrooms and support areas; examination of student work samples; interviews with students and parents; and extended discussions with the Leadership Team and other staff and students.

### Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-up

1. Time for collaboration among all staff
2. Improve reading and writing skill across the curriculum
3. Establish a student driven organization
4. Development of a standards-based instructional practices and assessments.
5. Provide access for all students to a rigorous and challenging core curriculum meeting a-g requirements.
6. Improve reading comprehension, assessed by reading scores on the SAT - 9.
7. Improve mathematical computation ability and mathematical skills, as evidenced by SAT -9 math scores.

### Schoolwide Areas of Strength

1. Dedication and commitment to support students by certificated and classified staff
2. Innovative Magnet Academies, Police, Math and Science, Law and Public Service, and Access Academies
3. Safe and orderly campus.
4. The establishment of college partnership programs such and USC/CSU Upward Bound and CBOP/UCLA, and LA COPS.
5. Plans are in place to use the Digital High School grant to improve technology and computer literacy for teachers and students.

Susan Miller Dorsey High School  
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Visiting Committee Report

Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

*Comments on school improvement issues*

The Visiting Committee worked collaboratively with Susan Miller Dorsey High School's staff in reviewing and modifying the school's Action Plan. The Action Plan is directed toward improving student performance in achieving the school's vision and mission, meeting the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results for all students, achieving the SAT-9 growth targets, preparing students for the High School Exit Exam. The Action Plan components reflect the growth areas identified by the school as stated in the self-study, the LEARN action plan and the IIUSP action plan, and as determined by the Visiting Committee through interviews and reviewing evidence presented by the school. The Action Plan consists of four areas, reflecting the major growth areas of the self-study. These areas include:

- All students will make progress toward meeting district and state standards in reading, writing, speaking and mathematics to achieve Expected Schoolwide Learning Results, meet or exceed SAT-9 target growths, and prepare students to meet or exceed performance standards as measured on the High School Exit Exam.
- Establish programs, procedures, and policies for incoming ninth grade students to ensure a high success rate for all students.
- Enhance guidance and support services for all students.
- Establish policies and procedures for inclusion of all stakeholders.

All four areas of Susan Miller Dorsey High School's Action Plan strongly support the staff's commitment to improve student learning. These efforts will build upon improvements made since the last visit, such as the LEARN program, IIUSP grant, three academies currently serving 500 students, and after-school and Saturday tutorial programs designed to challenge students and raise their levels of achievement.

The staff has stated that the Action Plan is broad-based and is designed to improve learning for all students. The Action Plan is in full alignment and supports the school's identified plans for, Digital High School, Healthy Start, CCR, Title I, and most recently, the IIUSP Action Plan. The Dorsey High School staff has been working on the improvement process for several years. The Local Leadership Council was formed to examine school programs, course offerings, period schedules, and available time for staff development and staff meetings. The IIUSP consultant has reviewed school data, interviewed members of the learning community, conducted classroom visitations, and worked with school Action Planning Committee to develop a preliminary Action Plan. The Focus On Learning process enabled the learning community to concentrate their efforts on a schoolwide, integrated plan for improvement, validating input from all stakeholders, modifying and aligning strategies within the plan.

The Visiting Committee agrees that the Action Plan developed by Susan Miller Dorsey High School represents a validation of the direction of the school's efforts to improve student learning. There is support from some stakeholders to implement the plan. There is a commitment from district administration to support Dorsey High School's efforts to implement the Focus On Learning Action Plan.

### *Degree of commitment schoolwide and system wide*

Prior to beginning the Focus On Learning process, Susan Miller Dorsey High School's staff established a leadership team, the Local Leadership Council, to examine the school's programs, take a closer look at student learning, and make recommendations for improvement. This committee developed preliminary expected schoolwide learning results, "Learning Outcomes," and has taken a close look at school schedules to better meet students' needs. Even though the concept of banking hours to provide for staff development was not successful, other strategies may be developed to enhance staff development opportunities.

### *Existing factors that support school improvement*

Susan Miller Dorsey High School has many dedicated certificated and classified staff who have demonstrated their desire to provide quality programs for students which lead to improved student performance. e.g., the school's magnets, a caring staff, class-size reduction in English for 11th and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, and identifying areas for improvement in other discipline areas. The school's administration is committed to improving programs and accepting the challenges in meeting student needs.

### *Impediments to school improvement*

The Action Plan has not been expanded and developed into an implementation format which includes specific steps to accomplish the strategies. All staff are in need of training in developing assessment tools to assess student achievement toward meeting the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results, and deliver instruction under a standard-based format. Following the current schedule, the school has minimal time to focus on the Action Plan, participate in schoolwide staff development and meetings, and to closely examine student progress. Areas designed to improve student learning need to be thoroughly planned, staff need to be trained, and students and parents need to be informed of the reasons for the changes and the expected outcomes.

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

Susan Miller Dorsey High School has an action plan that lists Action Target Areas, Rationale, Growth Targets, and the ESLRs addressed. In addition, specific strategies, Persons/Positions Responsible, Timelines, Evaluation Methods, Reporting Methods, Resource are identified. Focus On Learning formalized areas of improvement identified IUUSP and correlated school goals.

An established process for collaboration similar to the Focus On Learning process is evident. Persons/positions responsible for the action plan are in place. This is a continuation of the process to further empower staff and parents through the Local Leadership Council and standing committees.

The Action Plan provides for sufficient time for full implementation. Decisions need to be made about which person/position will take the lead in facilitating the collaboration necessary to carry out the specific steps. In areas where the timeline states "ongoing," benchmarks should be established to keep the learning community informed of the progress.

## *Schoolwide Action Plan*

### *Adequacy:*

#### *Schoolwide Key Issues:*

1. Time for collaboration among all staff
2. Improve reading and writing skill across the curriculum
3. Establish a student data driven organization
4. Development of standards-based instructional practices and assessments
5. Provide access for all students to a rigorous and challenging core curriculum meeting a-g requirements
6. Improve reading comprehension, assessed by reading scores on the SAT 9.
7. Improve mathematical computation ability and mathematical analysis skills, as evidenced by SAT 9 math scores.

The Action Plan addresses critical growth areas identified in the self-study. Items under the heading of "Strategies" in the Action Plan need to be further developed to ensure the activities are focused on improving student performance at Susan Miller Dorsey High School. Each strategy, as it is developed by the school, should include a justification of why the activity is needed, how it will be used to improve student learning, who will be held accountable for completing the strategy (with the identification of the person/position who will oversee its implementation), and how the strategy will be measured and evaluated. Successful implementation of the school's Action Plan should result in improved student learning leading to meeting the expected schoolwide learning results. Additionally, the plan should be in alignment and fully support the ITUSP Criteria adopted by the California State Board of Education and identified in the ITUSP Action Plan.

#### *Addressing the critical areas for follow-up*

- Susan Miller Dorsey High School's Focus On Learning Action Plan must be fully integrated with the school's ITUSP Action Plan.
- Implementation of the Action Plan must incorporate an ongoing thorough analysis of disaggregated student performance data, with revisions and modifications of the plan based on data.

#### *Enhancement of student learning*

The four areas of the Action Plan incorporate fundamental strategies that should lead to improved student performance. The school will develop programs and strategies to improve students' reading achievement, for all students – across all disciplines; embed the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results throughout all courses taught at the school, and support all students in establishing and maintaining a fully developed learning plan which will promote a balanced curriculum, support and encourage post secondary goals, and lead to successful graduation from Susan Miller Dorsey High School to the next level identified in each student's learning plan.

#### *Feasibility with existing resources*

Several areas identified in the Action Plan may not be within the authority or jurisdiction of the school to implement, such as staffing, course and graduation requirements, articulation with feeder schools, and changes in direction from the Los Angeles Unified School District administration.

*Areas of Strength.*

1. Dedication and commitment to support students by certificated and classified staff
2. Innovative Magnet Academies, Police, Math and Science, Law and Public Service, and Access Academies.
3. Safe and orderly campus.
4. The establishment of college partnership programs such and USC/CSU Upward Bound and CBOP/UCLA, and LA COPS.
5. Plans are in place to use the Digital High School grant to improve technology and computer literacy for teachers and students.

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Focus On Learning Action Plan  
March 19 - 21, 2001

- Action Target 1: All students will make progress toward meeting district and state standards in reading, writing, speaking and mathematics to achieve Expected Schoolwide Learning Results, meet or exceed SAT-9 target growths, and prepare students to meet or exceed performance standards as measured on the High School Exit Exam.
- Action Target 2: Establish programs, procedures, and policies for incoming ninth grade students to ensure a high success rate for all students.
- Action Target 3: Enhance guidance and support services for all students.
- Action Target 4: Establish policies and procedures for inclusion of all stakeholders.

Rationale:

Growth Target:

ESLRs Addressed:



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Strategies	Person Responsible	Timeline	Evaluation Methods	Reporting Methods	Resources
<i>Professional Development</i>					
Provide a two-day retreat for all staff for developing yearly goals and expectations, reviewing standards and frameworks and aligning curriculum.					
Provide time for departments to implement the State Content Standards, instructional strategies and assessment measures identified in the frameworks and standards documents in reading, language arts and math.					
Provide a summer training and on-going collaboration time for the Algebra teachers to develop the course syllabus and assessments and share promising practices.					
Establish and train a governance team comprised of APT members including the principal and department chairs to analyze and use achievement data to determine academic needs of students including enrichment and remediation.					

Strategies	Person Responsible	Timeline	Evaluation Methods	Reporting Methods	Resources
Train staff for implementing 9 <sup>th</sup> grade Freshman Success Academics – provide advisory time for teachers and counselors					
Provide on going modeling in best practices, use of reciprocal teaching and coaching for 9/10th grade Language Arts teachers. Provide summer and on-going training					
Provide on-going training in literacy techniques, teacher researcher programs, Academic English Mastery, SDAIE, and California Literacy project to improve reading and writing across the curriculum,					
Provide on-going training in standards-based lesson design and curriculum alignment.					
Implement holistic writing programs aligned with the HSEE.					
Provide training for all instructional aides in the teaching of reading and tutoring					
Implement and train teachers to use the Accelerated reading and math programs					

Strategies	Person Responsible	Timeline	Evaluation Methods	Reporting Methods	Resources
<b>Student Services</b> Provide additional support so that all 7 <sup>th</sup> graders have a post-secondary plan by the end of their sophomore year.					
Provide additional counseling and support staff to assist student achievement and career development					
Reorganize school into career path academics - each with a career focus.					
Develop programs/tutorials to assist struggling readers; e.g. reading enhancement class for low level readers, expand Accelerated Reader, institute Sustained Silent Reading programs and summer reading programs.					
Explore use of computer program tutorials in Language Arts and Math					
Provide on-line AP tutorials for advanced students					

Strategies	Person Responsible	Timeline	Evaluation Methods	Reporting Method	Resources
Identify targeted groups of students who require specific interventions in reading, language arts and/or in math including enrichment and remediation.					
Provide specific mentoring programs for African American males who are most danger of not completing 4 years of high school.					
<i>Resources</i>					
Purchase software for SAT, AP enrichment and other on-line classes.					
Pursue grants such as Federal Small Learning Communities, Title VII and State Academic Partnership Programs to ensure funding after IU/USP funds are completed.					
<i>Parents and Community</i>					
Establish on-line and telephone calendar system					
Organize telephone trees for meeting announcements					
Offer Family and Parent Leadership training to prepare parents for leadership roles					

Strategies	Person Responsible	Timeline	Evaluation Methods	Reporting Methods	Resources
Offer monthly orientation nights for parents on issues concerning their students and events					
Publish and mail-home a monthly newsletter to all parents					
Have student designed and maintained Web-site for faculty directory, e-mail, calendar and parent information					
Strategies	Person Responsible	Timeline	Evaluation Methods	Reporting Methods	Resources
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