

# BALBOA HIGH SCHOOL

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REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

*REPRESENTING THE*

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*FOR*

**BALBOA HIGH SCHOOL**

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

*7-10 MARCH 1999*

TYPE OF EVALUATION INSTRUMENT: *FOCUS ON LEARNING*

BALBOA HIGH SCHOOL

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

# **BALBOA HIGH SCHOOL**

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## CHAPTER I: Student/Community Profile

Balboa High School has clearly made great strides since being “reconstituted” in 1996. The most obvious changes are in the quality and appearance of the physical plant, but there have also been significant improvements in student and staff attitudes re their personal physical safety. Other significant findings include:

1. There has been a great deal of teacher turnover (*only 28 of the original faculty of 90 hired for Reconstitution are still at the school*). There have also been nine assistant principals in the past three years, and only recently (December 1998) were all three positions filled for this school year. Such a high rate of turnover is counter-productive to creating a new culture at the school, instituting new programs to meet the needs of a very challenging student body, and establishing the policies and procedures necessary to turn the reconstituted vision of Balboa into reality.
2. Two new initiatives (*the Digital High School and the School-to-Career program*) show great promise, but will need time and support (from both the staff at Balboa as well as the San Francisco Unified School District) to develop and enhance student learning. Since the school has now been hard-wired to accept the new technology, the emphasis now must shift to selecting appropriate software and providing the necessary suitable training for staff and students in its use and integration into all aspects of the curriculum.
3. A number of positive academic and behavioral initiatives, developed by both teachers and administrators, have been launched as Balboa has been reconstituted, but there is little if any over-arching rubric to pull them all together, align them with the Expected School-wide Learning Results, and ensure that they do not conflict. Examples are the *Communications Arts Academy, the Action Academy, the Law Academy, the SOAR program, School-to-Career, the advisory system, and the Digital High School project*. Without a plan of coordination, the hope and promise implicit in **Reconstitution** could be in jeopardy. Given the obvious personal and academic needs of Balboa students (well documented in the Student/Community Profile), such a development would be extremely unfortunate.
4. When the Self-Study was written, it was not known that, in early March of 1999, the SFUSD would mandate a new daily time schedule and the consolidation of seven teachers for the 1999-2000 school year. Inasmuch as the 4x4 block schedule and a number of different student safety net efforts are referred to in the Student/Community Profile, these new developments have the very real potential to alter the fledgling progress being made under **Reconstitution**. As the school administration, leadership team, and WASC focus group coordinators are acutely aware of the possible impact of these mandates, it is reasonable to assume that the necessary adjustments and accommodations will be made. District personnel have given assurances of their support for this process.



## The Eleven Philosophical Tenets

1. All individuals should learn to live and to work in a world that is characterized by interdependence and cultural diversity.
2. All individuals are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.
3. All individuals want to learn and to be recognized for their achievements.
4. All individuals can learn.
5. All individuals learn in many different ways and at varying rates.
6. Each individual learns best in a particular way.
7. All individuals are both potential learners and potential teachers.
8. If individuals do not learn, then those assigned to be their teachers will accept responsibility for this failure and will take appropriate action to ensure success.
9. Learning has both cognitive and affective dimensions.
10. Learning can be subdivided into a number of specific, concrete competencies that can be used as a focus for teaching.
11. Parents want their children to attain their fullest potential as learners and to succeed academically.

## **Introduction**

Founded in 1928, Balboa High School has long been an integral part of its community. As the center for secondary education, it has enjoyed a rich history and tradition while attempting to meet the academic and social needs of a changing and diverse student body. Although reconstitution marks a new chapter in the school's history, many of the challenges facing the staff reflect ongoing community conditions which make Balboa unique in its mission within the San Francisco Unified School District.

Balboa's unique character is reflected as much in its diverse student body and working class neighborhoods as it is in its energetic faculty and ambitious academic program. It is a school that inherits its greatest challenges by right of location. Situated in the southeast sector of the city, the surrounding area is considered inner city, and the high performance goals which Balboa teachers set for students are counterpoised each day with an increasingly strong set of demographic challenges. Unemployment and low income levels afflict many of the families in the school and students are often preoccupied with serious health or safety concerns as well. Twenty-five percent of the present student body — 300-plus students — live in settings where no parent is present. Records in the school's Teen Health Center indicate that these students live in group or foster homes, with distant relatives, or on their own.

The transience of many Balboa families has a strong impact on the life of the school as well. Recent students represent many of the new immigrant groups in the area, and their



families are not only strangers to the educational system but caught up in dire struggles to survive and adapt in a strange land. Far too many students are at Balboa for only a brief period of time, and Balboa's enrollment figures reflect an inordinate number of student "adds and drops" (e.g., this year, to 2/9/99, there have been 518 drops and 511 adds) that mirror the fluctuations in the surrounding neighborhoods. The transience makes community-building efforts difficult and challenges the school to ensure that Balboa students experience a consistent and nurturing school environment where relationships can flourish and deepen over time.

Balboa also reflects the challenges that characterize its feeder schools. In the present ninth grade, for example, students have significant reading deficits, and a majority of freshmen lack the prerequisite academic skills for a standard high school curriculum. Students not only enter the school with little information about the requirements for achieving successful academic standing, but, many of them also believe that a diploma can be obtained with minimum effort. For some, socializing is the motivation to attend school and graduation is regarded as an unclear end. Homework, class participation, and regular school attendance suffer and the staff must address these three areas of student responsibility to ensure coherence in the academic program.

The profile that emerges from the various sources tapped for the WASC Self-Study — teacher observations, records in the Teen Health Center, statistical data in District

publications, and surveys — is consistent, telling, and challenging. In many and varied ways, Balboa is, indeed, a “school on the move.”

## **Demographics of the School Community**

Physical Parameters of the Community. The physical parameters of the Balboa community are qualified and described statistically by zip code, neighborhood, and city sector. The information is often used to identify and describe Balboa’s most pressing characteristics when the faculty and administration are developing school policy and devising approaches for effective teaching.

The Balboa community is primarily comprised of four census zip codes: 94112, 94110, 94124 and 94134, (see Pin Map on the next page) that represent several interrelated neighborhoods: Bayview/Hunter’s Point, the Mission, Visitacion Valley, and Ingleside/Excelsior. The 1998 population of these confines is 208,895. The area is characterized by a mixture of established and residential development, low income housing, and a large industrial area in the Bayview District. Balboa High School is located in the 94112 zip code area known as the Excelsior neighborhood. A well-established area, it is easily accessible by bus and Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART). Poor bus service from the Visitacion Valley and Bayview/Hunter’s Point neighborhoods (94134), however, has historically contributed to first-period tardiness at the school. Approximately 50% of Balboa students commute via local bus.

A multicultural population can be found in each of the school's neighborhoods for the area has been in transition since World War II as different ethnic groups moved in and out. The 1990 census indicated that remnants of early European immigrants mix with families and individuals claiming their origins in over 32 countries, and the school's recent Student Survey (May, 1998) indicates that approximately 60% of Balboa student families speak a language other than English in the home, and 20% of the students have been in this country for less than four years.

Statistics from the 1998 Zip Code Source Book extend data from the last census, indicating that population shifts are continuing in the neighborhoods around Balboa. Since 1990, there has been a reduction of whites (-14%) and African Americans (-10%), and an increase in Asian-Pacific Islanders (+49%) and Latinos (+12%). The overall population in this area has increased 6% in the same ten-year period.

Housing and Neighborhood Characteristics. In a metropolitan area where the cost of living is very high, newly-arrived families strive to survive economically, and they move frequently as they seek affordable and appropriate housing. Young people are forced to change schools frequently in this process, or they move to live with extended families elsewhere. Transferring among schools and school districts is a disruptive reality to their lives. This limits student's identification and involvement with Balboa as part of their community and their investment in the academic program. As transfers struggle to make-

up credits in classes that may enroll as many as 35-40 students, teachers struggle to meet their needs.

Some students live in crowded conditions due to housing economics and family size.

Here, too, the student survey is helpful. Responses indicate that approximately 44% of the students live in homes with more than four people. This may affect their homework routines. Twenty-eight percent do their homework in locations other than the home; 57% have no regular place for doing homework, and 9% acknowledge that they do no homework.

There has been little recent physical improvement in the southeast corner of the city.

However, a new youth center recently opened in the Excelsior area, and there is hope that a new planned professional football stadium may provide an economic boost to Bayview inhabitants. Nonetheless, the aging residential neighborhoods where many students live, composed of working class and low to middle income households, evidence a need for support programs and jobs. The table below displays some critical defining census demographic characteristics of the zip code areas from which Balboa draws a vast majority of its students.

**BALBOA NEIGHBORHOOD STATS**  
by Southeast Area Zip Codes

Demographic Category	94112 Excelsior/ Ingleside	94124 Bayview	94134 Visitacion	94110 Mission	Total/ Average
Population	64,318	27,105	34,603	71,118	197,144
Households - Total	19,430	8,372	10,087	24,472	62,361
Households - Single Parent	22%	32%	27%	8%	22%
Households - With no Wage or Salary	27%	52%	37%	24%	335%
Households - On Public Assistance	11%	26%	19%	13%	17%
Persons - Born Outside the U.S.	45%	20%	41%	44%	38%
Persons - Below Federal Poverty Line	13%	26%	15%	18%	18%

U.S. Census 1990

% Balboa Students Per Zip Code	43%	19%	24%	10%	
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Family Status Indicators. The number of households without wages and the number that are on public assistance certainly influence the levels of stress and instability that are experienced within the school. Twenty-nine percent of the students living in the southeast corner of the city and 37% of Balboa students meet the criteria for the free lunch program, and their families often need their help with childcare and other financial responsibilities. Students acknowledged in their survey for this profile that 29% acknowledged that they had jobs after school, and 20% were working more than eight hours a week.

Teacher observations note that a substantial number of students arrive at school hungry, having missed their first meal, even though breakfast is offered at the school cafeteria. A morning with little or no nutrition accounts for some distracted, tired, and unfocused

students. Also, some students on occasion miss their free lunch or skip lunch for economic reasons. The Student Survey indicates that approximately 61% of students eat fewer than two meals a day, 48% of day meals are at fast food outlets, and 24% noted that they eat only one daily meal at home. In these cases, poor nutrition may hinder academic performance.

Poverty also contributes to the non-correction of vision problems. Teachers have observed that some students have weak, uncorrected eyesight and cannot see the board from any appreciable distance. Many students do not admit to the problem because they may be embarrassed that they cannot see well or that the family cannot afford glasses. The fact that poor vision problem goes uncorrected may hamper the students academic improvement.

## **Health Issues**

The Balboa community, similar to most areas with a low social economic status (SES), experiences an abnormal number of health problems. A barometer for health issues in the community is the Balboa Teen Health Center (BTHC) on campus. This comprehensive health care facility focuses on the health and well-being of students. Visits to the BTHC are compiled statistically to keep an on-going assessment of student needs and health issues. The table below lists BTHC visits to the three main groups of service providers for the last three years:

BALBOA TEEN HEALTH CENTER Patient Visits			
School Year	Medical	Mental Health	Health Education
1997-98	5,012	2,957	810
1996-97	4,932	2,631	912
1995-96	4,758	2,250	896

Balboa Teen Health Center Psychosocial Cart Review 8/95-7/97

The BTHC reports the three top reasons for medical visits over the past three years have been asthma, acute illness (including respiratory infections, gastritis, bronchitis, soft tissue injuries, ear infections, headaches), and family planning (including reproductive health care, birth control, sexually transmitted disease screening and treatment, counseling regarding pregnancy). The staff added the biggest issues facing students are lack of consistent primary care with a primary care provider and depression, which accounts for a large number of referrals to the BTHC's mental health staff.

The Community Health Profile by the Bayview/Hunter's Point Health and Environmental Assessment Project (July 1997-Draft) further illustrates the impact of health problems on Balboa students. This study has compiled health data in the Bayview/Hunter's Point (BVHP) areas and compares that data to regional and national figures. Among the findings are:

- 1) The BVHP has among the highest hospitalization rates in all age groups, not only in San Francisco, but also the state, for asthma, hypertension, congestive heart failure and diabetes;
- 2) The BVHP has the highest rates for invasive breast cancer mortality in San Francisco;

- 3) The lifetime risk of dying from a homicide for a BVHP African American male is higher than 1 in 20;
- 4) The BVHP has the highest concentration of air polluting industries in San Francisco.

Health problems account for a significant number of one-day and extended excused absences at Balboa. Student Survey respondents stated that 34% of absences were for doctor/dentist visits.

### **Personal Safety Factors**

Personal safety is another significant risk factor for many of the Balboa students, requiring that staff be constantly vigilant. In the Spring of 1998, the administration conducted the first Safety Survey designed to assess student and teacher perspectives. Responses on the survey indicated that students were more preoccupied with safety issues than teachers, and that internal school security and classroom safety were a primary concern of the students. The following fall, even tighter security measures were instituted.

The school's track record with respect to safety has been unstable in the past, and resulted in a closed-campus policy in 1992. At that time, a fence was installed around the campus in an effort to lessen harmful outside influences, including drugs, weapons, fighting, and gang activity. Today these influences penetrate the campus from time to time, but the number of incidents has decreased significantly since the school was reconstituted prior to the 1996-1997 school year. In the past year, street shootings, murders, beatings and



other instances of malfeasance have occurred beyond the school's fence, occasionally impacting school events and affecting the collective sense of security among students and adults. Last October, a school dance was postponed at the request of police because of incidents in areas close to the school. However, prior to reconstitution all dances were banned for safety reasons. Now we conduct roughly a dance a month with no major incidents.

Relative to other sections of the city, the southeast sector of San Francisco has for some time been designated a "high crime" area by the San Francisco Police Department.

Current year-to-date statistics compiled by the SFPD for major crimes show the rationale for such a designation. In fact, the crime rate for the police districts of Ingleside/Bayview and Mission, where a large proportion of Balboa students live, are particularly demonstrative.

MAJOR CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS AND PROPERTY			
Crimes	All Police Districts San Francisco	Ingleside / Mission / Bayview	%
Rape	197	60	31%
Robbery	2,966	1,026	35%
Aggravated Assault	2,276	933	41%
Burglary	5,204	1,748	34%
Motor Vehicle Theft	5,403	2,078	39%
TOTAL	16,092	5,864	36%

San Francisco Police Preliminary Crime Report, 9/89

The figures in the chart above are especially revealing when compared with current population levels. Crimes per thousand for all police districts registers 20.2, while that for

the Balboa neighborhoods is running at 28.1. Thus, the effects of crime are more visible to Balboa students, and certainly influence their sense of security. Students who are affected mentally or physically by violence frequently miss school and may be distracted in the classroom or seek affiliation with a gang for protection. The question of personal safety has an impact on many of Balboa's students as it influences their emotional and/or physical availability for the school's program.

### Profile of Balboa's Students

Feeder Schools. Balboa welcomes the majority of incoming freshmen from four middle schools: James Denman Middle School and Luther Burbank Middle School in the Excelsior neighborhood; Aptos Middle School in the Ingleside; and Visitacion Valley Middle School in Visitacion Valley. Many of the students coming from these schools arrive with special needs in the academic, social-emotional, and economic realm.

BALBOA FEEDER SCHOOL STATISTICS						
CBED / Other Data	Visitacion Valley	James Denman	Aptos	Luther Burbank	Average	Balboa H.S.
Enrollment	466	758	570	758	638	1,385
LEP/NEP %	34.3	31.7	28.4	31.7	31.5	34.6
SpEd %	16.5	11.6	13.9	11.6	13.4	11.8
EDY %	59.9	61.5	52.3	61.5	58.8	66.6
Free Lunch %	49.6	35.4	36.0	35.4	39.1	37.6
AFDC %	17.6	15.4	11.6	19.8	16.1	11.9
Unex Absence %	2.4	5.8	1.3	5.8	3.8	13.4
Drop Out %	5.7	2.2	N/A	2.2	3.4	5.7

California Public School Profiles 1997-1998  
San Francisco Department of Health

Student Characteristics: Balboa has a very diverse student body in terms of ethnicity.

Filipinos are the largest group (28.2%), followed by Latinos (26.9%), and African Americans (19.9). Asian groups are the fastest growing, especially the Chinese and Pacific Islander populations. The need for language instruction and ESL classes expands each year.

BALBOA HIGH SCHOOL POPULATION Summary Breakdown														
Grade	Male	Female	Total	AA	Chi	Filo	Japa	Kor	Lat	Nam	ON	OW	Total	%
9	154	130	284	72	26	60	1	0	72	4	31	18	284	23.3
10	182	121	303	66	14	81	1	1	84	5	27	24	303	24.8
11	238	186	424	81	36	122	2	1	117	2	39	24	424	34.7
12	103	107	210	24	21	81	1	0	55	0	16	12	210	17.2
TTL	677	544	1221	243	97	344	5	2	328	11	113	78	1221	
%	55.4	44.6		19.9	7.9	28.2	0.4	0.2	26.9	0.9	9.3	6.4		

SFUSD Data Services 10/7/98

Special Needs Students: Students with special needs extend across all grade levels, and are enrolled in one of three programs — the Special Day Class (SDC), the Resource Specialist Program (RSP), or the Designated Instruction Service (DIS). Students are placed by the District in these classes according to their Individual Education Plans (IEP), and their progress is monitored. The 155 students enrolled in these programs, as shown below, represent 11.8% of the student body:

BALBOA SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS				
Grade	SDC	RSP	DIS	Total
9	20	15	3	38
10	16	22	0	38
11	25	26	2	53
12	17	9	0	26
Total	78	72	5	155

Balboa H.S. Department of Special Education 11/98

Balboa offers a wide range of Special Day Classes, providing more support than most other District high schools. The range of services is designed to meet the needs of young people who have been designated as learning handicapped, severely impaired, severely language disabled, or severely emotionally disturbed.

SPECIAL DAY CLASS STUDENTS		
Description	Number	%
Learning Handicapped (LH)	43	55.1
Severely Impaired (SI)	17	21.8
Communication Impairs (CI)	10	12.8
Severely Emotionally Disturbed (SED)	8	10.3
Total	78	

Balboa H.S. Department of Special Education 11/98

The 1997-98 Coordinated Compliance review notification of findings (March, 1998) noted that Balboa is "exemplary in its efforts to provide inclusion services, mainstreaming, and extracurricular activities for individuals with exceptional needs ....

and for the administrative staff being directly involved in student progress and services

(p. 20).” On the other hand, the report also indicated that Balboa;

- 1) Lacked “optimum coordination between general and special education at some site levels” (p. 24);
- 2) Lacked “professional and proper interaction between teachers and paras” (p. 24);
- 3) Did not provide “specific supplementary instructional and auxiliary services for special need students” (p. 8).

These issues of noncompliance are included in the 1998-1999 goals of the school’s

Special Education Department and are being addressed this year.

Language Backgrounds. LEP/NEP students comprise approximately 34% of the school population, and the high level of incoming immigrants challenges the school to provide an individualized curriculum and adequate teacher support.

BALBOA LEP/NEP STUDENT TOTALS												
	Male	Female	AA	Chin	Filo	Japa	Kor	Lzt	N.Am	ON	OW	Total
Students	165	115	0	41	98	0	0	122	1	14	4	280
%	58.9	41.1		14.6	35.0			43.6	0.4	5.0	1.5	

The school provides language classes in Filipino, Spanish and Chinese, and transition into the general English program at the school is a well-coordinated effort. All LEP/NEP students have access to A-F requirements in sheltered or primary language classes; paraprofessionals support students in the classrooms; and a special college preparatory class helps to focus such students on post-secondary opportunities. Many of these students have not taken CTBS or STAR tests because a District policy exempts students from testing if they have not been in the country for at least thirty months. However, new

students' language ability is tested upon entry using the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) test.

Overall responsibility for determining how to best serve all English Language Learners (ELL) is the function of Balboa's Bilingual Advisory Committee, an entity mandated by the state. This group advises the School Site Council in order to ensure support for this student population through staff development and special program funding and hosts a number of parent nights yearly.

EDY Students. The number of students designated as Educationally Disadvantaged Youth (EDY) has remained stable at Balboa for many years. Balboa has focused on reducing the number of EDY students through specialized analysis and instruction. The state designates students as EDY if their scores on the CTBS/STAR tests fall in the 40th percentile or below, and the scores of approximately 66% of current students do so. Forty percent (40%) of these students fall below the 25th percentile.

BALBOA EDY TOTALS			
	1996	1997	1998
%	67.1	65.8	66.6

Balboa has implemented a number of programs to meet the needs of these students and strengthen their academic standing:

- EDY Services: A teacher on special assignment coordinates the data collection, student advising, tutoring, classroom placements, communication with parents, and manages the homework clinic (see below).
- SOAR: This program comprises at-risk students organized as a core cluster to ensure that they can share the same three teachers in social studies, English, and music production. The SOAR curricula are integrated and targeted at organizational and life skills and building self esteem. A new database has been established to determine the level of students performance as result of this program.
- Student Assistance Program (SAP): This District-mandated program is structured to assess the specific academic and socio-emotional needs of at-risk students and determine what support steps the community should take to address those needs. As teachers refer to the Counseling Department names of students deemed to require supplemental support, a formal process ensues to collect schoolwide data on the student around teacher and counselor judgments, and standardized criteria, to form a written referral to the SAP Committee. Meeting weekly, this committee is chaired by the Assistant Principal for Personnel Services and includes representative members of the credentialed and administrative staff, and a representative of the Balboa Teen Health Center. For each referral, the committee designs an individual program for the student utilizing the resources available at the school and in the community. Each case is monitored by a designated committee member and revisited every meeting after the initiation of support measures.

- Academic Literacy and Numeracy Classes: These special classes weave basic skill development instruction into the ninth and tenth grade curriculum, emphasizing writing, composition skills, and math skills for those students who show these needs.
- PACT Tutoring: Recently instituted with the independent Plan of Action for Changing Times agency, this program offers one-on-one professional counseling to at-risk students in the areas of basic skill reinforcement and training, study skills, time management, and academic planning. Working through the EDY Resource Teacher at the school, the on-site Tutorial Coordinator targets a core group of ninth graders who have low middle school records and have tested poorly on the CTBS tests. On a regular, scheduled basis, the students are pulled for one class of their regular schedule per week for consultation. The tutorial utilized the academic work from the student's present class, as well as supplemental program materials.
- Mentor Services: This program seeks to match staff members on a voluntary basis with ninth graders who have failed two or more eighth grade classes. The goal is to provide individual guidance and academic support from qualified, known mentors. A teacher has volunteered to staff the position of Program Coordinator in this new program.
- Homework Clinic: Under the voluntary direction of the EDY teacher on special assignment, this clinic is an outreach effort to offer students a quiet, safe refuge for completing homework assignments with tutorial support. Recently instituted, the clinic is open to all students, with a special appeal to those at-risk, and plans to meet daily for one hour after school in the Library.



In addition to the above, the school has enjoyed increased support from the District's Division of Curriculum Improvement and Professional Development (CIPD) in the current academic year. Subject-matter specialists are helping Balboa teachers to develop more refined strategies to meet student needs, especially the needs of those most at risk for academic failure. Ongoing strategies to meet the needs of EDY students is the main function of the School Advisory Committee (SAC) which meets regularly and advises Balboa's School Site Council.

When the total number of LEP/NEP, EDY, and Special Education students is considered, approximately 90% of Balboa's student body have special needs, thereby increasing our challenges with regard to low academic performance, dropouts, and suspensions.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is an ongoing problem that has a negative impact on the school's culture and the academic performance of students. While an inconsistent pattern, the average daily attendance (ADA) at Balboa has ranked low in comparison to other high schools in the District. In recent years, the staff has intensified the focus on student attendance, identifying the area as one of the school's priorities for the last two academic years (1997-1999). Staff makes home phone calls to reach out to students' families.

Accountability for student attendance is seen as a shared responsibility between student, family, faculty, and administration.

ATTENDANCE RELATED FACTORS			
	1996	1997	1998
ADA %	89.9	89.9	86.6
Excused Absence %	2.0	2.1	3.5
Unexcused Absence %	10.2	13.4	11.2

In an attempt to improve on these figures, the administration has published an attendance policy in the Balboa Student Handbook and the school has implemented an attendance/tardy program that is designed to decrease the number of tardy students each day. To date, the program has cut down on the number of daily tardies from 25% to approximately 10% in just two weeks. An afternoon attendance improvement program works in conjunction with the new attendance program, where any student that is over 45 minutes late, reports for 45 minutes to the "Attendance Improvement Program" after school. In addition, any student that is less than 45 minutes late is given a tardy pass, sent to class, and the attendance clerk calls home. A data base is kept to track repeat tardies. A program designed specifically for students who are not succeeding in school due to poor attendance has also been initiated this semester. The stakeholders include students, parents, and school personnel. The first step is a letter sent home advising parents that they must accompany their child back to school and meet with the Deans. At the meeting, the student, parent, and school personnel sign a behavioral contract with all participants having specific responsibility. Students who continue to be truant are reported to the District' Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) for legal follow-up with the parents or guardians. The Attendance Improvement Program has brought

students and parents together with school staff and, to date, the program has had positive effects, both with better attendance for the students and a cooperative relationship between home and school.

Dropouts: Dropouts are all students leaving Balboa without going through the proper exit process. These students, with whom the school has lost contact, fall under the Transitional Status Code LT to designate an unknown reason for leaving. Most of the yearly dropouts occur at the beginning of the school year as previously enrolled students opt for a change within the District to non-public schools, without notice to Balboa or the District. This is further compounded by a significant number of students who move out of the area during the school year without notice. What results is a less than meaningful statistic in terms of students who have supposedly quit school. Nonetheless, programs at Balboa, as explained below, try to reduce the number of students who choose to drop-out.

BALBOA DROP-OUT TOTALS			
	1996	1997	1998
%	1.9	1.2	5.7

Suspensions: Suspensions reflected a significant jump in 1997-98, due in part to raised expectations of student behavior. However, the number of suspensions has decreased this year from the same period last year: 14 suspensions per month in 1997-98; 8 suspensions per month for the first three months in 1998-99.

BALBOA SUSPENSION TOTALS			
	1996	1997	1998
%	119	76	157

Mindful of the need for continued improvement in this area, administration has initiated several support programs as a safety-net. Participation in one of the following programs can provide an alternative to suspension, if the time and work requirements are completed in full:

- Community Service Program: This program is supervised by the Dean's Office, and is offered as an alternative to suspension for behavioral infractions and defacement of school property. Task requirements relate to the severity, or degree of the infraction, and can include such jobs as painting over graffiti.
- IMPACT: This community program is sponsored by the San Francisco Police Department for youth who have committed a minor criminal offense. The program requires 100 hours of community service under the direction of the police and other resource people in the community. Participation in the program is prescribed in lieu of suspension or incarceration.

Balboa Enrollment				
Fall '90	Fall '97	Fall '98	11/15/98	1/25/99
1482	1561	1385	1221	1202

School Enrollment. The school enrollment has had a downward trend in the last three years. Although no official explanation exists for the decrease, remarks from discerning parents indicate that the political aura around "reconstitution" may have made parents wary. Given the choice, parents have chosen other schools. When this factor is added to the normal amount of shifting within the District, the continuing enrollment decrease may become somewhat understandable, but the phenomenon merits further investigation.

### **Student Performance**

Balboa High School has a long history of scoring at or near the bottom of the District rankings on standardized tests, and this trend has continued since reconstitution. The CTBS-Star, SAT/ACT, and Proficiency Tests are given annually to assess skill levels and learning aptitudes. Recent scores follow:

CTBS SCORES BY ETHNICITY				
		NCE 1996	NCE 1997	NCE 1998
Cumulative	Read	39.4	41.8	38.8
	Math	42.7	43.1	38.6
Ethnicity				
AA	Read	37.1	34.5	32.0
	Math	35.7	31.5	27.8
Chin	Read	39.4	44.5	41.6
	Math	56.3	56.0	47.8
Filo	Read	43.9	46.7	42.7
	Math	45.4	49.5	42.6
Japa	Read	N/A	43.5	39.5
	Math	N/A	53.0	46.0
Kor	Read	N/A	52.5	54.5
	Math	N/A	48.0	29.0
Lat	Read	36.3	37.7	36.1
	Math	36.3	36.2	34.6
NAmer	Read	50.0	35.0	48.0
	Math	N/A	65.0	71.0
ON	Read	37.7	44.8	40.8
	Math	40.0	49.2	43.8
OW	Read	46.1	46.6	41.3
	Math	43.4	42.6	41.4

CTBS SCORES BY GRADE				
		NCE 1996	NCE 1997	NCE 1998
Cumulative	Read	39.4	41.8	38.8
	Math	42.7	43.1	38.6
9th Grade	Read	38.8	42.3	40.0
	Math	43.3	41.5	40.0
10th Grade	Read	43.7	40.4	41.1
	Math	42.8	43.5	39.9
11th Grade	Read	35.5	42.8	34.8
	Math	41.0	44.2	35.6

Test outcomes in the past three years for African American and Latino students have continued to be low, and the faculty is concerned that the test scores of these students continue to decline as they move through the school. Literacy remains the primary challenge of the school.

As the successor to the CTBS in the State of California, the STAR test was administered at Balboa in the Spring of 1998. The results of this test mirrored previous CTBS rankings, and Balboa's average percentile rankings in the six discipline areas assessed on the STAR were below the District's high school averages in all ethnic, grade and curricular categories. Over six disciplines, 88% of Balboa test-takers averaged scores below the fiftieth percentile.

SAT scores evidence a similar pattern, with little upward movement in recent years. Although the number of students taking the PSAT and SAT have increased, test takers are still low at Balboa: 71 in 1996, 91 in 1997, and 96 in 1998.

BALBOA SAT MEAN SCORES									
VERBAL					MATH				
1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
356	359	404	362	352	388	401	416	406	392

In an attempt to improve basic skills, better prepare students for testing, and improve the number of test takers, a few measures have been implemented to help increase student

awareness of test-taking strategies. In particular, fee-waivers at the school help increase participation. As described in Recommendation 7 above, this process is aided by the services of independent tutoring agencies on campus, such as PACT, AACE, and LULAC. Improving the numbers taking the PSAT/SAT was part of a staff development effort which began last year.

In addition, the Mathematical, Engineering, Science Achievement program (MESA) supports a math after-school class which meets two times per week, and will be a regular class starting in 1999-2000. A Balboa teacher conducts the class, which focuses on math skill building to improve SAT scores. Also, a limited teacher enacted class encourages teachers of seniors to motivate students to take the examinations and improve their test-taking skills. This two hour, independent evening SAT class is taught by a volunteer teacher who focuses on the required content and test-taking skills. A twenty dollar fee is charged to each student for the nine-week class to ensure student attendance with fines charged for absences. All fees are returned for perfect attendance. The class has been restricted to twenty students to maximize the effectiveness of the teaching. The class has very consistent attendance.

Graduation. The number of students graduating from Balboa has shown an upswing since reconstitution of the school three years ago, and reflects the efforts of staff and faculty in encouraging students to meet the requirements for graduation. The recent WASC Student Survey indicates that approximately 82% of students feel that their most



important goal is high school graduation or college attendance.

BALBOA GRADUATION RATE			
	1996	1997	1998
# students	193	212	292

Balboa Graduation Records

Figures for the school's Grade Point Average are only available for the 1997-98 school year; the school's average is 2.23. Here again, the recent Student Survey provides insight on how some students regard this aspect of school: 16% of participating students noted that grades were only so important for graduation.

BALBOA MEAN GPA LEVELS By Ethnicity, 1998									
AA	Chin	Filo	Japa	Kor	Lat	Nam	ON	OW	Avg
1.86	2.87	2.37	1.91	2.74	2.18	1.23	1.99	2.44	2.23

Gifted Academically Talented Education (GATE) students are identified at the elementary level by a standardized test. At the high school level, these designated students are entitled to supplementary or enrichment programs. Presently Balboa has a designated faculty GATE representative and 32 noted GATE students, reflective of the ethnic diversity of the school. These students are dispersed throughout the school at each grade level, with a few in AP and Honors classes. However, the process for addressing the needs of GATE students in a comprehensive program has not been implemented since

reconstitution. The number of GATE students at Balboa has increased over the last four years. The CTBS scores have kept pace in math, but trended downward in reading.

GATE STUDENTS AT BALBOA			
1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
34	16	20	32

GATE STUDENTS/CTBS SCORES				
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Reading	67.2	64.5	60.6	50
Math	67.9	63.1	64.1	67.9

Advanced Placement and Honors Instruction. The school is conducting the following Advanced Placement (AP) classes at present: one Calculus class of 25 seniors, one European Literature class for 18 students, and a Spanish class for 5 students. AP classes are offered to all junior class members on an open, unqualified basis; the number of students taking AP tests has increased since the school's reconstitution.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT TEST TAKERS			
1995	1996	1997	1998
6	18	16	30

Honors-level instruction is offered to qualified and also interested students on a volunteer basis and by teacher encouragement. The school presently offers honors classes in

European Literature, American Literature, World Literature, U.S. History, Chemistry and Calculus

### **Surveys for the Self-Study Process**

Three separate surveys were conducted in the school community. Separate instruments were designed to tap the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers. The survey information was added to teacher observations and the information from other community studies to establish a rich database for the WASC Self-Study. Copies of the surveys and the raw data are included in the appendix.

The Student Survey yielded the largest sample with 538 responses. These surveys were organized around multiple-choice questions and administered in classrooms during a single class period. The 52 questions were suggested by members of the Student Community Profile Committee as well as other teachers, administrators, and students. The survey was printed in English and responses were scored on Scan sheets. The gender breakdown for respondents reflected the gender distribution of the school at large.

A Parent Survey was organized around 55 multiple-choice questions with additional problems for qualitative responses. English, Tagalog, Chinese and Spanish formats were distributed in order to maximize the involvement of a broad segment of the parent community. The survey was distributed to parents on "Back to School Night" and also

disseminated through students in targeted core and ESL/Bilingual classes who were asked to deliver it to their parents and then return the completed forms to the school. A small sample of responses came from the Deans' Office as parents visiting for conferences and other matters were asked to fill out the survey while waiting. The resulting sample size of 135 reflects 10% of the school's parents.

A Teacher Survey was organized around 78 multiple-choice questions that were designed by the Principal to elicit information pertinent to the WASC criteria. Administered in September 1998, this survey tapped teacher awareness of policies and other school issues, as well as their pedagogical approaches and a perspective on student needs.

### Balboa Staff

Balboa benefits from a highly invested faculty and staff. With 73 teachers, 20 paraprofessionals, and 17 classified personnel, the faculty and staff represent all ethnic groups and bring accomplished academic backgrounds to their responsibilities at the school.

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS		
	%	
College Degrees	100	
Advanced Degrees	64	
CLAD	12	
Degree in Teaching Support	78	
Live in San Francisco	92	
Lived in Another Country	43	
Speak More Than 1 Lang.	41	

The culture that has been established since the school's reconstitution has rested very much on staff efforts to improve the learning environment for a remarkably diverse and challenging group of students. Twenty-eight teachers remain from the original complement of 90 teachers hired after the school's reconstitution, however. This turnover — averaging 30-35% per year — has been an impediment to building needed continuity and stability at the school.

The administration has also experienced considerable turnover, including Assistant Principal positions. Also contributing to staff instability have been several long-term illnesses affecting teachers, support staff, and security personnel. The discussions in Self-Study focus groups suggest that the same pattern of turnover may recur at the end of the present school year.

### **Community Support**

Balboa High School enjoys a significant amount of support from its community. Aside from support by the District and private organizations as have been mentioned throughout this Profile, an active Alumni Association, community volunteers, and parents/guardians stand out as viable members of the Balboa safety-net.

- Balboa Alumni Association: Formed in 1970, the Balboa Alumni Association has grown to over 8,000 members as one of the largest organizations in the state. The

stated purpose of the Alumni Association is to "assist Balboa High School." In this effort, the group's support comes in many forms. Notably, the Association sees itself as the 'keeper of tradition' at the school. Through its work, a Hall of Fame and Hall of Merit have been established on the campus enshrining school artifacts and displaying the school's memorabilia covering the sports and academic history. In addition, this group is solely responsible for continuing the senior sweater tradition. Unique among San Francisco high schools, this program provides the availability of acquiring school sweaters with blocks to juniors as they enter their senior year. These sweaters enhance the status of the individual and act as an encouragement for students to target graduation as a goal. At the beginning of each year, the officers of the Alumni Association make a presentation to the faculty to educate new teachers and encourage the perpetration of Balboa's traditions. During the year members participate in school rallies and provide management assistance for school functions, including the Senior Breakfast and Graduation exercises. The organization's newspaper, published three times per year, informs and reminds the Balboa community of the school's traditions, its heritage, and the current activities at Balboa. Fundraising events and member donations allow the Association to make available yearly scholarships for graduating seniors and grants to help teachers purchase needed materials. Last year the Association provided \$7,000 in scholarships and made grants to help an AP teacher purchase books and the Music teacher to repair instruments.

- School Volunteers: This annual program, coordinated with a District effort to encourage community support, provides Balboa with concerned citizens to help teachers in the classroom. A teacher, on a volunteer basis, acts as the school coordinator, maintaining a sign-up list and matching community members with teacher needs. For the last two years, the number of participating volunteers has increased. In the first semester for example, twelve community representatives have spent time in classrooms. Also, as a result of a focused outreach effort, more Balboa parents have registered with the coordinator to offer help. Plans are to expand on this increase by more appeals to parents and with more teachers recognizing how the benefits of volunteer assistance will enhance instructions.
- Parent/ Guardian Involvement: In as much as more parent/guardian involvement is needed at Balboa, a number of parents/guardians take an interest in the school and offer support. Parents/guardians regularly serve on school committees, including the School Site Council (SSC), the Bilingual Advisory Council (BAC), and the School Advisory Committee (SAC). Still others attend sporting events and are regular participants on parent nights. As mentioned above, a few parents/guardians have signed up for classroom work. The Filipino Parent Center on campus includes parent/guardian assistance in supporting Filipino youth. Parent/guardian conferences are a regular part of the school effort to include parents/guardians in the process of improving the behavior and academic standing of at-risk students.

## Curricular Trends

Among the active efforts in place to improve student learning, two programs stand out as the most schoolwide of measures which will have in time a progressive effect on all curricula and student results. Namely the School- to-Career Program and the Digital High School Plan will integrate school staff development with pedagogical improvement to help staff meet the ESLR requirements.

- School-To-Career Partnership: The School-to-Career Partnership Program is supported and funded through the San Francisco Unified School District and the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. The program's mission reads: "Implement a system that readies students to seek and achieve satisfying careers, as well as further education and training, and fosters lifelong education and employment for San Franciscans". Through the uses of teacher-mentors on a campus, internships in the business community, and a four-year, integrated curricular pathway, the program is a major support element for students to help them meet academic and technical challenges in the post-secondary world.

As one of six member high schools, Balboa is in the process of establishing a plan to meet the organizational and educational requisites of the program. Last summer a recruited school coordinator attended a workshop hosted by the District to educate site administrators as to the opportunities and requirements of the program. Last semester a School-to-Career Team was formed with eight staff members, the school coordinator,



and the principal. Some work has been done in the areas of curricular pathway planning, course content goals, and assessment guidelines. Through the District, a dedicated program site coordinator for the school has been hired to integrate the program at the school and direct the introduction of the program's plans through staff development sessions.

- *The Digital High School Program:* Funded by the State of California, the Digital High School Program is being used by the District to help fulfill part of the San Francisco Unified School District's technology plan for high schools. At Balboa, the Digital High School Grant will provide a networked computer, printer, VCR, large screen monitor, and cable TV in each classroom. Further, the grant will fund an upgrade to the PC Lab and Mac Lab, as well as additional computer and audio-visual equipment. Implementation began in August 1998, but contractors were behind schedule. Electrical work is now finished and the network will be completed by the end of February. Due to construction, the PC Lab was not operational, but will be open in February with 24 new PC clones. When the project is complete, the school will benefit from:

- Additional technical support
- Enhanced access to instructional resources
- Teachers training in basic computer skills and strategies to integrate the technology into the curriculum
- Students will have access to e-mail and web-based projects will be possible
- Teachers will be able to incorporate into their lessons: computer presentations, web sources, video and cable TV, through their large screen monitor

Ninth grade is the target for technology instruction with emphasis on language arts, social studies, and mathematics. Ninth grade teachers in these subjects will be trained to incorporate technology based projects into their curriculum that address the skill level of ninth graders and include skill building activities. The eventual goal is to

have information/technology literacy classes for all ninth graders when staff and curriculum can be realigned. The Step-Up-to-Balboa Program for incoming ninth graders will have a technology component. As part of the grant, all faculty are expected to incorporate technology into their lesson plans. After the implementation year, the grant funds professional development for the next two to three years.

# **PROGRESS REPORT**

## CHAPTER II: Progress Report

Balboa High School went through the "Pursuing Excellence" accreditation process in 1994-95 and received a term of two years. In 1996, one year prior to the next scheduled visit for accreditation, the school was "*reconstituted*" by the San Francisco Unified School District. Subsequently, the school requested and was granted a two-year extension. The most significant change since the last visit has of course been **Reconstitution**, beginning with the near total refurbishing of the physical plant. The buildings were washed, repaired, and repainted. The grounds were washed and landscaped. Windows were replaced. Paralleling the physical changes have been those of personnel. *The entire adult staff was released from duty at Balboa, and a new principal was hired.* With assistance from the San Francisco Unified School District certificated personnel office, the new principal hired her assistant principals. The new administrative team then interviewed and hired the faculty, counselors/deans, clerical staff, custodians, paraprofessionals, and security personnel. Of the 90 teachers hired in the summer of 1996, only 28 are on the current faculty. What follows are the reports on the progress made on each of the last WASC Visiting Committee's recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** *The entire school community work together to develop plans that will successfully resolve the student behavior problems and concerns at Balboa High School. The School Environment Committee will need input and support from all stakeholders up and down the line to succeed.*

**Progress:** **Reconstitution** has been more than a major face-lift of the physical plant. Student attitudes and behaviors have also improved dramatically.

**Recommendation 2:** *The administration, staff, students, and parents write a unifying mission statement, including goals and objectives, that assures the Balboa community will work together to support the improvement of student performance.*

**Progress:** A unifying mission statement has been written but needs to be actively used on a meaningful daily basis.

**Recommendation 3:** *The district and ground department work with the science department to provide for the immediate installation and maintenance of necessary safety equipment in science labs so that students and staff are able to use the science labs in safety.*

**Progress:** Necessary safety equipment has been installed and is functioning in the science labs.

**Recommendation 4:** *The district and site administration make public health and safety issues a top priority, repair and/or upgrade the plumbing and electrical systems throughout the school, and upgrade general school facilities in order to make classrooms and the school habitable, physically safe and appropriate for students.*

**Progress:** Through **Reconstitution**, electrical and plumbing systems have been upgraded, and school facilities in general have been made habitable, physically safe, and appropriate for students and staff.

**Recommendation 5:** *The (newly empowered) school site council develop a plan for open and clear communications within the Balboa school community, particularly among staff, so that there is a clear understanding in the Balboa community regarding the many activities, programs, and changes in process.*

**Progress:** The administration and Site Council have significantly increased their efforts to reach out in productive ways to the school community, including holding meetings with interested community members at locations *in the community* as opposed to at the school.

**Recommendation 6:** *The administration and staff work together to reconfigure room assignments for the 1994-95 school year, and provide adequate and appropriate physical facilities for physically impaired students to insure equal access for all students to all facets of the educational program in compliance with state regulations.*

**Progress:** Classrooms for physically impaired students have been relocated to be in compliance with state regulations. Furthermore, these classrooms have been moved to the center of the campus for both physical and psychological reasons.

**Recommendation 7:** *The administration and staff develop and promote articulation with feeder schools to assure a smooth sequential transition from feeder schools to the core curriculum areas of Balboa's New Century Enterprise program thereby improving accurate academic placement.*

**Progress:** More articulation is taking place between Balboa and its feeder middle schools, but more needs to happen, especially in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics.

**Recommendation 8:** *The administration and staff develop plans, which insure the enrollment and inclusion in the Balboa New Century program of all appropriate grade-level students.*

**Progress:** The New Century program no longer exists.

**Recommendation 9:** *The school administration and core subject departments institute a systematic program of staff development that provides time for the departments to continue to develop curriculum consistent with the California state on frameworks while developing the Balboa academy concept thereby ensuring student achievement is properly aligned with those frameworks.*

**Progress:** Department heads have a common planning and meeting time, and each department meets every other Wednesday morning.

**Recommendation 10:** *The administration define and articulate the counseling services available to students, and publish the results; explaining how counselors are being used, so that the entire school community is aware of services available and how to access them, and to ensure that there is an integrated program of these services which makes the most efficient use of available staff in an appropriate and coordinated manner.*

**Progress:** More needs to be done to define and articulate programs and courses available to Balboa students – at Balboa, at CCSF, and all post-secondary options.

**Recommendation 11:** *Administration to formulate a method of information dissemination regarding changes in process and including students in the decision-making process.*

**Progress:** Dissemination of information is improved but needs to be improved more still. Creation of a central gathering place for staff, with bulletin boards, mailboxes, sign-in sheets, etc. could be useful in increasing awareness among staff. Revising of the advisory system by developing a basic skills curriculum and giving credit for attendance and participation would help to keep students informed and make it easier to include them in the decision-making process.

**Recommendation 12:** *The district and administration address the food service's inadequacy of facilities, access and food quality so that basic nutritional and social needs of Balboa High School students and staff are more adequately met.*

**Progress:** Students and staff alike report that food services have been improved considerably in terms of both nutrition and variety of choices.

**Recommendation 13:** *The district, school administration, and physical education department implement a plan for improving locker room facilities and gym facility security to provide for adequate student safety and well-being.*

**Progress:** Locker rooms have been cleaned and painted, but the entire gymnasium complex is still in need of major repair and modernization, i.e., it was not included in Reconstitution.

**Recommendation 14:** *The administration and staff evaluate all instructional strategies to insure that all students are actively engaged in their learning and are able to make the connection between school and the adult world.*

**Progress:** Students are generally more engaged in their learning but are not particularly aware of the expectations of the world after graduation. The new School-to-Career Coordinator, the implementation of the Digital High School, and a full complement of Assistant Principals are all hopeful signs for increasing this awareness.

**THE  
SELF-STUDY  
PROCESS**

WASC 24579



## CHAPTER III: The Self-Study Process

In the course of doing the self-study, the Balboa High School staff has addressed the *seven key outcomes* of the self-study process, some of them more thoroughly than others. During the Committee's visit, it became quite clear that the "Focus on Learning" process would continue to aid the Balboa community in improving their school. The seven key outcomes and the Visiting Committee's report on each are as follows:

*1. the involvement of each stakeholder group in the self-study*

The entire Balboa staff was engaged in the self-study process. Even though it has been very difficult to bring Balboa parents into the school, there was some parental involvement. Only a few students were involved.

*2. a better understanding of the impact of the program on student learning*

As a result of the Focus on Learning process, staff members have realized that the use of assessment data to drive the development of curriculum is very important. They know that they need training in development of a variety of assessment tools and in utilizing the results of these various assessments to shape the curriculum.

*3. the development, clarification, or refinement of expected schoolwide learning results*

The ESLRs were developed with the input of all staff members and reflect the needs of the students at Balboa. The staff members realize that they have to take the next step and incorporate the ESLRs across the curriculum.

*4. a better understanding of how specific disciplines and/or support programs compare to appropriate curricular references and current educational thinking through the use of discussion questions, data gathering, and analysis of student work.*

It was clear to the visiting team, through the examination of the focus group process binders, that the Balboa staff used discussion questions, gathered data, and analyzed student work to review their programs in light of current educational thinking and practice.

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

Through the self-study process the staff has gained an awareness of the need to assess programs in order to have a more positive effect on student learning.

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

The Balboa staff has gone through the process of creating very detailed action plans, but these action plans do not always converge on the priority needs of Balboa.

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

In view of the number of tasks detailed in the action plans, the Balboa staff needs to instead focus on a few major priorities. The accountability system should include a mechanism to report out accomplishments publicly to the entire Balboa school community.

**The Visiting Committee believes that the Balboa self-study is an accurate description of the programs available for the students at Balboa. The large, thorough, and well-organized volume of evidence illustrated well the broad range of student achievement at Balboa. Based on analysis of this evidence, the committee believes that the school has accurately identified its needs.**

**EXPECTED  
SCHOOLWIDE  
LEARNING  
RESULTS  
(eslr's)**

# ESLRs Expected Schoolwide Learning Results

## A) Demonstrate Grade-Level Skills in Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Mathematics

- 1) Develop effective study & test-taking skills
- 2) Understand and communicate mathematical concepts and interpret written text
- 3) Demonstrate literacy
- 4) Exhibit presentation skills
- 5) Communicate effectively in personal, academic, and work environments

## B) Strengthen Personal Character

- 1) Exhibit self-discipline through personal commitment and accountability
- 2) Make healthy choices
- 3) Internalize Balboa High School Life Skills

## C) Use Technology Effectively

- 1) Become technologically literate
- 2) Access and assess information from technological resources to support research needs

## D) Demonstrate Higher Order Thinking Skills

- 1) Gather, synthesize, analyze, apply, and evaluate information
- 2) Exhibit problem-solving skills
- 3) Develop **goals and strategies** for post high school years

## E) Exhibit Positive, Creative Expressions

- 1) Participate in school activities
- 2) Develop an appreciation and acceptance of cultural diversity
- 3) Realize a role in the community
- 4) Exhibit personal creativity

**QUALITY**

**OF**

**THE**

**SCHOOL'S**

**PROGRAM**

WASC 24584

## CHAPTER IV: Quality of the School's Program

### A. Vision, Leadership and Culture

#### *What currently exists:*

**Criterion A1:** *The school has a clearly stated vision or purpose based upon its beliefs, student needs, and current educational research. Supported by the governing board and the central administration, the school's purpose is defined further by ESLRs: what all students should know and be able to do by graduation.*

Balboa has a vision statement that was created with input from the school community and it reflects the philosophical tenets of the SFUSD. However, some members of the community feel that the statement needs to be revised and made more concise and that it should be more visible in the entire school community. The vision seems to have the support from outside the school (from the district office and the board) but it needs to become part of the daily operation of the school. While the ESLRs are widely known, they seem not to be the driving force behind school planning and policy decisions.

#### *Areas of strength:*

- Balboa has a vision statement created with input of the stakeholders
- Balboa's vision statement has the support of the district and is in alignment with the philosophical tenets of the SFUSD.

#### *Growth needs:*

- There should be school-wide commitment to the vision and ESLRs
- The vision needs to become part of the daily life of the entire school
- Teachers need support and training in order to dovetail their curricular goals with the ESLRs and the school's vision.

**Criterion A2:** *The school leadership makes decisions and initiates activities that focus on all students achieving the ESLRs. The leadership empowers the school community and encourages commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning.*

The leadership of the school since reconstitution has focused on improvement of the school culture. There has been significant progress in raising the level of civility among the students and the number of students not in class has decreased. There has also been a substantial drop in the number of students suspended. The level of cleanliness has risen and many members of the community say that they feel that Balboa is a much safer place now than it was before reconstitution.

There seems to be no school-wide plan for ensuring that the ESLRs are incorporated into the curriculum. Individual departments and teachers monitor the implementation of curriculum standards. New programs have been implemented based on student need and teacher initiative.

The organizational structure of the school does not seem to be clear to all staff members so it is sometimes difficult for them to get needed support. There is an evolving formalized decision making process, but many staff members feel disenfranchised. Many staff members say that they do not know what is going on, and that there is no regular vehicle for communication between and among staff members beyond a daily written bulletin distributed to all staff.

***Areas of strength:***

- The caring, energetic, and committed staff has found ways to create programs that address the needs of their students.

***Growth needs:***

- The school community needs to develop more leaders who will encourage more staff participation and collaboration that will result in shared responsibility for student learning.
- The formalized decision making structure for the school needs to be revised by the staff. The process should be clearly understood by all stakeholders. All stakeholders need to have a clear voice in governance and decision-making.
- A systematic method of regular communication between administration and staff and among staff members should be revised and maintained.

***Criterion A3: The support, utilization, and monitoring of staff facilitate achievement of the ESLRs. Leadership and staff are part of an organized structure that is committed to professional development.***

Balboa has 8 staff development days per year. Professional development programs do not always meet the needs of teachers either for discipline specific issues or for long-range school improvement. There has been no coherent plan for using the staff development time. Individual staff members do attend workshops outside of school, but the information they get is not necessarily shared with other staff members.

***Areas of strength:***

- The district has made a commitment to providing time for professional development

***Growth needs:***

- Staff members need professional development in a wide range of areas.
- Teachers need to be involved in making the plans for individual and all-school professional development.

**Criterion A4:** *The school is a safe, clean and orderly place that nurtures learning. The culture of the school is characterized by trust, professionalism, and high expectations for all students, and a focus on continuous school improvement.*

Even though the campus has been vastly improved since reconstitution, the staff members feel that students need to take even more responsibility for maintaining a clean campus. Many stakeholders express positive feelings about the changes in the campus appearance and security. The custodial, security, and support staff members along with the teachers and administration and students are responsible for these improvements.

**Areas of strength:**

- The entire school community has made great progress in campus cleanliness and safety.

**Growth needs:**

- Students should be encouraged to take more responsibility for their school and its appearance.

## **B. Curricular Paths**

**What currently exists:**

**Criterion B1:** *All students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent curriculum that supports the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results.*

All students may take the San Francisco Unified School District courses necessary for graduation, but that in and of itself is a significant challenge for most students, and going beyond is even more difficult. Advanced Placement and City College of San Francisco classes are also available, but students hear about these on an individual basis from teachers and counselors. The advisory system, if all staff participate in a systematic fashion, could provide an avenue for all students to hear pertinent information about what courses are available, when, and where.

The block schedule has both supporters and detractors. Positive aspects include more time in class for support and in-depth instruction as well as reduced student contact time between classes. Negative aspects include the difficulty of repeating failed classes and the lack of choices and flexibility. *However, since the Self-Study was written, the SFUSD has stated that the current 4x4 block schedule cannot be funded and that it must therefore be abandoned and another schedule developed for the 1999-2000 school year.* The staff is currently engaged in that process.

Some support services exist but only a small percentage of students know about or use them. However, the Balboa Teen Health Center is well established and well known.



Also, all 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students for the last two years have had double mathematics and language arts classes. The overall problem seems to be one of coordination and staffing of the various safety net programs. Again, an improved advisory system might assist in solving this problem. It also remains to be seen what the possibilities will be with the new schedule.

Approximately 75% of the incoming freshmen are not academically prepared for high school work. In addition, 25% failed more than two subjects in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. There is a clear need for more thorough assessment as well as articulation with the feeder middle schools. Students are apparently in need of even more academic and personal support than currently exists, in addition to more co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities.

***Areas of strength:***

- There is a working partnership with City College of San Francisco to provide college classes for Balboa students on the CCSF campus, including African-American and Latino dropout prevention programs.
- The SOAR program offers potentially truant and educationally disadvantaged students an opportunity to improve basic academic skills, develop organizational abilities, and refocus their attention on meeting graduation requirements.
- The three Academies – Law, Action, and Communication Arts – offer students meaningful interdisciplinary programs to better focus their intellectual energies through high school to college or career options after graduation.

***Growth needs:***

- Refine the advisory system by developing a curriculum that emphasizes basic academic skills, developing and monitoring individual learning plans for all students, and offering credit for attendance and participation.
- Develop a plan for coordinating and communicating the many social and academic support programs to all stakeholders – students, staff, parents, and the community.
- Create a daily time schedule that allows time for teachers to meet, discuss, and plan curriculum and instructional activities.

**Criterion B2:** *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.*

Students may have the option of creating a personal learning plan, but it is not clear how or when or with whom they do so. Again, just doing the basics seems more than enough for both students and staff. More curricular choices beyond the minimum graduation requirements would be desirable, but if students and staff are indeed “overwhelmed”, then it is hardly realistic to add more. Perhaps the new School-to-Career coordinator will be able to assist in this effort.

***Areas of strength:***

- See #1, #2, and #3 above under “Criterion B1 Strengths”.

- Hiring a School-to-Career Coordinator recognizes the need for ensuring that students are aware of as many post-secondary options as possible so they can better target their learning.

***Growth needs:***

- See #1, #2, and #3 above under “Criterion B1 *Growth needs*”.
- Continue efforts to support all students in need of stronger academic skills – reading, writing, speaking, computation, use of technology, and problem solving.

**Criterion B3:** *Upon graduation all students are prepared to continue the pursuit of their academic and occupational goals.*

It would seem, given the stated challenge of meeting the day to day requirements of coming to school and passing the classes needed for graduation, that focusing on post-secondary options, be they academic or vocational, is difficult. Furthermore, there are still too many students who are unclear as to what is expected both at Balboa and beyond.

***Areas of strength:***

- The PACT program gives students information and guidance for planning their high school learning program.
- Hiring the new School-to-Career Coordinator will bring the many teacher – developed initiatives under the direction and coordination of one person and allow for greater communication and support.
- The staff has raised student expectations as evidenced by more than doubling the number of students enrolling and attending college after graduating from Balboa.

***Growth needs:***

- See #1, #2, and #3 above under “Criterion B1 *Growth needs*”.

### **C. Powerful Teaching and Learning**

Effort is being made on an individual basis by many teachers to provide powerful teaching and learning experiences in the classroom. There is exciting collaboration happening between various groups of teachers, such as those working in the three academies and the SOAR program. However, lack of planning time, the high teacher attrition rate, the lack of textbooks and lab materials, and an extremely large population of EDY students (66% of Balboa’s students are designated as educationally disadvantaged youth) make it difficult for teachers to make strides in this area. This struggle is reflected in the fact that, according to Balboa’s teacher survey, 42% of teachers think there is only “somewhat” of a “positive learning culture at Balboa” and 23% think there is none at all. In order for Balboa to improve the overall academic culture of the school, teachers ultimately need more time to develop and coordinate challenging curriculum, as well as the resources to provide necessary materials for the classroom.

*What currently exists:*

**Criterion 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?*

There have been repeated efforts to ensure that all students are engaged in challenging learning, however, new teachers, by their very nature, require more time and support in this effort. It is always up to individual teachers to follow state frameworks, implement innovative curriculum, or develop course syllabi; however, few teachers are explicitly incorporating the school ESLRs into their curriculum. However, students are being exposed to extremely challenging learning experiences in some classrooms. (See comments for criterion C2) Also, most teachers seem to have created positive relationships with their students and most students cite a plethora of caring, dedicated teachers as one of Balboa's strengths.

Balboa offers a core curriculum of classes that meet the UC system's A-F requirements. Currently only three AP classes are being offered, and honors classes were scaled back this year from 16 to eight. This year, class sizes ranged between extremely large classes and extremely small classes. This disparity seems to be caused by the high absentee rate at Balboa as well as difficulties in scheduling stemming from the 4x4 block schedule.

A shortage of teacher resources is apparent as well. Many science teachers lack adequate lab materials and many teachers do not have enough copies of texts to allow students to take books home. There is also a need for more graphing calculators in the math department.

*Areas of strength:*

- Many teachers are involving students in challenging learning opportunities and using a variety of strategies and resources to meet their students' needs.
- Balboa has a cadre of dedicated, compassionate and hardworking teachers who work to develop close relationships with students.

*Growth needs:*

- Teachers and administrators need to develop a plan for professional growth that addresses the needs of teachers working with Balboa's population.
- More elective opportunities need to be offered.
- More honors and AP classes need to be offered.
- Teachers need access to adequate resources for their classrooms, such as up-to-date textbooks, lab materials and graphing calculators.
- Prepare a school catalogue describing all courses, programs and services to ensure that all stakeholders understand the scope of the school's offerings. The catalogue should be available in all languages appropriate to the school.

**Criterion 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?*

Many teachers are exposing their students to learning opportunities that emphasize higher order thinking skills. For example, students in a government class were engaged in a mock congress, writing bills, discussing them in house and senate sub committees, and lobbying for their bill to pass. Students in an integrated science class built a battery that converted chemical energy to electrical energy.

With regard to collaboration, the Law Academy, Community Action Academy and Communication Arts Academy, as well as the SOAR program, seem to be making some strides in offering a challenging and interdisciplinary curriculum. For example, students in the Community Action Academy experience a curriculum that integrates English, math and social science. Students apply their knowledge through a series of community service activities such as building a house for a family in need. The teachers in these programs report that their attendance rates are higher than the school average and their students feel a closer connection to the school community. However, the school offers no data for academy student outcomes, citing that the “academy structures are still in the preliminary stages.”

In general, 95% of staff members say they collaborate with other teachers, yet the self-study also reports that it is difficult to plan common collaboration times into the master schedule. Until the master schedule establishes as a priority common prep times for team teachers, teachers will continue to collaborate only on an informal basis.

***Areas of strength:***

- Many teachers are exposing their students to learning opportunities that emphasize higher order thinking skills.
- Teachers in the academies programs and the SOAR program are collaborating and offering an integrated program that emphasizes higher order thinking skills.

***Growth needs:***

- Teachers need a master schedule design that allows teaching teams weekly common planning time in addition to prep periods.
- Teachers and administrators need to investigate other means of designing interdisciplinary teaching experiences that align related courses, such as American literature and US history.
- Teachers and administrators need to strengthen existing academy structures so that stability is not dependent on specific teachers.

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

Balboa admits that implementation of this criteria is left to the individual teacher. According to the self-study, many classes use “primary source documents, community resources, computer technology or field experience” to “enhance student learning and motivation.” Sometimes teachers invite guest speakers or organize field trips, such as a trip to Sacramento by the Law Academy students to lobby politicians or a visit to a social studies classroom by Japanese men who had been interned in World War II. The Junior ROTC program offers students military training and life skills. Only two “School to Career” classes, accounting and work experience, are currently being offered. However, beyond these disparate offerings, there seems to be little institutional support for connecting classroom learning experiences to broader life experiences. Balboa also states in the self-study that “students are sometimes ambivalent about school, seeing only a limited connection between classes, the school’s expectations and life outside school.”

Balboa has rewired the school and is currently working on updating its computers. This is being paid for by the Digital High School grant. Balboa also has a full-time computer technician.

***Areas of strength:***

- Some teachers are using a variety of resources for learning and engaging students in learning experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom.
- The Digital High School grant money has enabled the school to begin to provide access for all students to modern technology.

***Growth needs:***

- Teachers need more technology training.
- Balboa needs to offer more computer classes.
- Students need more access to functioning computer labs.
- Balboa needs to significantly expand its School to Career options.

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

***What currently exists:***

**Criterion D1:** *All students receive appropriate support to help ensure academic success.*

Balboa High School is a culturally, academically, and socially diverse student body. There are numerous support services for students, and the number of students graduating from Balboa has increased by more than 50% over the last two years. However, there is still a need for a more coordinated effort in making these services accessible to students.

The Digital High School grant will provide much needed technology added to each classroom. This grant will provide one computer and one TV/VCR for every classroom. One computer per class, however, does not allow for all students to be engaged in fully using the technology for their assignments and projects. Staff will also need training to appropriately incorporate this technology into the curriculum.

Presently students have limited access to the library. Over the last two years money has been allocated to provide students with more books and resources. Enough computers are not available to students and more library resources and hours are needed. Students need more research and outside reading materials.

Balboa has a large population of students with special needs. Special needs students at Balboa represent 11.8% of the student body or 155 students. Special Education serves students in RSP, SDC, or the DIS according to their IEP. The progress of these students is monitored and placement in general education carefully planned. Regular education teachers need more training in modifications for students and more improved communication concerning the student. The position of the Dean/Head Counselor has been changed to more effectively address the personal and academic needs of students. The ESL/Bilingual department continues to commit to ensuring that language and culture do not isolate these students. More computers are needed to provide support for English Language Learners. Although more can certainly be done, it needs to be noted that ESL students are much more fully incorporated into the mainstream culture of Balboa High School than before reconstitution.

*Areas of strength:*

- Balboa High School is the recipient of the Digital High School Grant.
- The ESL/Bilingual Department and the Special Education Department are committed to supporting students in their personal and academic growth.
- Student support services have been initiated and implemented by individual members of the Balboa community.
- The staff at Balboa is caring, committed, and hard working.

*Growth needs:*

- More ways need to be found to encourage students to use the library. More research materials need to be made available to students.
- More training needs to be made available to teachers in the use of technology
- Develop a newsletter to better communicate with all stakeholders.

**Criterion D2:** *Students have access to a system of personal support services, activities, and opportunities at the school and within the community.*

Balboa's faculty has struggled to create a cohesive support for their many at risk students. Students have access to personal support services from several sources. These sources include the Teen Health Clinic, and EDY Monitoring. There are currently not enough services for all students. There is not a coordinated effort of student support services.

Many services exist in isolation. Some student-centered programs have been created and implemented by individual teachers and are not school-wide programs. All students are not working within the same type of organizational structure. More dialogue and shared leadership is needed around this issue.

Tardiness and absenteeism represent a large challenge for the school. The assistant principal has instituted new policies. School paraprofessionals need to be given more opportunity to dialogue with teachers about this issue. More counselors are needed in order to address at risk students and their needs. The daily advisory period model has been changed to address this challenge.

***Areas of strength:***

- The development of Academies have served to support students in their personal and academic growth
- Tardies have been reduced substantially.
- The Teen Health Clinic is the only clinic of its kind in the city.

***Growth needs:***

- A School to Career program can better connect students to their learning.
- The staff should review the effectiveness of the Advisory Period. This review should include student attendance, accounting, credit, and curriculum.
- Communicate to students the support services available to them. Implement a systematic approach to improve student support.
- Develop and implement actions to increase faculty retention.
- Develop a system of rewards and recognition for student achievement.
- Assess the incidences of tardiness and absenteeism establishing an accurate database and implementing consistent policies.

***Criterion D3: The school leadership employs a wide range of strategies to encourage parental and community involvement.***

Balboa High School seeks to offer opportunities for parents and community to become involved in the life of the school. Efforts are made to involve families of newly arrived students. Parent/family involvement includes parent nights, college nights, music performances, athletic games, Bilingual Advisory Committee, School Site Council, School Advisory Council, the Parent Center, Volunteer Programs, field trip chaperoning, parent-teacher conferences and parent-dean conferences. Staff members attempt to conduct conferences in the appropriate home language. School correspondence is sent out in four primary languages-Spanish, Filipino, Chinese, and English.

***Areas of strength:***

- Parents actively participate on the School Site Council.

***Growth needs:***

- Develop strategies to include more parents and community in the life of the school.
- Encourage closer communication with teachers, parents, and students.

**Criterion D4:** *The human, material, and financial resources, as well as facilities available to the school are sufficient and effectively used to support students in accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results.*

The school has been newly painted, windows have been replaced, and lockers have been repaired, but, as in most California public schools, financial resources are still lacking. Staff utilizes what little it has. More resource utilization, maintenance, and upkeep are needed. Staff members share ideas and collaborate intermittently. The school's physical plant is old and requires constant maintenance and repair. While district repair crews are often understaffed, the custodial staff takes great pride in their work and was voted the best custodial team in the city in 1997. Facility improvement is a substantial and ongoing process. The school gymnasium is in need of major renovation. There is an adequate supply of state-adopted texts. More up-to-date equipment and supplies are needed. Up-to-date texts and supplementary materials that are culturally relevant are lacking. The cafeteria offers a variety of options. Students meet with the cafeteria manager and the principal to discuss preferences. Some students do not take advantage of the free lunch program if eligible.

***Areas of strength:***

- Both the interior and exterior of the school has undergone a major face-lift as clearly shown by the "before and after" pictures in the appendix of the Self-Study.
- Building and grounds are well cared for and litter is at a minimum.
- The school and classrooms are clean and well kept.
- The cafeteria is operated efficiently.

***Growth needs:***

- The gymnasium is in need of major renovation.
- Students need books they're able to take home and more up-to-date supplementary materials.

**E. Assessment and Accountability**

The Assessment and Accountability Focus Group was comprised of 19 faculty members. This committee was divided into three subcommittees. Each subcommittee addressed one of three Assessment and Accountability criteria. The subcommittee's work was reviewed and approved by the entire focus group and subsequently edited by the leadership team. It should be noted that there was a lack of parent and student participation on this committee. This process facilitated a comprehensive review of evidence and thorough examination of the school's status relative to each criterion.



*What currently exists:*

**Criterion E1:** *Teachers employ a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate students and to modify the curriculum and instructional practices. Students use assessment results to modify their learning in order to enhance their educational program.*

Assessment at Balboa is carried out in various ways such as state-mandated tests, teacher-made tests, essays and projects. Some teachers use portfolios and notebooks as additional assessment methods. Based on the school report, evidence made available to the visiting committee, and interviews with the focus group, it is evident that the faculty is concerned with the use of data to drive teaching and learning. The school offers students excellent opportunities for academic support but this assistance is not a direct result of student data analysis. Assessment is used to determine student grades and is viewed as separate from instruction, usually taking the form of end-of-unit or end-of-semester tests that measure what students have learned. These assessments are used to judge student performance and determine grades.

*Areas of strength:*

- The various assessment methods used at Balboa High School to determine academic success
- The desire of faculty to learn to use data to modify instruction and help students learn at greater levels
- The numerous in school and after school academic support opportunities for students

*Growth needs:*

- The faculty and administration need to determine the metrics to be used to measure the academic progress of Balboa students.
- The faculty should develop a process for the systematic review and analysis of student achievement data.
- Ongoing professional development on the effective use of data to drive instruction needs to be provided to the staff.
- Balboa High School teachers need to share the results of assessment data with their students in a greater measure to enable students to modify their learning.

**Criterion E2:** *The school, district, and community regularly review student progress toward accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results. Assessment results are reported to the entire school community on a regular basis.*

Since the ESLRs have recently been completed, the school has not yet developed an assessment program to measure student achievement of the ESLRs. Current methods of assessing student learning include STAR 9, SAT, PSAT, AP exams, Golden State exams, district proficiency tests, and college entrance rates. SAT 9 results are desegregated by grade, gender, ethnicity, bilingual and special education status. These results are reported to the community. However, only a few teachers have received standardized test data on

individual students. School assessment has not yet been organized into a coherent program and reporting results to Balboa stakeholders is inconsistent

*Areas of strength:*

- The collection and analysis of performance data on educationally disadvantaged students that serve to determine the extra support services given to these students

*Growth needs:*

- The faculty and administration need to select appropriate student performance data that will measure student attainment of ESLRs.
- The faculty and administration should develop a systematic process for collecting, analyzing and reporting student achievement data to all school constituencies including parents and community members.

*Criterion E3: The assessment of expected schoolwide learning results drives the school's program development and resource allocation.*

Budget and resource allocations at Balboa focus on short term solutions and are not necessarily linked to student achievement data. Planned, purposeful changes tend to address symptoms of problems rather than root causes. Balboa High School has not yet developed an organized approach to data collection and analysis focused toward long term program planning and development.

*Areas of Strength:*

- Staff use of general information about students to initiate assistance efforts such as special writing courses, SOAR academy and mentoring programs
- The emerging collaboration of some departments to gather and analyze student data in a systematic way.

*Growth Needs:*

- The faculty and administration need to develop a process to assess all incoming students in reading, writing, and mathematics for appropriate course placement and allocation of teacher resources.
- The administration should continue to review the teacher assignment process to ensure that course assignments are consistent with the teacher's area of expertise and student needs, especially with the high turnover of faculty.
- The faculty and administration should review and refine student course placement practices consistent with student needs, course prerequisites, and teacher recommendations.

**ONGOING  
SCHOOL  
IMPROVEMENT**

## CHAPTER V: Ongoing School Improvement

The Committee feels that the Action Plans do not adequately address the critical areas of follow-up because they are *a) too unfocused, b) too numerous, and c) too ambitious*. The Committee feels that the Action Plans need to be boiled down to their core elements, and that a timeline that emphasizes accomplishing small, easily doable tasks first needs to be developed. The Committee feels that a foundation of solid achievement needs to be established first to more likely insure the success of future endeavors. The Committee further feels that increased efforts to improve communication and shared governance with all members of the Balboa educational community are necessary to successful implementation of **Reconstitution** at Balboa High School.

The Committee feels that the Action Plans, when reworked, will definitely enhance student learning. However, staff turnover and the quality and quantity of the San Francisco Unified School District commitment could be impediments in that process. The commitment is clearly present in the faculty and administration but remains to be seen in the student and parent communities. *The entire school community needs to follow up on the visit by the WASC Committee as soon as possible and capitalize on the enthusiasm, focus, hope, promise, and will engendered by the self-study process.* **Balboa High School has embarked on an unprecedented effort in public education, and there are no well-traveled paths to use as guides. Therefore, it is incumbent that all stakeholders renew their efforts to take the necessary next steps to further improve the quality of education for the students of Balboa High School.**



# Accrediting Commission For Schools

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DONALD G. HAUGHT, Ed.D.  
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MARILYN S. GEORGE, Ed.D.  
 ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## RECOMMENDATION FOR A TERM OF ACCREDITATION

Name of School Visited Balboa High School  
 Address of School 1000 Cayuga Avenue, SAN Francisco 94112  
 Name of School District San Francisco Unified School District  
 Form Used in Self-Study Focus on Learning Visit seventh  
 Date of Visit 7 - 10 March 1999 Accredited Grade Span 9 - 12 Enrollment 1202

The Visiting Committee's CONFIDENTIAL recommendation to the Accrediting Commission is:

	<b>A Term Of Accreditation For Six Years:</b> A term of <u>six</u> years with a written Progress Report to the School's governing board on the <u>major</u> recommendations or critical areas listed in the Visiting Committee Report. Upon review and formal acceptance by the board, the report will be filed with the WASC Office.
X	<b>A Term Of Accreditation For Six Years With A Review:</b> A term of <u>six</u> years with a complete Progress Report on <u>major</u> recommendations or critical areas and one day on-site review by a two member committee to be completed not later than the third year of the six year term.
	<b>A Term Of Accreditation For Three Years:</b> A term of <u>three</u> years with a full self-study and a full on-site visit during the third year.
	<b>A Term Of Accreditation For One Or Two Years:</b> A term of <u>one</u> or <u>two</u> years (circle one or two) with a complete Progress Report and revisit to serve as a "warning" that unless prompt attention is given to the major recommendations accreditation may be denied.
	<b>Denial Of Accreditation:</b> Denial of accreditation based on conditions detailed in the Visiting Committee Report.

NOTE: The Commission reserves the right to grant terms of accreditation other than those above, including a recommendation for a full self-study at any time. Such action will follow a Commission review of the Visiting Committee Report. In the event of a formal appeal, this document will be provided to the school principal.

### VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NICOLE RAMOS BERAN [Signature]

DANIEL ORDAZ [Signature]

HARRIET T. Gray [Signature]

Margaret M. Rowland [Signature] David Moss [Signature]  
 Type/print name Signature COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Date 1 April 1999

## Documentation Worksheet

Directions: Complete *individually* by placing checks in the boxes below that represent your ratings. Use this information as all Visiting Committee members discuss criteria/findings and come to consensus ratings.

The Committee member finds that the school meets the specific WASC/CDE Criteria Categories as follows:

WASC/CDE Criteria	Highly Effective	Effective	Minimally Effective
Vision, Leadership & Culture			X
Curricular Paths		X	
Powerful Teaching & Learning		X	
Support for Student Personal & Academic Growth		X	
Assessment & Accountability			X

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## DOCUMENTATION AND JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT

### I. Complete sections A through E:

- State the Visiting Committee rating (Highly effective, effective, minimally effective)

**highly effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence of (1) the achievement of a high degree of student learning with respect to the category of criteria and (2) a strong operable school improvement process not requiring external monitoring.

**effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence of (1) the achievement of student learning with respect to the category of criteria; and (2) the need for some minimal outside monitoring to support the school improvement process.

**minimally effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide limited evidence of (1) the achievement of student learning with respect to the category of criteria and (2) the necessity for outside monitoring to support the school's improvement process.

- Provide a brief narrative rationale that describes the degree to which the school supports student learning through each category of criteria. (Refer to Chapters IV & V of the Visiting Committee Report)

The Committee finds that the school meets the specific WASC/CDE Criteria Categories as follows:

#### A. Vision, Leadership, Culture

Visiting Committee Rating: minimally effective

Supporting Area(s) of Strength: # improved culture

Supporting Critical Area(s) for Follow-up: # communication and shared governance

Narrative Rationale: The school community has worked very hard the past three years to define and activate a vision for Balboa High School. Staff turnover has been a detriment to this process, but reconstitution is a major change in the way the school has been run, and it will take time for the new vision to be absorbed by the Balboa stakeholders.

#### B. Curricular Paths

Visiting Committee Rating: effective

Supporting Area(s) of Strength: # the Academies, School-to-Career Coordinator

Supporting Critical Area(s) for Follow-up: # coordination, staff gathering place, organization

Narrative Rationale: charts, newsletters, course description booklets

Balboa has recognized the need to establish clear curricular paths, and first on the list is the need to strengthen reading, writing, and computational skills. All freshmen take double math and language arts courses, and graduation and college attendance rates have gone up.

**C. Powerful Teaching and Learning**

Visiting Committee Rating: effective

Supporting Area(s) of Strength: # project-based learning

Supporting Critical Area(s) for Follow-up: # advanced placement and honors courses

Narrative Rationale: The new teachers at Balboa are well-grounded in project-based learning, and most students are engaged and on-task. There is a high degree of collaboration among staff, but there is clearly a need for more. As the Digital High School is implemented, and as the School-to-Career Coordinator becomes familiar with all that Balboa has, a greater collective sense of powerful teaching and learning should become evident.

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

Visiting Committee Rating: effective

Supporting Area(s) of Strength: # teacher on special assignment, the Academies, new

Supporting Critical Area(s) for Follow-up: # assistant principals

Narrative Rationale: coordination of programs, attendance/tardy policies

Balboa has done a great deal to provide more support for student personal and academic growth. The Balboa Teen Health Center is a model for any urban high school, the Academies allow connecting the disciplines for greater relevance, and the full complement of assistant principals promises support for staff and student alike.

**E. Assessment and Accountability**

Visiting Committee Rating: effective

Supporting Area(s) of Strength: # staff sees need for professional development

Supporting Critical Area(s) for Follow-up: # need matrix/template for assessment

Narrative Rationale: Balboa knows it needs professional development on how to use data to design curriculum and improve student learning. The staff also knows it needs to do a better job of matching the ESLR's with the day-to-day curriculum. The action plans address this need, and the staff is poised to take the next steps in reconstituting Balboa.



## II. Summarize the Visiting Committee's findings for these accreditation expectations.

- The Committee finds that the school meets the accreditation process expectations as follows:

- 1) The school has the capacity to implement a schoolwide action plan resulting in ongoing improvement.

Narrative: As staff turnover decreases, the Balboa staff clearly has the capacity to implement a schoolwide action plan that will result in ongoing improvement. The initial action plan is too ambitious, but they know that and they have already begun to glean the critical elements from the action plan and create a more doable one, with short term goals and gains tied realistically to long term vision.

- 2) The school has addressed the recommendations of the previous Visiting Committee.

Narrative: Inasmuch as Balboa has been reconstituted, the Committee feels that in many ways the recommendations of the previous visiting committee are either irrelevant or definitely addressed. In fact, reconstitution can be said to be both a direct and indirect outgrowth of the previous committee's observations and suggestions. The previous committee's recommended term of accreditation is testimony.

- 3) The school's self-study was appropriately developed with the involvement of individuals as required by WASC.

Narrative: The self-study was a thorough, candid, and representational document that was well-supported by the evidence, interviews, observations, and careful reading. Parents and students were somewhat under-represented, but, again, reconstitution has made it difficult to include those elements of the Balboa community. However, recent progress has been made, and more efforts are on the horizon. The involvement during the visit was very high and very informative.

## III. Provide a brief narrative which summarizes the Visiting Committee's rationale for the recommended term: (If there is an unresolved minority opinion please indicate and explain.)

- term options seriously considered
- reasons for the *term recommended*

In the comments reflect upon the following:

- the schoolwide degree to which students are learning
- the capacity of the school to implement, monitor, and accomplish the action plan

The Committee seriously considered two terms: a 3 and a 6R. The debate was whether or not the Balboa community had the human and financial resources to take the next steps in reconstitution. The committee ended up feeling strongly that the school does in fact have these resources, that the resolve is there, that the leadership is there (especially the principal and focus group leaders), and that the extra time would be a definite asset in their plans to improve learning for Balboa's students. The turnover rate of staff and students has made the reconstitution process problematic, but things are settling down, the vision is clarifying, the community is getting on board, and the culture has improved so radically that the shorter term, we felt, would be more depressing and detrimental. Students are doing better. They are coming to school more often and better prepared. They are being held accountable. They are safer. They are graduating at a higher rate and going on to more education and training. We feel they need the 6R to have a better chance to succeed, to fulfill the promise of reconstitution

# BALBOA HIGH SCHOOL

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

*REPRESENTING THE*

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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Foreign Language Teacher  
Berkeley High School  
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**Mr. David Moss**  
Visiting Committee Chairman  
Principal  
De Anza High School  
Richmond, California

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE

*REPRESENTING THE*

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*FOR*

**BALBOA HIGH SCHOOL**

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

*7-10 MARCH 1999*

TYPE OF EVALUATION INSTRUMENT: *FOCUS ON LEARNING*

WASC 24606

# **BALBOA HIGH SCHOOL**

## ***ACCREDITATION REPORT***

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**&**

**COMMUNITY**

**PROFILE**

## CHAPTER I: Student/Community Profile

Balboa High School has clearly made great strides since being “reconstituted” in 1996. The most obvious changes are in the quality and appearance of the physical plant, but there have also been significant improvements in student and staff attitudes re their personal physical safety. Other significant findings include:

1. There has been a great deal of teacher turnover (*only 28 of the original faculty of 90 hired for Reconstitution are still at the school*). There have also been nine assistant principals in the past three years, and only recently (December 1998) were all three positions filled for this school year. Such a high rate of turnover is counter-productive to creating a new culture at the school, instituting new programs to meet the needs of a very challenging student body, and establishing the policies and procedures necessary to turn the reconstituted vision of Balboa into reality.
2. Two new initiatives (*the Digital High School and the School-to-Career program*) show great promise, but will need time and support (from both the staff at Balboa as well as the San Francisco Unified School District) to develop and enhance student learning. Since the school has now been hard-wired to accept the new technology, the emphasis now must shift to selecting appropriate software and providing the necessary suitable training for staff and students in its use and integration into all aspects of the curriculum.
3. A number of positive academic and behavioral initiatives, developed by both teachers and administrators, have been launched as Balboa has been reconstituted, but there is little if any over-arching rubric to pull them all together, align them with the Expected School-wide Learning Results, and ensure that they do not conflict. Examples are the *Communications Arts Academy, the Action Academy, the Law Academy, the SOAR program, School-to-Career, the advisory system, and the Digital High School project*. Without a plan of coordination, the hope and promise implicit in **Reconstitution** could be in jeopardy. Given the obvious personal and academic needs of Balboa students (well documented in the Student/Community Profile), such a development would be extremely unfortunate.
4. When the Self-Study was written, it was not known that, in early March of 1999, the SFUSD would mandate a new daily time schedule and the consolidation of seven teachers for the 1999-2000 school year. Inasmuch as the 4x4 block schedule and a number of different student safety net efforts are referred to in the Student/Community Profile, these new developments have the very real potential to alter the fledgling progress being made under **Reconstitution**. As the school administration, leadership team, and WASC focus group coordinators are acutely aware of the possible impact of these mandates, it is reasonable to assume that the necessary adjustments and accommodations will be made. District personnel have given assurances of their support for this process.



## The Eleven Philosophical Tenets

1. All individuals should learn to live and to work in a world that is characterized by interdependence and cultural diversity.
2. All individuals are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.
3. All individuals want to learn and to be recognized for their achievements.
4. All individuals can learn.
5. All individuals learn in many different ways and at varying rates.
6. Each individual learns best in a particular way.
7. All individuals are both potential learners and potential teachers.
8. If individuals do not learn, then those assigned to be their teachers will accept responsibility for this failure and will take appropriate action to ensure success.
9. Learning has both cognitive and affective dimensions.
10. Learning can be subdivided into a number of specific, concrete competencies that can be used as a focus for teaching.
11. Parents want their children to attain their fullest potential as learners and to succeed academically.

## **Introduction**

Founded in 1928, Balboa High School has long been an integral part of its community. As the center for secondary education, it has enjoyed a rich history and tradition while attempting to meet the academic and social needs of a changing and diverse student body. Although reconstitution marks a new chapter in the school's history, many of the challenges facing the staff reflect ongoing community conditions which make Balboa unique in its mission within the San Francisco Unified School District.

Balboa's unique character is reflected as much in its diverse student body and working class neighborhoods as it is in its energetic faculty and ambitious academic program. It is a school that inherits its greatest challenges by right of location. Situated in the southeast sector of the city, the surrounding area is considered inner city, and the high performance goals which Balboa teachers set for students are counterpoised each day with an increasingly strong set of demographic challenges. Unemployment and low income levels afflict many of the families in the school and students are often preoccupied with serious health or safety concerns as well. Twenty-five percent of the present student body — 300-plus students — live in settings where no parent is present. Records in the school's Teen Health Center indicate that these students live in group or foster homes, with distant relatives, or on their own.

The transience of many Balboa families has a strong impact on the life of the school as well. Recent students represent many of the new immigrant groups in the area, and their



families are not only strangers to the educational system but caught up in dire struggles to survive and adapt in a strange land. Far too many students are at Balboa for only a brief period of time, and Balboa's enrollment figures reflect an inordinate number of student "adds and drops" (e.g., this year, to 2/9/99, there have been 518 drops and 511 adds) that mirror the fluctuations in the surrounding neighborhoods. The transience makes community-building efforts difficult and challenges the school to ensure that Balboa students experience a consistent and nurturing school environment where relationships can flourish and deepen over time.

Balboa also reflects the challenges that characterize its feeder schools. In the present ninth grade, for example, students have significant reading deficits, and a majority of freshmen lack the prerequisite academic skills for a standard high school curriculum. Students not only enter the school with little information about the requirements for achieving successful academic standing, but, many of them also believe that a diploma can be obtained with minimum effort. For some, socializing is the motivation to attend school and graduation is regarded as an unclear end. Homework, class participation, and regular school attendance suffer and the staff must address these three areas of student responsibility to ensure coherence in the academic program.

The profile that emerges from the various sources tapped for the WASC Self-Study — teacher observations, records in the Teen Health Center, statistical data in District

publications, and surveys — is consistent, telling, and challenging. In many and varied ways, Balboa is, indeed, a “school on the move.”

## **Demographics of the School Community**

Physical Parameters of the Community: The physical parameters of the Balboa community are qualified and described statistically by zip code, neighborhood, and city sector. The information is often used to identify and describe Balboa’s most pressing characteristics when the faculty and administration are developing school policy and devising approaches for effective teaching.

The Balboa community is primarily comprised of four census zip codes: 94112, 94110, 94124 and 94134, (see Pin Map on the next page) that represent several interrelated neighborhoods: Bayview/Hunter’s Point, the Mission, Visitacion Valley, and Ingleside/Excelsior. The 1998 population of these confines is 208,895. The area is characterized by a mixture of established and residential development, low income housing, and a large industrial area in the Bayview District. Balboa High School is located in the 94112 zip code area known as the Excelsior neighborhood. A well-established area, it is easily accessible by bus and Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART). Poor bus service from the Visitacion Valley and Bayview/Hunter’s Point neighborhoods (94134), however, has historically contributed to first-period tardiness at the school. Approximately 50% of Balboa students commute via local bus.

A multicultural population can be found in each of the school's neighborhoods for the area has been in transition since World War II as different ethnic groups moved in and out. The 1990 census indicated that remnants of early European immigrants mix with families and individuals claiming their origins in over 32 countries, and the school's recent Student Survey (May, 1998) indicates that approximately 60% of Balboa student families speak a language other than English in the home, and 20% of the students have been in this country for less than four years.

Statistics from the 1998 Zip Code Source Book extend data from the last census, indicating that population shifts are continuing in the neighborhoods around Balboa. Since 1990, there has been a reduction of whites (-14%) and African Americans (-10%), and an increase in Asian-Pacific Islanders (+49%) and Latinos (+12%). The overall population in this area has increased 6% in the same ten-year period.

Housing and Neighborhood Characteristics. In a metropolitan area where the cost of living is very high, newly-arrived families strive to survive economically, and they move frequently as they seek affordable and appropriate housing. Young people are forced to change schools frequently in this process, or they move to live with extended families elsewhere. Transferring among schools and school districts is a disruptive reality to their lives. This limits student's identification and involvement with Balboa as part of their community and their investment in the academic program. As transfers struggle to make-

up credits in classes that may enroll as many as 35-40 students, teachers struggle to meet their needs.

Some students live in crowded conditions due to housing economics and family size. Here, too, the student survey is helpful. Responses indicate that approximately 44% of the students live in homes with more than four people. This may affect their homework routines. Twenty-eight percent do their homework in locations other than the home; 57% have no regular place for doing homework, and 9% acknowledge that they do no homework.

There has been little recent physical improvement in the southeast corner of the city. However, a new youth center recently opened in the Excelsior area, and there is hope that a new planned professional football stadium may provide an economic boost to Bayview inhabitants. Nonetheless, the aging residential neighborhoods where many students live, composed of working class and low to middle income households, evidence a need for support programs and jobs. The table below displays some critical defining census demographic characteristics of the zip code areas from which Balboa draws a vast majority of its students.

**BALBOA NEIGHBORHOOD STATS**  
by Southeast Area Zip Codes

Demographic Category	94112 Excelsior/ Ingleside	94124 Bayview	94134 Visitacion	94110 Mission	Total/ Average
Population	64,318	27,105	34,603	71,118	197,144
Households - Total	19,430	8,372	10,087	24,472	62,361
Households - Single Parent	22%	32%	27%	8%	22%
Households - With no Wage or Salary	27%	52%	37%	24%	335%
Households - On Public Assistance	11%	26%	19%	13%	17%
Persons - Born Outside the U.S.	45%	20%	41%	44%	38%
Persons - Below Federal Poverty Line	13%	26%	15%	18%	18%

U.S. Census 1990

% Balboa Students Per Zip Code	43%	19%	24%	10%	
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Family Status Indicators. The number of households without wages and the number that are on public assistance certainly influence the levels of stress and instability that are experienced within the school. Twenty-nine percent of the students living in the southeast corner of the city and 37% of Balboa students meet the criteria for the free lunch program, and their families often need their help with childcare and other financial responsibilities. Students acknowledged in their survey for this profile that 29% acknowledged that they had jobs after school, and 20% were working more than eight hours a week.

Teacher observations note that a substantial number of students arrive at school hungry, having missed their first meal, even though breakfast is offered at the school cafeteria. A morning with little or no nutrition accounts for some distracted, tired, and unfocused

students. Also, some students on occasion miss their free lunch or skip lunch for economic reasons. The Student Survey indicates that approximately 61% of students eat fewer than two meals a day, 48% of day meals are at fast food outlets, and 24% noted that they eat only one daily meal at home. In these cases, poor nutrition may hinder academic performance.

Poverty also contributes to the non-correction of vision problems. Teachers have observed that some students have weak, uncorrected eyesight and cannot see the board from any appreciable distance. Many students do not admit to the problem because they may be embarrassed that they cannot see well or that the family cannot afford glasses. The fact that poor vision problem goes uncorrected may hamper the students academic improvement.

## **Health Issues**

The Balboa community, similar to most areas with a low social economic status (SES), experiences an abnormal number of health problems. A barometer for health issues in the community is the Balboa Teen Health Center (BTHC) on campus. This comprehensive health care facility focuses on the health and well-being of students. Visits to the BTHC are compiled statistically to keep an on-going assessment of student needs and health issues. The table below lists BTHC visits to the three main groups of service providers for the last three years:

**BALBOA TEEN HEALTH CENTER**  
Patient Visits

School Year	Medical	Mental Health	Health Education
1997-98	5,012	2,957	810
1996-97	4,932	2,631	912
1995-96	4,758	2,250	896

Balboa Teen Health Center Psychosocial Cart Review 8/95-7/97

The BTHC reports the three top reasons for medical visits over the past three years have been asthma, acute illness (including respiratory infections, gastritis, bronchitis, soft tissue injuries, ear infections, headaches), and family planning (including reproductive health care, birth control, sexually transmitted disease screening and treatment, counseling regarding pregnancy). The staff added the biggest issues facing students are lack of consistent primary care with a primary care provider and depression, which accounts for a large number of referrals to the BTHC's mental health staff.

The Community Health Profile by the Bayview/Hunter's Point Health and Environmental Assessment Project (July 1997-Draft) further illustrates the impact of health problems on Balboa students. This study has compiled health data in the Bayview/Hunter's Point (BVHP) areas and compares that data to regional and national figures. Among the findings are:

- 1) The BVHP has among the highest hospitalization rates in all age groups, not only in San Francisco, but also the state, for asthma, hypertension, congestive heart failure and diabetes;
- 2) The BVHP has the highest rates for invasive breast cancer mortality in San Francisco;

- 3) The lifetime risk of dying from a homicide for a BVHP African American male is higher than 1 in 20;
- 4) The BVHP has the highest concentration of air polluting industries in San Francisco.

Health problems account for a significant number of one-day and extended excused absences at Balboa. Student Survey respondents stated that 34% of absences were for doctor/dentist visits.

### **Personal Safety Factors**

Personal safety is another significant risk factor for many of the Balboa students, requiring that staff be constantly vigilant. In the Spring of 1998, the administration conducted the first Safety Survey designed to assess student and teacher perspectives. Responses on the survey indicated that students were more preoccupied with safety issues than teachers, and that internal school security and classroom safety were a primary concern of the students. The following fall, even tighter security measures were instituted.

The school's track record with respect to safety has been unstable in the past, and resulted in a closed-campus policy in 1992. At that time, a fence was installed around the campus in an effort to lessen harmful outside influences, including drugs, weapons, fighting, and gang activity. Today these influences penetrate the campus from time to time, but the number of incidents has decreased significantly since the school was reconstituted prior to the 1996-1997 school year. In the past year, street shootings, murders, beatings and



other instances of malfeasance have occurred beyond the school's fence, occasionally impacting school events and affecting the collective sense of security among students and adults. Last October, a school dance was postponed at the request of police because of incidents in areas close to the school. However, prior to reconstitution all dances were banned for safety reasons. Now we conduct roughly a dance a month with no major incidents.

Relative to other sections of the city, the southeast sector of San Francisco has for some time been designated a "high crime" area by the San Francisco Police Department.

Current year-to-date statistics compiled by the SFPD for major crimes show the rationale for such a designation. In fact, the crime rate for the police districts of Ingleside/Bayview and Mission, where a large proportion of Balboa students live, are particularly demonstrative.

MAJOR CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS AND PROPERTY			
Crimes	All Police Districts San Francisco	Ingleside / Mission / Bayview	%
Rape	197	60	31%
Robbery	2,966	1,026	35%
Aggravated Assault	2,276	933	41%
Burglary	5,204	1,748	34%
Motor Vehicle Theft	5,403	2,078	39%
TOTAL	16,092	5,864	36%

San Francisco Police Preliminary Crime Report, 9/89

The figures in the chart above are especially revealing when compared with current population levels. Crimes per thousand for all police districts registers 20.2, while that for

the Balboa neighborhoods is running at 28.1. Thus, the effects of crime are more visible to Balboa students, and certainly influence their sense of security. Students who are affected mentally or physically by violence frequently miss school and may be distracted in the classroom or seek affiliation with a gang for protection. The question of personal safety has an impact on many of Balboa's students as it influences their emotional and/or physical availability for the school's program.

### Profile of Balboa's Students

Feeder Schools. Balboa welcomes the majority of incoming freshmen from four middle schools: James Denman Middle School and Luther Burbank Middle School in the Excelsior neighborhood; Aptos Middle School in the Ingleside; and Visitacion Valley Middle School in Visitacion Valley. Many of the students coming from these schools arrive with special needs in the academic, social-emotional, and economic realm.

<b>BALBOA FEEDER SCHOOL STATISTICS</b>						
<b>CBED / Other Data</b>	<b>Visitacion Valley</b>	<b>James Denman</b>	<b>Aptos</b>	<b>Luther Burbank</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Balboa H.S.</b>
Enrollment	466	758	570	758	638	1,385
LEP/NEP %	34.3	31.7	28.4	31.7	31.5	34.6
SpEd %	16.5	11.6	13.9	11.6	13.4	11.8
EDY %	59.9	61.5	52.3	61.5	58.8	66.6
Free Lunch %	49.6	35.4	36.0	35.4	39.1	37.6
AFDC %	17.6	15.4	11.6	19.8	16.1	11.9
Unex Absence %	2.4	5.8	1.3	5.8	3.8	13.4
Drop Out %	5.7	2.2	N/A	2.2	3.4	5.7

California Public School Profiles 1997-1998  
San Francisco Department of Health

Student Characteristics: Balboa has a very diverse student body in terms of ethnicity.

Filipinos are the largest group (28.2%), followed by Latinos (26.9%), and African Americans (19.9). Asian groups are the fastest growing, especially the Chinese and Pacific Islander populations. The need for language instruction and ESL classes expands each year.

BALBOA HIGH SCHOOL POPULATION Summary Breakdown														
Grade	Male	Female	Total	AA	Chi	Filo	Japa	Kor	Lat	Nam	ON	OW	Total	%
9	154	130	284	72	26	60	1	0	72	4	31	18	284	23.3
10	182	121	303	66	14	81	1	1	84	5	27	24	303	24.8
11	238	186	424	81	36	122	2	1	117	2	39	24	424	34.7
12	103	107	210	24	21	81	1	0	55	0	16	12	210	17.2
TTL	677	544	1221	243	97	344	5	2	328	11	113	78	1221	
%	55.4	44.6		19.9	7.9	28.2	0.4	0.2	26.9	0.9	9.3	6.4		

SFUSD Data Services 10/7/98

Special Needs Students. Students with special needs extend across all grade levels, and are enrolled in one of three programs — the Special Day Class (SDC), the Resource Specialist Program (RSP), or the Designated Instruction Service (DIS). Students are placed by the District in these classes according to their Individual Education Plans (IEP), and their progress is monitored. The 155 students enrolled in these programs, as shown below, represent 11.8% of the student body:

<b>BALBOA SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS</b>				
<b>Grade</b>	<b>SDC</b>	<b>RSP</b>	<b>DIS</b>	<b>Total</b>
9	20	15	3	38
10	16	22	0	38
11	25	26	2	53
12	17	9	0	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>155</b>

Balboa H.S. Department of Special Education 11/98

Balboa offers a wide range of Special Day Classes, providing more support than most other District high schools. The range of services is designed to meet the needs of young people who have been designated as learning handicapped, severely impaired, severely language disabled, or severely emotionally disturbed.

<b>SPECIAL DAY CLASS STUDENTS</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Learning Handicapped (LH)	43	55.1
Severely Impaired (SI)	17	21.8
Communication Impairs (CI)	10	12.8
Severely Emotionally Disturbed (SED)	8	10.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	

Balboa H.S. Department of Special Education 11/98

The 1997-98 Coordinated Compliance review notification of findings (March, 1998) noted that Balboa is "exemplary in its efforts to provide inclusion services, mainstreaming, and extracurricular activities for individuals with exceptional needs ....

and for the administrative staff being directly involved in student progress and services (p. 20).” On the other hand, the report also indicated that Balboa;

- 1) Lacked “optimum coordination between general and special education at some site levels” (p. 24);
- 2) Lacked “professional and proper interaction between teachers and paras” (p. 24);
- 3) Did not provide “specific supplementary instructional and auxiliary services for special need students” (p. 8).

These issues of noncompliance are included in the 1998-1999 goals of the school’s Special Education Department and are being addressed this year.

Language Backgrounds. LEP/NEP students comprise approximately 34% of the school population, and the high level of incoming immigrants challenges the school to provide an individualized curriculum and adequate teacher support.

BALBOA LEP/NEP STUDENT TOTALS												
	Male	Female	AA	Chin	Filo	Japa	Kor	Lat	N.Am	ON	OW	Total
Students	165	115	0	41	98	0	0	122	1	14	4	280
%	58.9	41.1		14.6	35.0			43.6	0.4	5.0	1.5	

The school provides language classes in Filipino, Spanish and Chinese, and transition into the general English program at the school is a well-coordinated effort. All LEP/NEP students have access to A-F requirements in sheltered or primary language classes; paraprofessionals support students in the classrooms; and a special college preparatory class helps to focus such students on post-secondary opportunities. Many of these students have not taken CTBS or STAR tests because a District policy exempts students from testing if they have not been in the country for at least thirty months. However, new

students' language ability is tested upon entry using the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) test.

Overall responsibility for determining how to best serve all English Language Learners (ELL) is the function of Balboa's Bilingual Advisory Committee, an entity mandated by the state. This group advises the School Site Council in order to ensure support for this student population through staff development and special program funding and hosts a number of parent nights yearly.

EDY Students. The number of students designated as Educationally Disadvantaged Youth (EDY) has remained stable at Balboa for many years. Balboa has focused on reducing the number of EDY students through specialized analysis and instruction. The state designates students as EDY if their scores on the CTBS/STAR tests fall in the 40th percentile or below, and the scores of approximately 66% of current students do so. Forty percent (40%) of these students fall below the 25th percentile.

BALBOA EDY TOTALS			
	1996	1997	1998
%	67.1	65.8	66.6

Balboa has implemented a number of programs to meet the needs of these students and strengthen their academic standing:

- EDY Services: A teacher on special assignment coordinates the data collection, student advising, tutoring, classroom placements, communication with parents, and manages the homework clinic (see below).
- SOAR: This program comprises at-risk students organized as a core cluster to ensure that they can share the same three teachers in social studies, English, and music production. The SOAR curricula are integrated and targeted at organizational and life skills and building self esteem. A new database has been established to determine the level of students performance as result of this program.
- Student Assistance Program (SAP): This District-mandated program is structured to assess the specific academic and socio-emotional needs of at-risk students and determine what support steps the community should take to address those needs. As teachers refer to the Counseling Department names of students deemed to require supplemental support, a formal process ensues to collect schoolwide data on the student around teacher and counselor judgments, and standardized criteria, to form a written referral to the SAP Committee. Meeting weekly, this committee is chaired by the Assistant Principal for Personnel Services and includes representative members of the credentialed and administrative staff, and a representative of the Balboa Teen Health Center. For each referral, the committee designs an individual program for the student utilizing the resources available at the school and in the community. Each case is monitored by a designated committee member and revisited every meeting after the initiation of support measures.

- Academic Literacy and Numeracy Classes: These special classes weave basic skill development instruction into the ninth and tenth grade curriculum, emphasizing writing, composition skills, and math skills for those students who show these needs.
- PACT Tutoring: Recently instituted with the independent Plan of Action for Changing Times agency, this program offers one-on-one professional counseling to at-risk students in the areas of basic skill reinforcement and training, study skills, time management, and academic planning. Working through the EDY Resource Teacher at the school, the on-site Tutorial Coordinator targets a core group of ninth graders who have low middle school records and have tested poorly on the CTBS tests. On a regular, scheduled basis, the students are pulled for one class of their regular schedule per week for consultation. The tutorial utilized the academic work from the student's present class, as well as supplemental program materials.
- Mentor Services: This program seeks to match staff members on a voluntary basis with ninth graders who have failed two or more eighth grade classes. The goal is to provide individual guidance and academic support from qualified, known mentors. A teacher has volunteered to staff the position of Program Coordinator in this new program.
- Homework Clinic: Under the voluntary direction of the EDY teacher on special assignment, this clinic is an outreach effort to offer students a quiet, safe refuge for completing homework assignments with tutorial support. Recently instituted, the clinic is open to all students, with a special appeal to those at-risk, and plans to meet daily for one hour after school in the Library.



In addition to the above, the school has enjoyed increased support from the District's Division of Curriculum Improvement and Professional Development (CIPD) in the current academic year. Subject-matter specialists are helping Balboa teachers to develop more refined strategies to meet student needs, especially the needs of those most at risk for academic failure. Ongoing strategies to meet the needs of EDY students is the main function of the School Advisory Committee (SAC) which meets regularly and advises Balboa's School Site Council.

When the total number of LEP/NEP, EDY, and Special Education students is considered, approximately 90% of Balboa's student body have special needs, thereby increasing our challenges with regard to low academic performance, dropouts, and suspensions.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is an ongoing problem that has a negative impact on the school's culture and the academic performance of students. While an inconsistent pattern, the average daily attendance (ADA) at Balboa has ranked low in comparison to other high schools in the District. In recent years, the staff has intensified the focus on student attendance, identifying the area as one of the school's priorities for the last two academic years (1997-1999). Staff makes home phone calls to reach out to students' families.

Accountability for student attendance is seen as a shared responsibility between student, family, faculty, and administration.

ATTENDANCE RELATED FACTORS			
	1996	1997	1998
ADA %	89.9	89.9	86.6
Excused Absence %	2.0	2.1	3.5
Unexcused Absence %	10.2	13.4	11.2

In an attempt to improve on these figures, the administration has published an attendance policy in the Balboa Student Handbook and the school has implemented an attendance/tardy program that is designed to decrease the number of tardy students each day. To date, the program has cut down on the number of daily tardies from 25% to approximately 10% in just two weeks. An afternoon attendance improvement program works in conjunction with the new attendance program, where any student that is over 45 minutes late, reports for 45 minutes to the "Attendance Improvement Program" after school. In addition, any student that is less than 45 minutes late is given a tardy pass, sent to class, and the attendance clerk calls home. A data base is kept to track repeat tardies. A program designed specifically for students who are not succeeding in school due to poor attendance has also been initiated this semester. The stakeholders include students, parents, and school personnel. The first step is a letter sent home advising parents that they must accompany their child back to school and meet with the Deans. At the meeting, the student, parent, and school personnel sign a behavioral contract with all participants having specific responsibility. Students who continue to be truant are reported to the District' Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) for legal follow-up with the parents or guardians. The Attendance Improvement Program has brought

students and parents together with school staff and, to date, the program has had positive effects, both with better attendance for the students and a cooperative relationship between home and school.

Dropouts: Dropouts are all students leaving Balboa without going through the proper exit process. These students, with whom the school has lost contact, fall under the Transitional Status Code LT to designate an unknown reason for leaving. Most of the yearly dropouts occur at the beginning of the school year as previously enrolled students opt for a change within the District to non-public schools, without notice to Balboa or the District. This is further compounded by a significant number of students who move out of the area during the school year without notice. What results is a less than meaningful statistic in terms of students who have supposedly quit school. Nonetheless, programs at Balboa, as explained below, try to reduce the number of students who choose to drop-out.

BALBOA DROP-OUT TOTALS			
	1996	1997	1998
%	1.9	1.2	5.7

Suspensions: Suspensions reflected a significant jump in 1997-98, due in part to raised expectations of student behavior. However, the number of suspensions has decreased this year from the same period last year: 14 suspensions per month in 1997-98; 8 suspensions per month for the first three months in 1998-99.

<b>BALBOA SUSPENSION TOTALS</b>			
	1996	1997	1998
%	119	76	157

Mindful of the need for continued improvement in this area, administration has initiated several support programs as a safety-net. Participation in one of the following programs can provide an alternative to suspension, if the time and work requirements are completed in full:

- Community Service Program: This program is supervised by the Dean's Office, and is offered as an alternative to suspension for behavioral infractions and defacement of school property. Task requirements relate to the severity, or degree of the infraction, and can include such jobs as painting over graffiti.
- IMPACT: This community program is sponsored by the San Francisco Police Department for youth who have committed a minor criminal offense. The program requires 100 hours of community service under the direction of the police and other resource people in the community. Participation in the program is prescribed in lieu of suspension or incarceration.

<b>Balboa Enrollment</b>				
Fall '90	Fall '97	Fall '98	11/15/98	1/25/99
1482	1561	1385	1221	1202

School Enrollment. The school enrollment has had a downward trend in the last three years. Although no official explanation exists for the decrease, remarks from discerning parents indicate that the political aura around “reconstitution” may have made parents wary. Given the choice, parents have chosen other schools. When this factor is added to the normal amount of shifting within the District, the continuing enrollment decrease may become somewhat understandable, but the phenomenon merits further investigation.

### **Student Performance**

Balboa High School has a long history of scoring at or near the bottom of the District rankings on standardized tests, and this trend has continued since reconstitution. The CTBS-Star, SAT/ACT, and Proficiency Tests are given annually to assess skill levels and learning aptitudes. Recent scores follow:

CTBS SCORES BY ETHNICITY				
		NCE 1996	NCE 1997	NCE 1998
Cumulative	Read	39.4	41.8	38.8
	Math	42.7	43.1	38.6
Ethnicity				
AA	Read	37.1	34.5	32.0
	Math	35.7	31.5	27.8
Chin	Read	39.4	44.5	41.6
	Math	56.3	56.0	47.8
Filo	Read	43.9	46.7	42.7
	Math	45.4	49.5	42.6
Japa	Read	N/A	43.5	39.5
	Math	N/A	53.0	46.0
Kor	Read	N/A	52.5	54.5
	Math	N/A	48.0	29.0
Lat	Read	36.3	37.7	36.1
	Math	36.3	36.2	34.6
NAmer	Read	50.0	35.0	48.0
	Math	N/A	65.0	71.0
ON	Read	37.7	44.8	40.8
	Math	40.0	49.2	43.8
OW	Read	46.1	46.6	41.3
	Math	43.4	42.6	41.4

CTBS SCORES BY GRADE				
		NCE 1996	NCE 1997	NCE 1998
Cumulative	Read	39.4	41.8	38.8
	Math	42.7	43.1	38.6
9th Grade	Read	38.8	42.3	40.0
	Math	43.3	41.5	40.0
10th Grade	Read	43.7	40.4	41.1
	Math	42.8	43.5	39.9
11th Grade	Read	35.5	42.8	34.8
	Math	41.0	44.2	35.6

Test outcomes in the past three years for African American and Latino students have continued to be low, and the faculty is concerned that the test scores of these students continue to decline as they move through the school. Literacy remains the primary challenge of the school.

As the successor to the CTBS in the State of California, the STAR test was administered at Balboa in the Spring of 1998. The results of this test mirrored previous CTBS rankings, and Balboa's average percentile rankings in the six discipline areas assessed on the STAR were below the District's high school averages in all ethnic, grade and curricular categories. Over six disciplines, 88% of Balboa test-takers averaged scores below the fiftieth percentile.

SAT scores evidence a similar pattern, with little upward movement in recent years. Although the number of students taking the PSAT and SAT have increased, test takers are still low at Balboa: 71 in 1996, 91 in 1997, and 96 in 1998.

BALBOA SAT MEAN SCORES									
VERBAL					MATH				
1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
356	359	404	362	352	388	401	416	406	392

In an attempt to improve basic skills, better prepare students for testing, and improve the number of test takers, a few measures have been implemented to help increase student

awareness of test-taking strategies. In particular, fee-waivers at the school help increase participation. As described in Recommendation 7 above, this process is aided by the services of independent tutoring agencies on campus, such as PACT, AACE, and LULAC. Improving the numbers taking the PSAT/SAT was part of a staff development effort which began last year.

In addition, the Mathematical, Engineering, Science Achievement program (MESA) supports a math after-school class which meets two times per week, and will be a regular class starting in 1999-2000. A Balboa teacher conducts the class, which focuses on math skill building to improve SAT scores. Also, a limited teacher enacted class encourages teachers of seniors to motivate students to take the examinations and improve their test-taking skills. This two hour, independent evening SAT class is taught by a volunteer teacher who focuses on the required content and test-taking skills. A twenty dollar fee is charged to each student for the nine-week class to ensure student attendance with fines charged for absences. All fees are returned for perfect attendance. The class has been restricted to twenty students to maximize the effectiveness of the teaching. The class has very consistent attendance.

Graduation. The number of students graduating from Balboa has shown an upswing since reconstitution of the school three years ago, and reflects the efforts of staff and faculty in encouraging students to meet the requirements for graduation. The recent WASC Student Survey indicates that approximately 82% of students feel that their most



important goal is high school graduation or college attendance.

BALBOA GRADUATION RATE			
	1996	1997	1998
# students	193	212	292

Balboa Graduation Records

Figures for the school's Grade Point Average are only available for the 1997-98 school year; the school's average is 2.23. Here again, the recent Student Survey provides insight on how some students regard this aspect of school: 16% of participating students noted that grades were only so important for graduation.

BALBOA MEAN GPA LEVELS By Ethnicity, 1998									
AA	Chin	Filo	Japa	Kor	Lat	Nam	ON	OW	Avg
1.86	2.87	2.37	1.91	2.74	2.18	1.23	1.99	2.44	2.23

Gifted Academically Talented Education (GATE) students are identified at the elementary level by a standardized test. At the high school level, these designated students are entitled to supplementary or enrichment programs. Presently Balboa has a designated faculty GATE representative and 32 noted GATE students, reflective of the ethnic diversity of the school. These students are dispersed throughout the school at each grade level, with a few in AP and Honors classes. However, the process for addressing the needs of GATE students in a comprehensive program has not been implemented since

reconstitution. The number of GATE students at Balboa has increased over the last four years. The CTBS scores have kept pace in math, but trended downward in reading.

GATE STUDENTS AT BALBOA			
1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
34	16	20	32

GATE STUDENTS/CTBS SCORES				
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Reading	67.2	64.5	60.6	50
Math	67.9	63.1	64.1	67.9

Advanced Placement and Honors Instruction. The school is conducting the following Advanced Placement (AP) classes at present: one Calculus class of 25 seniors, one European Literature class for 18 students, and a Spanish class for 5 students. AP classes are offered to all junior class members on an open, unqualified basis; the number of students taking AP tests has increased since the school's reconstitution.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT TEST TAKERS			
1995	1996	1997	1998
6	18	16	30

Honors-level instruction is offered to qualified and also interested students on a volunteer basis and by teacher encouragement. The school presently offers honors classes in

European Literature, American Literature, World Literature, U.S. History, Chemistry and Calculus

### **Surveys for the Self-Study Process**

Three separate surveys were conducted in the school community. Separate instruments were designed to tap the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers. The survey information was added to teacher observations and the information from other community studies to establish a rich database for the WASC Self-Study. Copies of the surveys and the raw data are included in the appendix.

The Student Survey yielded the largest sample with 538 responses. These surveys were organized around multiple-choice questions and administered in classrooms during a single class period. The 52 questions were suggested by members of the Student Community Profile Committee as well as other teachers, administrators, and students. The survey was printed in English and responses were scored on Scan sheets. The gender breakdown for respondents reflected the gender distribution of the school at large.

A Parent Survey was organized around 55 multiple-choice questions with additional problems for qualitative responses. English, Tagalog, Chinese and Spanish formats were distributed in order to maximize the involvement of a broad segment of the parent community. The survey was distributed to parents on "Back to School Night" and also

disseminated through students in targeted core and ESL/Bilingual classes who were asked to deliver it to their parents and then return the completed forms to the school. A small sample of responses came from the Deans' Office as parents visiting for conferences and other matters were asked to fill out the survey while waiting. The resulting sample size of 135 reflects 10% of the school's parents.

A Teacher Survey was organized around 78 multiple-choice questions that were designed by the Principal to elicit information pertinent to the WASC criteria. Administered in September 1998, this survey tapped teacher awareness of policies and other school issues, as well as their pedagogical approaches and a perspective on student needs.

### Balboa Staff

Balboa benefits from a highly invested faculty and staff. With 73 teachers, 20 paraprofessionals, and 17 classified personnel, the faculty and staff represent all ethnic groups and bring accomplished academic backgrounds to their responsibilities at the school.

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS		
	%	
College Degrees	100	
Advanced Degrees	64	
CLAD	12	
Degree in Teaching Support	78	
Live in San Francisco	92	
Lived in Another Country	43	
Speak More Than 1 Lang.	41	

The culture that has been established since the school's reconstitution has rested very much on staff efforts to improve the learning environment for a remarkably diverse and challenging group of students. Twenty-eight teachers remain from the original complement of 90 teachers hired after the school's reconstitution, however. This turnover — averaging 30-35% per year — has been an impediment to building needed continuity and stability at the school.

The administration has also experienced considerable turnover, including Assistant Principal positions. Also contributing to staff instability have been several long-term illnesses affecting teachers, support staff, and security personnel. The discussions in Self-Study focus groups suggest that the same pattern of turnover may recur at the end of the present school year.

### **Community Support**

Balboa High School enjoys a significant amount of support from its community. Aside from support by the District and private organizations as have been mentioned throughout this Profile, an active Alumni Association, community volunteers, and parents/guardians stand out as viable members of the Balboa safety-net.

- Balboa Alumni Association: Formed in 1970, the Balboa Alumni Association has grown to over 8,000 members as one of the largest organizations in the state. The

stated purpose of the Alumni Association is to "assist Balboa High School." In this effort, the group's support comes in many forms. Notably, the Association sees itself as the 'keeper of tradition' at the school. Through its work, a Hall of Fame and Hall of Merit have been established on the campus enshrining school artifacts and displaying the school's memorabilia covering the sports and academic history. In addition, this group is solely responsible for continuing the senior sweater tradition. Unique among San Francisco high schools, this program provides the availability of acquiring school sweaters with blocks to juniors as they enter their senior year. These sweaters enhance the status of the individual and act as an encouragement for students to target graduation as a goal. At the beginning of each year, the officers of the Alumni Association make a presentation to the faculty to educate new teachers and encourage the perpetration of Balboa's traditions. During the year members participate in school rallies and provide management assistance for school functions, including the Senior Breakfast and Graduation exercises. The organization's newspaper, published three times per year, informs and reminds the Balboa community of the school's traditions, its heritage, and the current activities at Balboa. Fundraising events and member donations allow the Association to make available yearly scholarships for graduating seniors and grants to help teachers purchase needed materials. Last year the Association provided \$7,000 in scholarships and made grants to help an AP teacher purchase books and the Music teacher to repair instruments.

- *School Volunteers:* This annual program, coordinated with a District effort to encourage community support, provides Balboa with concerned citizens to help teachers in the classroom. A teacher, on a volunteer basis, acts as the school coordinator, maintaining a sign-up list and matching community members with teacher needs. For the last two years, the number of participating volunteers has increased. In the first semester for example, twelve community representatives have spent time in classrooms. Also, as a result of a focused outreach effort, more Balboa parents have registered with the coordinator to offer help. Plans are to expand on this increase by more appeals to parents and with more teachers recognizing how the benefits of volunteer assistance will enhance instructions.
- *Parent/ Guardian Involvement:* In as much as more parent/guardian involvement is needed at Balboa, a number of parents/guardians take an interest in the school and offer support. Parents/guardians regularly serve on school committees, including the School Site Council (SSC), the Bilingual Advisory Council (BAC), and the School Advisory Committee (SAC). Still others attend sporting events and are regular participants on parent nights. As mentioned above, a few parents/guardians have signed up for classroom work. The Filipino Parent Center on campus includes parent/guardian assistance in supporting Filipino youth. Parent/guardian conferences are a regular part of the school effort to include parents/guardians in the process of improving the behavior and academic standing of at-risk students.

## Curricular Trends

Among the active efforts in place to improve student learning, two programs stand out as the most schoolwide of measures which will have in time a progressive effect on all curricula and student results. Namely the School- to-Career Program and the Digital High School Plan will integrate school staff development with pedagogical improvement to help staff meet the ESLR requirements.

- School-To-Career Partnership: The School-to-Career Partnership Program is supported and funded through the San Francisco Unified School District and the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. The program's mission reads: "Implement a system that readies students to seek and achieve satisfying careers, as well as further education and training, and fosters lifelong education and employment for San Franciscans". Through the uses of teacher-mentors on a campus, internships in the business community, and a four-year, integrated curricular pathway, the program is a major support element for students to help them meet academic and technical challenges in the post-secondary world.

As one of six member high schools, Balboa is in the process of establishing a plan to meet the organizational and educational requisites of the program. Last summer a recruited school coordinator attended a workshop hosted by the District to educate site administrators as to the opportunities and requirements of the program. Last semester a School-to-Career Team was formed with eight staff members, the school coordinator,



and the principal. Some work has been done in the areas of curricular pathway planning, course content goals, and assessment guidelines. Through the District, a dedicated program site coordinator for the school has been hired to integrate the program at the school and direct the introduction of the program's plans through staff development sessions.

- The Digital High School Program: Funded by the State of California, the Digital High School Program is being used by the District to help fulfill part of the San Francisco Unified School District's technology plan for high schools. At Balboa, the Digital High School Grant will provide a networked computer, printer, VCR, large screen monitor, and cable TV in each classroom. Further, the grant will fund an upgrade to the PC Lab and Mac Lab, as well as additional computer and audio-visual equipment. Implementation began in August 1998, but contractors were behind schedule. Electrical work is now finished and the network will be completed by the end of February. Due to construction, the PC Lab was not operational, but will be open in February with 24 new PC clones. When the project is complete, the school will benefit from:

- Additional technical support
- Enhanced access to instructional resources
- Teachers training in basic computer skills and strategies to integrate the technology into the curriculum
- Students will have access to e-mail and web-based projects will be possible
- Teachers will be able to incorporate into their lessons: computer presentations, web sources, video and cable TV, through their large screen monitor

Ninth grade is the target for technology instruction with emphasis on language arts, social studies, and mathematics. Ninth grade teachers in these subjects will be trained to incorporate technology based projects into their curriculum that address the skill level of ninth graders and include skill building activities. The eventual goal is to

have information/technology literacy classes for all ninth graders when staff and curriculum can be realigned. The Step-Up-to-Balboa Program for incoming ninth graders will have a technology component. As part of the grant, all faculty are expected to incorporate technology into their lesson plans. After the implementation year, the grant funds professional development for the next two to three years.

# **PROGRESS REPORT**

## CHAPTER II: Progress Report

Balboa High School went through the “**Pursuing Excellence**” accreditation process in 1994-95 and received a term of two years. In 1996, one year prior to the next scheduled visit for accreditation, the school was “*reconstituted*” by the San Francisco Unified School District. Subsequently, the school requested and was granted a two-year extension. The most significant change since the last visit has of course been **Reconstitution**, beginning with the near total refurbishing of the physical plant. The buildings were washed, repaired, and repainted. The grounds were washed and landscaped. Windows were replaced. Paralleling the physical changes have been those of personnel. *The entire adult staff was released from duty at Balboa, and a new principal was hired.* With assistance from the San Francisco Unified School District certificated personnel office, the new principal hired her assistant principals. The new administrative team then interviewed and hired the faculty, counselors/deans, clerical staff, custodians, paraprofessionals, and security personnel. Of the 90 teachers hired in the summer of 1996, only 28 are on the current faculty. What follows are the reports on the progress made on each of the last WASC Visiting Committee’s recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** *The entire school community work together to develop plans that will successfully resolve the student behavior problems and concerns at Balboa High School. The School Environment Committee will need input and support from all stakeholders up and down the line to succeed.*

**Progress:** **Reconstitution** has been more than a major face-lift of the physical plant. Student attitudes and behaviors have also improved dramatically.

**Recommendation 2:** *The administration, staff, students, and parents write a unifying mission statement, including goals and objectives, that assures the Balboa community will work together to support the improvement of student performance.*

**Progress:** A unifying mission statement has been written but needs to be actively used on a meaningful daily basis.

**Recommendation 3:** *The district and ground department work with the science department to provide for the immediate installation and maintenance of necessary safety equipment in science labs so that students and staff are able to use the science labs in safety.*

**Progress:** Necessary safety equipment has been installed and is functioning in the science labs.

**Recommendation 4:** *The district and site administration make public health and safety issues a top priority, repair and/or upgrade the plumbing and electrical systems throughout the school, and upgrade general school facilities in order to make classrooms and the school habitable, physically safe and appropriate for students.*

**Progress:** Through **Reconstitution**, electrical and plumbing systems have been upgraded, and school facilities in general have been made habitable, physically safe, and appropriate for students and staff.

**Recommendation 5:** *The (newly empowered) school site council develop a plan for open and clear communications within the Balboa school community, particularly among staff, so that there is a clear understanding in the Balboa community regarding the many activities, programs, and changes in process.*

**Progress:** The administration and Site Council have significantly increased their efforts to reach out in productive ways to the school community, including holding meetings with interested community members at locations *in the community* as opposed to at the school.

**Recommendation 6:** *The administration and staff work together to reconfigure room assignments for the 1994-95 school year, and provide adequate and appropriate physical facilities for physically impaired students to insure equal access for all students to all facets of the educational program in compliance with state regulations.*

**Progress:** Classrooms for physically impaired students have been relocated to be in compliance with state regulations. Furthermore, these classrooms have been moved to the center of the campus for both physical and psychological reasons.

**Recommendation 7:** *The administration and staff develop and promote articulation with feeder schools to assure a smooth sequential transition from feeder schools to the core curriculum areas of Balboa's New Century Enterprise program thereby improving accurate academic placement.*

**Progress:** More articulation is taking place between Balboa and its feeder middle schools, but more needs to happen, especially in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics.

**Recommendation 8:** *The administration and staff develop plans, which insure the enrollment and inclusion in the Balboa New Century program of all appropriate grade-level students.*

**Progress:** The New Century program no longer exists.

**Recommendation 9:** *The school administration and core subject departments institute a systematic program of staff development that provides time for the departments to continue to develop curriculum consistent with the California state on frameworks while developing the Balboa academy concept thereby ensuring student achievement is properly aligned with those frameworks.*

**Progress:** Department heads have a common planning and meeting time, and each department meets every other Wednesday morning.

**Recommendation 10:** *The administration define and articulate the counseling services available to students, and publish the results; explaining how counselors are being used, so that the entire school community is aware of services available and how to access them, and to ensure that there is an integrated program of these services which makes the most efficient use of available staff in an appropriate and coordinated manner.*

**Progress:** More needs to be done to define and articulate programs and courses available to Balboa students – at Balboa, at CCSF, and all post-secondary options.

**Recommendation 11:** *Administration to formulate a method of information dissemination regarding changes in process and including students in the decision-making process.*

**Progress:** Dissemination of information is improved but needs to be improved more still. Creation of a central gathering place for staff, with bulletin boards, mailboxes, sign-in sheets, etc. could be useful in increasing awareness among staff. Revising of the advisory system by developing a basic skills curriculum and giving credit for attendance and participation would help to keep students informed and make it easier to include them in the decision-making process.

**Recommendation 12:** *The district and administration address the food service's inadequacy of facilities, access and food quality so that basic nutritional and social needs of Balboa High School students and staff are more adequately met.*

**Progress:** Students and staff alike report that food services have been improved considerably in terms of both nutrition and variety of choices.

**Recommendation 13:** *The district, school administration, and physical education department implement a plan for improving locker room facilities and gym facility security to provide for adequate student safety and well-being.*

**Progress:** Locker rooms have been cleaned and painted, but the entire gymnasium complex is still in need of major repair and modernization, i.e., it was not included in Reconstitution.

**Recommendation 14:** *The administration and staff evaluate all instructional strategies to insure that all students are actively engaged in their learning and are able to make the connection between school and the adult world.*

**Progress:** Students are generally more engaged in their learning but are not particularly aware of the expectations of the world after graduation. The new School-to-Career Coordinator, the implementation of the Digital High School, and a full complement of Assistant Principals are all hopeful signs for increasing this awareness.

**THE  
SELF-STUDY  
PROCESS**



## CHAPTER III: The Self-Study Process

In the course of doing the self-study, the Balboa High School staff has addressed the *seven key outcomes* of the self-study process, some of them more thoroughly than others. During the Committee's visit, it became quite clear that the "**Focus on Learning**" process would continue to aid the Balboa community in improving their school. The seven key outcomes and the Visiting Committee's report on each are as follows:

*1. the involvement of each stakeholder group in the self-study*

The entire Balboa staff was engaged in the self-study process. Even though it has been very difficult to bring Balboa parents into the school, there was some parental involvement. Only a few students were involved.

*2. a better understanding of the impact of the program on student learning*

As a result of the Focus on Learning process, staff members have realized that the use of assessment data to drive the development of curriculum is very important. They know that they need training in development of a variety of assessment tools and in utilizing the results of these various assessments to shape the curriculum.

*3. the development, clarification, or refinement of expected schoolwide learning results*

The ESLRs were developed with the input of all staff members and reflect the needs of the students at Balboa. The staff members realize that they have to take the next step and incorporate the ESLRs across the curriculum.

*4. a better understanding of how specific disciplines and/or support programs compare to appropriate curricular references and current educational thinking through the use of discussion questions, data gathering, and analysis of student work.*

It was clear to the visiting team, through the examination of the focus group process binders, that the Balboa staff used discussion questions, gathered data, and analyzed student work to review their programs in light of current educational thinking and practice.

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

Through the self-study process the staff has gained an awareness of the need to assess programs in order to have a more positive effect on student learning.

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

The Balboa staff has gone through the process of creating very detailed action plans, but these action plans do not always converge on the priority needs of Balboa.

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

In view of the number of tasks detailed in the action plans, the Balboa staff needs to instead focus on a few major priorities. The accountability system should include a mechanism to report out accomplishments publicly to the entire Balboa school community.

**The Visiting Committee believes that the Balboa self-study is an accurate description of the programs available for the students at Balboa. The large, thorough, and well-organized volume of evidence illustrated well the broad range of student achievement at Balboa. Based on analysis of this evidence, the committee believes that the school has accurately identified its needs.**

**EXPECTED  
SCHOOLWIDE  
LEARNING  
RESULTS  
(eslr's)**

# ESLRs Expected Schoolwide Learning Results

## A) Demonstrate Grade-Level Skills in Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Mathematics

- 1) Develop effective study & test-taking skills
- 2) Understand and communicate mathematical concepts and interpret written text
- 3) Demonstrate literacy
- 4) Exhibit presentation skills
- 5) Communicate effectively in personal, academic, and work environments

## B) Strengthen Personal Character

- 1) Exhibit self-discipline through personal commitment and accountability
- 2) Make healthy choices
- 3) Internalize Balboa High School Life Skills

## C) Use Technology Effectively

- 1) Become technologically literate
- 2) Access and assess information from technological resources to support research needs

## D) Demonstrate Higher Order Thinking Skills

- 1) Gather, synthesize, analyze, apply, and evaluate information
- 2) Exhibit problem-solving skills
- 3) Develop goals and strategies for post high school years

## E) Exhibit Positive, Creative Expressions

- 1) Participate in school activities
- 2) Develop an appreciation and acceptance of cultural diversity
- 3) Realize a role in the community
- 4) Exhibit personal creativity

**QUALITY  
OF  
THE  
SCHOOL'S  
PROGRAM**

## CHAPTER IV: Quality of the School's Program

### A. Vision, Leadership and Culture

#### *What currently exists:*

**Criterion A1:** *The school has a clearly stated vision or purpose based upon its beliefs, student needs, and current educational research. Supported by the governing board and the central administration, the school's purpose is defined further by ESLRs: what all students should know and be able to do by graduation.*

Balboa has a vision statement that was created with input from the school community and it reflects the philosophical tenets of the SFUSD. However, some members of the community feel that the statement needs to be revised and made more concise and that it should be more visible in the entire school community. The vision seems to have the support from outside the school (from the district office and the board) but it needs to become part of the daily operation of the school. While the ESLRs are widely known, they seem not to be the driving force behind school planning and policy decisions.

#### *Areas of strength:*

- Balboa has a vision statement created with input of the stakeholders
- Balboa's vision statement has the support of the district and is in alignment with the philosophical tenets of the SFUSD.

#### *Growth needs:*

- There should be school-wide commitment to the vision and ESLRs
- The vision needs to become part of the daily life of the entire school
- Teachers need support and training in order to dovetail their curricular goals with the ESLRs and the school's vision.

**Criterion A2:** *The school leadership makes decisions and initiates activities that focus on all students achieving the ESLRs. The leadership empowers the school community and encourages commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning.*

The leadership of the school since reconstitution has focused on improvement of the school culture. There has been significant progress in raising the level of civility among the students and the number of students not in class has decreased. There has also been a substantial drop in the number of students suspended. The level of cleanliness has risen and many members of the community say that they feel that Balboa is a much safer place now than it was before reconstitution.

There seems to be no school-wide plan for ensuring that the ESLRs are incorporated into the curriculum. Individual departments and teachers monitor the implementation of curriculum standards. New programs have been implemented based on student need and teacher initiative.

The organizational structure of the school does not seem to be clear to all staff members so it is sometimes difficult for them to get needed support. There is an evolving formalized decision making process, but many staff members feel disenfranchised. Many staff members say that they do not know what is going on, and that there is no regular vehicle for communication between and among staff members beyond a daily written bulletin distributed to all staff.

***Areas of strength:***

- The caring, energetic, and committed staff has found ways to create programs that address the needs of their students.

***Growth needs:***

- The school community needs to develop more leaders who will encourage more staff participation and collaboration that will result in shared responsibility for student learning.
- The formalized decision making structure for the school needs to be revised by the staff. The process should be clearly understood by all stakeholders. All stakeholders need to have a clear voice in governance and decision-making.
- A systematic method of regular communication between administration and staff and among staff members should be revised and maintained.

***Criterion A3: The support, utilization, and monitoring of staff facilitate achievement of the ESLRs. Leadership and staff are part of an organized structure that is committed to professional development.***

Balboa has 8 staff development days per year. Professional development programs do not always meet the needs of teachers either for discipline specific issues or for long-range school improvement. There has been no coherent plan for using the staff development time. Individual staff members do attend workshops outside of school, but the information they get is not necessarily shared with other staff members.

***Areas of strength:***

- The district has made a commitment to providing time for professional development

***Growth needs:***

- Staff members need professional development in a wide range of areas.
- Teachers need to be involved in making the plans for individual and all-school professional development.

**Criterion A4:** *The school is a safe, clean and orderly place that nurtures learning. The culture of the school is characterized by trust, professionalism, and high expectations for all students, and a focus on continuous school improvement.*

Even though the campus has been vastly improved since reconstitution, the staff members feel that students need to take even more responsibility for maintaining a clean campus. Many stakeholders express positive feelings about the changes in the campus appearance and security. The custodial, security, and support staff members along with the teachers and administration and students are responsible for these improvements.

***Areas of strength:***

- The entire school community has made great progress in campus cleanliness and safety.

***Growth needs:***

- Students should be encouraged to take more responsibility for their school and its appearance.

## **B. Curricular Paths**

***What currently exists:***

**Criterion B1:** *All students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent curriculum that supports the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results.*

All students may take the San Francisco Unified School District courses necessary for graduation, but that in and of itself is a significant challenge for most students, and going beyond is even more difficult. Advanced Placement and City College of San Francisco classes are also available, but students hear about these on an individual basis from teachers and counselors. The advisory system, if all staff participate in a systematic fashion, could provide an avenue for all students to hear pertinent information about what courses are available, when, and where.

The block schedule has both supporters and detractors. Positive aspects include more time in class for support and in-depth instruction as well as reduced student contact time between classes. Negative aspects include the difficulty of repeating failed classes and the lack of choices and flexibility. *However, since the Self-Study was written, the SFUSD has stated that the current 4x4 block schedule cannot be funded and that it must therefore be abandoned and another schedule developed for the 1999-2000 school year.* The staff is currently engaged in that process.

Some support services exist but only a small percentage of students know about or use them. However, the Balboa Teen Health Center is well established and well known.



Also, all 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students for the last two years have had double mathematics and language arts classes. The overall problem seems to be one of coordination and staffing of the various safety net programs. Again, an improved advisory system might assist in solving this problem. It also remains to be seen what the possibilities will be with the new schedule.

Approximately 75% of the incoming freshmen are not academically prepared for high school work. In addition, 25% failed more than two subjects in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. There is a clear need for more thorough assessment as well as articulation with the feeder middle schools. Students are apparently in need of even more academic and personal support than currently exists, in addition to more co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities.

***Areas of strength:***

- There is a working partnership with City College of San Francisco to provide college classes for Balboa students on the CCSF campus, including African-American and Latino dropout prevention programs.
- The SOAR program offers potentially truant and educationally disadvantaged students an opportunity to improve basic academic skills, develop organizational abilities, and refocus their attention on meeting graduation requirements.
- The three Academies – Law, Action, and Communication Arts – offer students meaningful interdisciplinary programs to better focus their intellectual energies through high school to college or career options after graduation.

***Growth needs:***

- Refine the advisory system by developing a curriculum that emphasizes basic academic skills, developing and monitoring individual learning plans for all students, and offering credit for attendance and participation.
- Develop a plan for coordinating and communicating the many social and academic support programs to all stakeholders – students, staff, parents, and the community.
- Create a daily time schedule that allows time for teachers to meet, discuss, and plan curriculum and instructional activities.

**Criterion B2:** *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.*

Students may have the option of creating a personal learning plan, but it is not clear how or when or with whom they do so. Again, just doing the basics seems more than enough for both students and staff. More curricular choices beyond the minimum graduation requirements would be desirable, but if students and staff are indeed “overwhelmed”, then it is hardly realistic to add more. Perhaps the new School-to-Career coordinator will be able to assist in this effort.

***Areas of strength:***

- See #1, #2, and #3 above under “Criterion B1 Strengths”.

- Hiring a School-to-Career Coordinator recognizes the need for ensuring that students are aware of as many post-secondary options as possible so they can better target their learning.

***Growth needs:***

- See #1, #2, and #3 above under “Criterion B1 *Growth needs*”.
- Continue efforts to support all students in need of stronger academic skills – reading, writing, speaking, computation, use of technology, and problem solving.

**Criterion B3:** *Upon graduation all students are prepared to continue the pursuit of their academic and occupational goals.*

It would seem, given the stated challenge of meeting the day to day requirements of coming to school and passing the classes needed for graduation, that focusing on post-secondary options, be they academic or vocational, is difficult. Furthermore, there are still too many students who are unclear as to what is expected both at Balboa and beyond.

***Areas of strength:***

- The PACT program gives students information and guidance for planning their high school learning program.
- Hiring the new School-to-Career Coordinator will bring the many teacher – developed initiatives under the direction and coordination of one person and allow for greater communication and support.
- The staff has raised student expectations as evidenced by more than doubling the number of students enrolling and attending college after graduating from Balboa.

***Growth needs:***

- See #1, #2, and #3 above under “Criterion B1 *Growth needs*”.

**C. Powerful Teaching and Learning**

Effort is being made on an individual basis by many teachers to provide powerful teaching and learning experiences in the classroom. There is exciting collaboration happening between various groups of teachers, such as those working in the three academies and the SOAR program. However, lack of planning time, the high teacher attrition rate, the lack of textbooks and lab materials, and an extremely large population of EDY students (66% of Balboa’s students are designated as educationally disadvantaged youth) make it difficult for teachers to make strides in this area. This struggle is reflected in the fact that, according to Balboa’s teacher survey, 42% of teachers think there is only “somewhat” of a “positive learning culture at Balboa” and 23% think there is none at all. In order for Balboa to improve the overall academic culture of the school, teachers ultimately need more time to develop and coordinate challenging curriculum, as well as the resources to provide necessary materials for the classroom.

*What currently exists:*

**Criterion 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?*

There have been repeated efforts to ensure that all students are engaged in challenging learning, however, new teachers, by their very nature, require more time and support in this effort. It is always up to individual teachers to follow state frameworks, implement innovative curriculum, or develop course syllabi; however, few teachers are explicitly incorporating the school ESLRs into their curriculum. However, students are being exposed to extremely challenging learning experiences in some classrooms. (See comments for criterion C2) Also, most teachers seem to have created positive relationships with their students and most students cite a plethora of caring, dedicated teachers as one of Balboa's strengths.

Balboa offers a core curriculum of classes that meet the UC system's A-F requirements. Currently only three AP classes are being offered, and honors classes were scaled back this year from 16 to eight. This year, class sizes ranged between extremely large classes and extremely small classes. This disparity seems to be caused by the high absentee rate at Balboa as well as difficulties in scheduling stemming from the 4x4 block schedule.

A shortage of teacher resources is apparent as well. Many science teachers lack adequate lab materials and many teachers do not have enough copies of texts to allow students to take books home. There is also a need for more graphing calculators in the math department.

*Areas of strength:*

- Many teachers are involving students in challenging learning opportunities and using a variety of strategies and resources to meet their students' needs.
- Balboa has a cadre of dedicated, compassionate and hardworking teachers who work to develop close relationships with students.

*Growth needs:*

- Teachers and administrators need to develop a plan for professional growth that addresses the needs of teachers working with Balboa's population.
- More elective opportunities need to be offered.
- More honors and AP classes need to be offered.
- Teachers need access to adequate resources for their classrooms, such as up-to-date textbooks, lab materials and graphing calculators.
- Prepare a school catalogue describing all courses, programs and services to ensure that all stakeholders understand the scope of the school's offerings. The catalogue should be available in all languages appropriate to the school.

**Criterion 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?*

Many teachers are exposing their students to learning opportunities that emphasize higher order thinking skills. For example, students in a government class were engaged in a mock congress, writing bills, discussing them in house and senate sub committees, and lobbying for their bill to pass. Students in an integrated science class built a battery that converted chemical energy to electrical energy.

With regard to collaboration, the Law Academy, Community Action Academy and Communication Arts Academy, as well as the SOAR program, seem to be making some strides in offering a challenging and interdisciplinary curriculum. For example, students in the Community Action Academy experience a curriculum that integrates English, math and social science. Students apply their knowledge through a series of community service activities such as building a house for a family in need. The teachers in these programs report that their attendance rates are higher than the school average and their students feel a closer connection to the school community. However, the school offers no data for academy student outcomes, citing that the "academy structures are still in the preliminary stages."

In general, 95% of staff members say they collaborate with other teachers, yet the self-study also reports that it is difficult to plan common collaboration times into the master schedule. Until the master schedule establishes as a priority common prep times for team teachers, teachers will continue to collaborate only on an informal basis.

***Areas of strength:***

- Many teachers are exposing their students to learning opportunities that emphasize higher order thinking skills.
- Teachers in the academies programs and the SOAR program are collaborating and offering an integrated program that emphasizes higher order thinking skills.

***Growth needs:***

- Teachers need a master schedule design that allows teaching teams weekly common planning time in addition to prep periods.
- Teachers and administrators need to investigate other means of designing interdisciplinary teaching experiences that align related courses, such as American literature and US history.
- Teachers and administrators need to strengthen existing academy structures so that stability is not dependent on specific teachers.

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

Balboa admits that implementation of this criteria is left to the individual teacher. According to the self-study, many classes use "primary source documents, community resources, computer technology or field experience" to "enhance student learning and motivation." Sometimes teachers invite guest speakers or organize field trips, such as a trip to Sacramento by the Law Academy students to lobby politicians or a visit to a social studies classroom by Japanese men who had been interned in World War II. The Junior ROTC program offers students military training and life skills. Only two "School to Career" classes, accounting and work experience, are currently being offered. However, beyond these disparate offerings, there seems to be little institutional support for connecting classroom learning experiences to broader life experiences. Balboa also states in the self-study that "students are sometimes ambivalent about school, seeing only a limited connection between classes, the school's expectations and life outside school."

Balboa has rewired the school and is currently working on updating its computers. This is being paid for by the Digital High School grant. Balboa also has a full-time computer technician.

***Areas of strength:***

- Some teachers are using a variety of resources for learning and engaging students in learning experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom.
- The Digital High School grant money has enabled the school to begin to provide access for all students to modern technology.

***Growth needs:***

- Teachers need more technology training.
- Balboa needs to offer more computer classes.
- Students need more access to functioning computer labs.
- Balboa needs to significantly expand its School to Career options.

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

***What currently exists:***

**Criterion D1:** *All students receive appropriate support to help ensure academic success.*

Balboa High School is a culturally, academically, and socially diverse student body. There are numerous support services for students, and the number of students graduating from Balboa has increased by more than 50% over the last two years. However, there is still a need for a more coordinated effort in making these services accessible to students.

The Digital High School grant will provide much needed technology added to each classroom. This grant will provide one computer and one TV/VCR for every classroom. One computer per class, however, does not allow for all students to be engaged in fully using the technology for their assignments and projects. Staff will also need training to appropriately incorporate this technology into the curriculum.

Presently students have limited access to the library. Over the last two years money has been allocated to provide students with more books and resources. Enough computers are not available to students and more library resources and hours are needed. Students need more research and outside reading materials.

Balboa has a large population of students with special needs. Special needs students at Balboa represent 11.8% of the student body or 155 students. Special Education serves students in RSP, SDC, or the DIS according to their IEP. The progress of these students is monitored and placement in general education carefully planned. Regular education teachers need more training in modifications for students and more improved communication concerning the student. The position of the Dean/Head Counselor has been changed to more effectively address the personal and academic needs of students. The ESL/Bilingual department continues to commit to ensuring that language and culture do not isolate these students. More computers are needed to provide support for English Language Learners. Although more can certainly be done, it needs to be noted that ESL students are much more fully incorporated into the mainstream culture of Balboa High School than before reconstitution.

*Areas of strength:*

- Balboa High School is the recipient of the Digital High School Grant.
- The ESL/Bilingual Department and the Special Education Department are committed to supporting students in their personal and academic growth.
- Student support services have been initiated and implemented by individual members of the Balboa community.
- The staff at Balboa is caring, committed, and hard working.

*Growth needs:*

- More ways need to be found to encourage students to use the library. More research materials need to be made available to students.
- More training needs to be made available to teachers in the use of technology
- Develop a newsletter to better communicate with all stakeholders.

**Criterion D2:** *Students have access to a system of personal support services, activities, and opportunities at the school and within the community.*

Balboa's faculty has struggled to create a cohesive support for their many at risk students. Students have access to personal support services from several sources. These sources include the Teen Health Clinic, and EDY Monitoring. There are currently not enough services for all students. There is not a coordinated effort of student support services.

Many services exist in isolation. Some student-centered programs have been created and implemented by individual teachers and are not school-wide programs. All students are not working within the same type of organizational structure. More dialogue and shared leadership is needed around this issue.

Tardiness and absenteeism represent a large challenge for the school. The assistant principal has instituted new policies. School paraprofessionals need to be given more opportunity to dialogue with teachers about this issue. More counselors are needed in order to address at risk students and their needs. The daily advisory period model has been changed to address this challenge.

***Areas of strength:***

- The development of Academies have served to support students in their personal and academic growth
- Tardies have been reduced substantially.
- The Teen Health Clinic is the only clinic of its kind in the city.

***Growth needs:***

- A School to Career program can better connect students to their learning.
- The staff should review the effectiveness of the Advisory Period. This review should include student attendance, accounting, credit, and curriculum.
- Communicate to students the support services available to them. Implement a systematic approach to improve student support.
- Develop and implement actions to increase faculty retention.
- Develop a system of rewards and recognition for student achievement.
- Assess the incidences of tardiness and absenteeism establishing an accurate database and implementing consistent policies.

***Criterion D3: The school leadership employs a wide range of strategies to encourage parental and community involvement.***

Balboa High School seeks to offer opportunities for parents and community to become involved in the life of the school. Efforts are made to involve families of newly arrived students. Parent/family involvement includes parent nights, college nights, music performances, athletic games, Bilingual Advisory Committee, School Site Council, School Advisory Council, the Parent Center, Volunteer Programs, field trip chaperoning, parent-teacher conferences and parent-dean conferences. Staff members attempt to conduct conferences in the appropriate home language. School correspondence is sent out in four primary languages-Spanish, Filipino, Chinese, and English.

***Areas of strength:***

- Parents actively participate on the School Site Council.

***Growth needs:***

- Develop strategies to include more parents and community in the life of the school.
- Encourage closer communication with teachers, parents, and students.

**Criterion D4:** *The human, material, and financial resources, as well as facilities available to the school are sufficient and effectively used to support students in accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results.*

The school has been newly painted, windows have been replaced, and lockers have been repaired, but, as in most California public schools, financial resources are still lacking. Staff utilizes what little it has. More resource utilization, maintenance, and upkeep are needed. Staff members share ideas and collaborate intermittently. The school's physical plant is old and requires constant maintenance and repair. While district repair crews are often understaffed, the custodial staff takes great pride in their work and was voted the best custodial team in the city in 1997. Facility improvement is a substantial and ongoing process. The school gymnasium is in need of major renovation. There is an adequate supply of state-adopted texts. More up-to-date equipment and supplies are needed. Up-to-date texts and supplementary materials that are culturally relevant are lacking. The cafeteria offers a variety of options. Students meet with the cafeteria manager and the principal to discuss preferences. Some students do not take advantage of the free lunch program if eligible.

***Areas of strength:***

- Both the interior and exterior of the school has undergone a major face-lift as clearly shown by the "before and after" pictures in the appendix of the Self-Study.
- Building and grounds are well cared for and litter is at a minimum.
- The school and classrooms are clean and well kept.
- The cafeteria is operated efficiently.

***Growth needs:***

- The gymnasium is in need of major renovation.
- Students need books they're able to take home and more up-to-date supplementary materials.

## **E. Assessment and Accountability**

The Assessment and Accountability Focus Group was comprised of 19 faculty members. This committee was divided into three subcommittees. Each subcommittee addressed one of three Assessment and Accountability criteria. The subcommittee's work was reviewed and approved by the entire focus group and subsequently edited by the leadership team. It should be noted that there was a lack of parent and student participation on this committee. This process facilitated a comprehensive review of evidence and thorough examination of the school's status relative to each criterion.



*What currently exists:*

**Criterion E1:** *Teachers employ a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate students and to modify the curriculum and instructional practices. Students use assessment results to modify their learning in order to enhance their educational program.*

Assessment at Balboa is carried out in various ways such as state-mandated tests, teacher-made tests, essays and projects. Some teachers use portfolios and notebooks as additional assessment methods. Based on the school report, evidence made available to the visiting committee, and interviews with the focus group, it is evident that the faculty is concerned with the use of data to drive teaching and learning. The school offers students excellent opportunities for academic support but this assistance is not a direct result of student data analysis. Assessment is used to determine student grades and is viewed as separate from instruction, usually taking the form of end-of-unit or end-of-semester tests that measure what students have learned. These assessments are used to judge student performance and determine grades.

*Areas of strength:*

- The various assessment methods used at Balboa High School to determine academic success
- The desire of faculty to learn to use data to modify instruction and help students learn at greater levels
- The numerous in school and after school academic support opportunities for students

*Growth needs:*

- The faculty and administration need to determine the metrics to be used to measure the academic progress of Balboa students.
- The faculty should develop a process for the systematic review and analysis of student achievement data.
- Ongoing professional development on the effective use of data to drive instruction needs to be provided to the staff.
- Balboa High School teachers need to share the results of assessment data with their students in a greater measure to enable students to modify their learning.

**Criterion E2:** *The school, district, and community regularly review student progress toward accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results. Assessment results are reported to the entire school community on a regular basis.*

Since the ESLRs have recently been completed, the school has not yet developed an assessment program to measure student achievement of the ESLRs. Current methods of assessing student learning include STAR 9, SAT, PSAT, AP exams, Golden State exams, district proficiency tests, and college entrance rates. SAT 9 results are desegregated by grade, gender, ethnicity, bilingual and special education status. These results are reported to the community. However, only a few teachers have received standardized test data on

individual students. School assessment has not yet been organized into a coherent program and reporting results to Balboa stakeholders is inconsistent

*Areas of strength:*

- The collection and analysis of performance data on educationally disadvantaged students that serve to determine the extra support services given to these students

*Growth needs:*

- The faculty and administration need to select appropriate student performance data that will measure student attainment of ESLRs.
- The faculty and administration should develop a systematic process for collecting, analyzing and reporting student achievement data to all school constituencies including parents and community members.

*Criterion E3: The assessment of expected schoolwide learning results drives the school's program development and resource allocation.*

Budget and resource allocations at Balboa focus on short term solutions and are not necessarily linked to student achievement data. Planned, purposeful changes tend to address symptoms of problems rather than root causes. Balboa High School has not yet developed an organized approach to data collection and analysis focused toward long term program planning and development.

*Areas of Strength:*

- Staff use of general information about students to initiate assistance efforts such as special writing courses, SOAR academy and mentoring programs
- The emerging collaboration of some departments to gather and analyze student data in a systematic way.

*Growth Needs:*

- The faculty and administration need to develop a process to assess all incoming students in reading, writing, and mathematics for appropriate course placement and allocation of teacher resources.
- The administration should continue to review the teacher assignment process to ensure that course assignments are consistent with the teacher's area of expertise and student needs, especially with the high turnover of faculty.
- The faculty and administration should review and refine student course placement practices consistent with student needs, course prerequisites, and teacher recommendations.

**ONGOING  
SCHOOL  
IMPROVEMENT**

## CHAPTER V: Ongoing School Improvement

The Committee feels that the Action Plans do not adequately address the critical areas of follow-up because they are *a) too unfocused, b) too numerous, and c) too ambitious*. The Committee feels that the Action Plans need to be boiled down to their core elements, and that a timeline that emphasizes accomplishing small, easily doable tasks first needs to be developed. The Committee feels that a foundation of solid achievement needs to be established first to more likely insure the success of future endeavors. The Committee further feels that increased efforts to improve communication and shared governance with all members of the Balboa educational community are necessary to successful implementation of **Reconstitution** at Balboa High School.

The Committee feels that the Action Plans, when reworked, will definitely enhance student learning. However, staff turnover and the quality and quantity of the San Francisco Unified School District commitment could be impediments in that process. The commitment is clearly present in the faculty and administration but remains to be seen in the student and parent communities. *The entire school community needs to follow up on the visit by the WASC Committee as soon as possible and capitalize on the enthusiasm, focus, hope, promise, and will engendered by the self-study process.* **Balboa High School has embarked on an unprecedented effort in public education, and there are no well-traveled paths to use as guides. Therefore, it is incumbent that all stakeholders renew their efforts to take the necessary next steps to further improve the quality of education for the students of Balboa High School.**