BELL HIGH SCHOOL

FOCUS ON LEARNING

VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

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Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

Bell is a comprehensive, Concept 6, multi-track year-round high school that serves the tri-city area of Bell, Cudahy and Maywood in the southeastern section of Los Angeles County. It is one of eleven schools in Cluster 22, a subdivision of the Los Angeles Unified School District. The Concept 6, year-round calendar contains 163 instructional days for each track. This is seventeen days fewer than the "traditional" school calendar. To compensate for this, the school day is longer than the traditional school day by thirty-nine minutes. The day begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 3:14 p.m.; each period lasts sixty minutes.

The student population numbers more than 4,540 and is more than 98% Hispanic. The ethnic composition of Bell High is 98.4% Hispanic. Of the remaining 1.6% less than 1% is "white" and the remaining .5% is American Indian, Asian, Black and Filipino. That designation covers students from Mexico, Central & South America as well as the Caribbean. The California statewide district average for Gifted and Talented (GATE) identification is 3 to 5 per cent. Bell has identified 303 students (of whom 12 are highly gifted) for GATE which represents 6.4 per cent of the school's population. Three hundred and thirty one students took a total of 535 Advanced Placement (AP) exams. The students do extremely well in Spanish Language (often 100% earning a 3 or higher), very well in Spanish Literature and less successfully on the other exams. By June of 1997, 284 students had taken the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) with the mean verbal score listed as 378 and the mean math score as 405. Although their SAT scores were about 150 points below the average for students entering college, the GPA earned by Bell students during college is slightly above average. Bell's pass rate in the A-F classes was 62.8% in 1997-98. Beginning with the 1996-97 school year, the entire student body has been eligible for Title I services based on the high percent of students who qualified for lunch program. Approximately one-third of the students (1,554) are limited in English proficiency (LEP). Special needs and English Learners (EL) who need more time to complete courses required for graduation and post-secondary education are allowed to remain in high school until the age of twenty-two.

The community which Bell High serves is one of the poorest and most densely populated areas of the state – and the nation. The average per capita income is $7,104. The Bell school community has a continuing stream of new immigrants. However, there is also a core of stable families, whose children are attending Bell for the second or even third generation. The majority of parents in the community place a high value on education, even though they may not have completed many years of school themselves. Many parents want their students to continue their education after high school. However, the economic reality is that many families cannot provide the space, time and privacy that students need to complete intensive high school studies necessary for transition to college or university work. The other reality is that many students must hold a part-time, or even full time, job during high school and/or postsecondary education in high school, the job may be to assist with family finances. After graduation, a job is often necessary to pay for the postsecondary education.

Chapter II: Progress Report

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

The School Based Management Council has been the vehicle used by the school to address the recommendations of the previous Visiting Team. This process was monitored by the Staff Development Coordinator.

Since the last accreditation major progress has been made in the areas of curriculum offerings, school attendance, reduced drop out rates, technology acquisition and home-to-school communication.

Of concern to the school community was the placement of the school on the district's 100 lowest performing schools list in 1996-97 and the subsequent placement on probation in September for failing to make gains in the 1997-98 school year in the district's benchmark performance indicators.   The district's benchmark indicators include SAT 9 percentiles, transition of non-English students to English instruction, redesignation rate of LEP students, percent of student in-seat attendance, average teacher days absent, district dropout rate, number of advanced placement sections offered, and a-f pass rates.   Bell received a minus for a decrease in in-seat attendance which went from 95.66 to 94.32 per cent – a minus even though this still ranks them as #1 in the district among 50 high schools; a drop in the number of AP sections offered from 35.5 to 30 – a minus even though they are still #5 in the District among 50 high schools.   Additionally Bell received a minus for the increase in the teacher absence rate from 8 days to 9 days per year and their composite test scores went down from 26 to 25.

- Discussion of the progress made on all recommendations from the last full visit.

Previous major recommendations from the WASC Visiting Committee have been addressed to varying degrees. Thirteen major recommendations addressed high absenteeism, communication, improving the instruction of integrated skills across the curriculum, increasing the access to guidance and counseling services, increasing staff technological expertise, air conditioning maintenance problems, articulation with feeder schools, infusing instructional technology in the mathematics curriculum, resurfacing of tennis courts, acquiring additional computers, expanding the use of technology in the Vocational/Technical arts program, and the development of a master plan to address maintenance and repair for instructional equipment. Progress on these issues is as follows:

- The School Based Management Council adopted a new discipline policy and schoolwide rules with an emphasis on student responsibility. An Attendance Counselor was added and period-by-period attendance accounting was instituted. The attendance program and polices facilitated an increase in in-seat attendance from 82% to at least 95% with Bell High School recognized by the District for the Most Improved Attendance in 1994-95. The Los Angeles Board has named Bell as the high school with the Number One in-seat attendance for the last four years.

- Parents now receive a progress report/report card every four weeks containing grades and attendance. The newsletter is sent home each quarter. Parent conferences are held once each semester and the conference times have been extended until 7:00 p.m. in order to accommodate parents. The school bulletin is read in homeroom every day. The daily bulletin was posted on the BellNet site until recently and will be online again once a new staff member is trained.

- Strategies to integrate basic skills and higher thinking skills into the curriculum have been a major emphasis of the Staff Development Committee over the last three years. Nearly all staff members are presently engaged in or have completed the SB 1969 certificate program or the BCLAD and CLAD. Approximately 125 certificated and 25 classified staff members attend workshops and conferences each year to increase subject matter knowledge and improve teaching and student learning strategies. The Math Department has adopted the integrated math programs. Tutoring has been instituted at lunch, after school and Saturdays for students.

- Access to counseling has greatly increased with the addition of three counselors, Title I and Perkins counselors, a full-time PSA counselor and a Psychiatric Social Worker.

- Staff members have received extensive training via the Digital High School and SB1510 grants. Subsequent grants have also provided the school with staff development opportunities.

- Problems still seem to persist with the air-conditioning and heating system. While there is progress, much needs to be done in this area.

- Articulation has increased with the feeder schools with varying degrees of success. An articulation program has been developed by Bell High in which teachers from Bell meet twice each year with the feeder school representatives to discuss and collect incoming data and current IEPs. Since the last accreditation report, the District has reorganized into "clusters" with a District administrator assigned to each cluster. There have been two cluster wide staff development days that have helped in improving articulation along with monthly meetings such as the cluster's

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Math Task Force. Unfortunately cluster wide staff development days no longer exist. While progress in this area is recognized, improvements still need to be made.

- The newly adopted Integrated Mathematics curriculum is utilizing scientific and graphing calculators in every lesson. The department's bungalows will be connected to the Internet system this year.

- The issue of repairing the damaged tennis courts is now moot, since portable bungalows have been placed on top of the courts to provide classrooms for a growing student population.

- Special Education students are now able to access computers in the Mac and CCC labs. The need for computers in the classrooms is being addressed by the Prop BB and Digital High School Grant. This year the grants is focus on providing the necessary cabling infrastructure and training staff to use the computers. Subsequent years will provide classroom equipment and curriculum development.

- Five Vocational/Technical Arts classrooms now have six or more computers with the appropriate software. Graphics Arts uses computers for project layouts. The school has a Computer Assisted Drafting Class (CAD). The Cisco Network Academy Class trains students who may qualify for a national test to become Cisco Associate Network Engineers.

- A master plan to address the needs for repair, maintenance and replacement of equipment is still a need. The need is even more crucial with the increase in computer equipment and the subsequent reduction in repair services.

Chapter III: Self-Study Process

- *Bell High School's Expected Schoolwide Learning Results*

  Bell High School students will

  - become responsible and contributing members of the school and community.
  - become critical thinkers who daily use logical problem-solving skills.
  - improve their skills in all academic areas to the highest possible level.
  - develop work habits and skills necessary for transition to post-secondary education or the work place.
  - develop sufficient competence in the use of technology to provide for lifelong success.

- Comments on the school's self-study process with respect to the key outcomes and accuracy observable evidence representative of what ALL students are doing and producing and supportive of the identified schoolwide growth areas

1. The involvement and collaboration of each stakeholder group in the self-study.

The Visiting Committee evidence to support the involvement and collaboration of the entire school community in the self-study.   The school is to be commended on the involvement of all parties which was complicated by the year-round three track program. There was concern when some members of the Steering Committee corrected some of the data in the Self-Study at the final Steering Committee meeting. The process was also complicated by the loss of professional development days this year.

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

The assessment of student achievement and the sharing of this data with all the staff has increased the overall awareness of the program and the impact it is having on students. This area is not as strong as it should be but improvements are being made.   Because of the Accreditation Process, the school is focused on developing a systematic approach to data collection and analysis oriented toward long-term program planning and development.

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

In April of 1998, the Steering Committee introduced concepts, general purpose of ESLR's while reviewing the District's mission and vision statement.   The Steering Committee work was then presented to the faculty which met in focus groups to review and suggest revisions to the ESLR's.   The Steering Committee then took

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the faculty work and completed the ESLR's with final presentation and approval made by the faculty, GATE parents, SBM Council, BAC/CEAC.

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

The Los Angeles Unified School District has an extensive list of student expectations and support services to meet those expectations Strong philosophical differences exist as to how to "raise the bar" for academic achievement, the elimination of remedial courses and social promotion. The elimination of professional days is currently hurting the ability of the staff to stay current with the latest educational thinking.

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

Each department is writing performance rubrics for District standards, a process that has influenced the development of the ESLR's. Schoolwide achievement tests are analyzed to determine students' skill deficiencies and to identify instruction needed to assist students with achievement of the ESLR's, school's Mission and Vision statements and the LAUSD standards.

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

The Action Plan was created and written with direct input from the entire staff with Track A teachers giving the most input. The Action Plan addresses resources, persons responsible, timelines, assessment evidence and the process of reporting updates. Concern has been expressed by the Committee that many of the timelines are too open ended and there needs to be greater clarification as to when one could expect the action steps to take place. While there is an expressed commitment to the six plans, there will be the need to clearly establish a reporting process on progress to the school community in a timely manner.

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

The school has established six "Committees of Improvement". Each Committee will have representatives from each department, students, parents and representatives from the classified staff. The Committees will meet for the next five years. The Accreditation Coordinator is tasked with organizing and directing the Action Plan implementation. There is the possibility that this position may not be funded in the future and this will leave the school with the need to develop an alternative approach to monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan

- Comments regarding how accurately the self-study reflects what is happening at the school.

The Visiting Committee finds that the self-study reflects what is happening at the school. The committees were factual and didn't hesitate to list the areas where improvements were needed along with the accomplishments of the school. As previously mentioned there was some confusion expressed by some members of the Steering Committee with some of the data listed in the Self-Study.

Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

A.   Vision, Leadership, and Culture

What currently exists

*A1.   * The school has a clearly stated vision based upon its beliefs, students' needs and current educational research. The vision is supported by the governing board and the central administration. The school's purpose is defined by the expected school wide learning results.*

Bell High School has developed a Mission Statement and Vision statement, which is consistent with National, State and local standards. Using the Vision and Mission statements as a starting point there is evidence that the staff at Bell High School met to create and establish the statements which were used to develop their ESLR's. These were presented to the entire learning community and there was consensus. The ESLR's at Bell High School are general enough to encompass a wide variety of learning experiences. There is a commitment by the school to ensure that the ESLR's provide a focus for the students. The school is in the initial stages of incorporating the ESLR's into lesson plans. However, changes are not typically driven by the local ascertained needs of the stakeholders, but by District vision. This creates a problem in truly meeting the needs of all students.

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

The ESLR's implementation is at an initial stage. The ESLR's are posted in most classrooms and throughout the school in English and Spanish. There is little evidence to demonstrate changes in student learning since the ESLR's were established. There is a limited awareness of continuing an on-going effort in integrating the ESLR's to drive the curriculum.

There is a shared participation in decision making and the school administration encourages staff involvement in the governance of the school. Administrative responsibilities are clearly delineated through the LAUSD/UTLA contract and shared with the staff. Because the school is in the early stages of ESLR development and implementation, there will be a great deal of attention necessary to fully acquaint the community regarding Expected Learning Results and their attainment.

A3. * *The support, utilization, and monitoring of staff facilitates achievement of the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results. Leadership and staff are a part of an organized structure committed to professional development.*

Staff was supportive and involved in the development of these goals, but the school has not yet reached the point of implementing the ESLR's into the curriculum full force.

It was reported to the Visiting Team that staff development is a challenge for staff to participate. The year round three track system, District mandates and limited facilities make the implementation of the ESLR's difficult.

Staff development activities tend to focus on the act of teaching rather than based on student learning. "How do students learn" needs to be the focus for continuous staff development for all staff. Bell High School has access to SB1882 and Digital Grant funds to support staff development activities as well as other categorical funds. The Visiting Team recommends the alignment of the Staff Development Program with the genuine needs of the staff and students based on the school's ESLR's.

The development of the class schedule is addressed by the contract and ultimately the principal is responsible to ensure that student needs are met.

Bell High School has twelve mentor teachers whose primary responsibility is to assist new teachers. According to the self-study and the observation of the Visiting Team, the District needs to provide continuing support for the beginning teacher with practical timelines. The Buddy System at the site needs to be formalized.

Tenured teachers are monitored at least once every other year and probationary teachers and qualifying employees are monitored at least once each academic year.

A4. * *The culture of the school is characterized by trust, professionalism, high expectations for all students, and focus on continuous school improvement.*

Much of the responsibility for maintaining a safe environment is assumed by administration, the two full-time, unformed school police, classified aides and off-track employees. There is a need for an extensive security system to include telephones for classroom teachers who might need assistance from security personnel. The safe school plan was developed by representation from all stakeholders.

There is an after-school and Saturday tutoring program offered that attracts a number of students, especially ninth graders and at-risk students.

Much of the approach to professionalism, including sharing ideas and innovations is departmental in nature. Most curricular work is done in specific content areas.

According to the surveys given to the staff, parents and students, the stakeholders agree that the school buildings and grounds are not kept clean or in good repair.

Areas of Strength:

- Stakeholder groups participated in developing the ESLR's.
- The staff is respected and appreciated by parents, students and the community.
- The school is a safe and orderly environment, which promotes student learning.

Key Issues:

- ESLR's have not been aligned with the content standards in all subject areas.
- There is a lack of a coordinated staff development plan that focuses on student achievement of the ESLR's.
- There is a need for an appropriate security system for the protection of staff, students, and technology equipment.

Important Evidence:

- Self-Study
- Classroom Observations
- Focus Group Meetings
- Discussions with Stakeholders

Initial Observations:

- Synthesis of Schoolwide Areas of Strength and Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up

B. Curricular Paths

What Currently Exists

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

The Self Study indicates that all students receive an academic curriculum which has been adopted by the District and aligns with the state Frameworks and school ESLR's. Recognizing a need to better prepare students moving up from the feeder schools, starting in school year 1998-99, all BHS ninth grade students were placed in rigorous, college preparatory English classes at a 20:1 student to teacher ratio. A standards based math class, limited to twenty ninth grade students, is planned for implementation as soon as July of this year. Students in these programs who do not perform, or test at lower competency levels, are supported through an additional combination of a one term CCC programmed reading lab and a one term humanities reading based core elective class. For low achieving or testing math students, a second review class has been added to their schedules. An extensive tutoring program exists for all students as well as an enhanced counseling and intervention program called "Niners" which supports low achieving at-risk ninth graders. The school has recognized the need to intervene and better prepare at-risk students in these two core subjects and has acted on these needs.

Although BHS has been identified as one of the thirty lowest performing LAUSD schools, the school offers a wide and open curriculum which includes many Advanced Placement, Honors, and UC a-f approved courses. Close monitoring of attendance programs indicate that the school is improving student in-seat attendance. Local poverty, low test scores and achievement by incoming students, a high transience rate, and a high percentage of LEP and Special Education students are all challenges to engaging students in a rigorous, relevant and coherent curriculum.

Special Education and English learners have equal access to the core curriculum, but the number of Special Education students and Bell's status as a year round school necessitate Special Education teachers offering multiple subjects and preparations in many SDC classes, thus hindering the learning climate. Honors and Advanced Placement courses are offered on all tracks, and Bell High is among the top five LAUSD schools in total number of AP courses offered. But the pass rate is low in many of these classes. Elective classes are not equally offered during all tracks, nor to all grade levels with the fewest available to ninth grade students. Low achieving ninth grade students with extra math and English classes in their schedules have no room for electives. Teachers on emergency credentials, nearly 30 according to the report, impact the quality of student achievement as

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these teachers are not adequately trained in current educational philosophy, teaching methodologies, student learning styles, SDAIE strategies or standards.

In addition to a college preparatory program, the report states that students can choose course sequences in the curriculum that lead to work/career related education. To increase these choices, five sections of ROP Auto were opened in March of 1999 with co-funding by day and evening school programs. Many Perkins ROC/ROP programs exist on campus. A Multilingual Teacher Career Academy, a Cisco Network Academy, and a joint Perkins and SB1882 project to integrate vocational and academic areas are being developed. All these projects align with school ESLR's according to the report.

Teachers have posted ESLR's and standards in most classrooms, but few efforts to address ESLR's in daily instruction were observed. Lesson plans reflecting current standards have also been created and are on file. The visiting committee found that directed and focused staff development is needed at BHS to encourage teachers to implement new standards-based curriculum and modify the delivery of instruction towards student attainment of higher order thinking skills. Also, additional staff development, joint meeting time and departmental planning time would allow the faculty to develop necessary ESLR indicators and develop subject area rubrics to properly evaluate that curriculum does in fact support achievement of the ESLR's.

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

BHS states that students meet with high school counselors prior to matriculation when curriculum, class offerings, graduation and college requirements, programs and extra-curricular activities are discussed. A planning sheet that parents approve is kept for reference and programs are created based on test scores and student plans for the future. Students transferring from other schools also meet with counselors to make these same decisions. Guidance counselors review learning plans with each student at least once annually and make adjustments to programs when necessary. In the fall and spring, seniors are counseled and monitored to meet graduation requirements and post-graduation timelines. A Career Advisor and a College counselor works in conjunction with counselors to provide specific information to students. Twice annually a College and Career Fair is held during school hours and is available to all students.

The Visiting Team found that while learning plans were developed and modified, and the school provides substantial career education and guidance, true curricular paths are at a low level of development at Bell High. Students basically have two options: an academic, college preparatory program or a job skill related career path. Aside from the early development of the Multilingual Teacher Career

Academy, currently implemented on all three tracks and where teachers from different disciplines are beginning to plan integrated curriculum, no true career paths exist. The staff development coordinator at BHS has indicated a school commitment to have vocational education teachers and academic teachers use release time to plan an integrated Perkins curricular pathway. The report also indicated the need to provide career path training and exploration through a series of eight-week courses for ninth grade students in order to acquaint them with career choices.

The Visiting Team encourages these efforts and recommends that efforts be made by school leadership to increase schoolwide knowledge, participation in and acceptance of curricular path programs.

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

BHS states that it attempts to prepare every student for college as well as the professional job market. This is also indicated by the elimination of remedial classes as well as a number of interventions outside the classroom such as tutoring at lunch, after school and on Saturdays. Over 73% of students surveyed indicated a choice of either a four year college, community college or vocational school.

BHS employs a full-time College Counselor and staff to assist students in obtaining college information, much of which is obtained on site over the internet. Financial aid and scholarship workshops are offered to parents in both English and Spanish. Student representatives of this group felt that while information was available, some students were unaware of it. Teachers also indicated that while students said that they planned to go on to college, they were not performing at an appropriate academic level to be prepared for college. The need for greater counselor outreach and accessibility was identified in the report as a need.

A Career Advisor provides advisement and work experience training to students at BHS. LAUSD, and ROC/ROP programs also provide job training and opportunities to students at Bell as well as partnerships with local public service and corporate employers. Two+2 articulations exist with three local community colleges to transition students into a certificate/degree program at these community colleges.

The Perkins program provides training for students to work while attending school, and continues on into college. The Cisco Academy has a four semester curriculum and prepares students to be computer network technicians. The Multilingual Teacher Career Academy enrolls students starting in grade nine and through curricula and tutoring at a local elementary school acquaints students with the problems and promise of the education field in hopes of recruiting future

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teachers. Follow-up information on graduated students is scant, but UC and CSU reports are returned on University freshmen. 53 students were admitted to the UC system last year, and approximately 209 students were admitted to CSU from the graduating class of 640 students, or around 40% of the class.

Areas of Strength

- Efforts to bring ninth grade students up to standards. .
- Developing Cisco, MTCA and Perkins programs.
- Extensive use of educational technology to facilitate learning.

Key Issues

- Continue the improvement of staff development so as to better address student achievement.
- Reschedule Special Education classes so as to provide fewer subjects and preparations per period.
- Increase number of interdisciplinary cores throughout the curricula and develop curricular paths.

Important Evidence

- Student programs/master schedule
- Student/staff interviews
- Self Study
- Classroom observations
- Focus group meeting
- Classroom/focus group evidence

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C. Powerful Teaching and Learning

What currently exists

*C1.   * All students are involved in challenging learning experiences to achieve the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results.*

*   *   Teachers use a variety of strategies and resources including technology to engage students actively and help them succeed at high levels.*

The Bell Self Study Report indicates that there have been some changes in the ways teachers teach. On District mandate, remedial classes have been replaced with courses more in line with LAUSD guidelines for instruction. Intervention strategies have been developed to provide students access to a higher level of competency. Some of these include the Niners Program for at-risk freshmen, the CCC Lab for language arts intervention, the Digital High School grant for further expansion of the use of computers and the Humanitas program for interdisciplinary teaching.

Some teachers have begun to recognize a change in teacher roles from knowledge givers and content experts to coaches and facilitators assisting students to become active learners. There is a growing awareness and utilization of student learning styles to guide the planning and implementation of lessons. Many teachers continue to use methodologies that stress knowledge gained through the rote practice and reteaching of sequential skills.

The Technology Plan plays a significant role in the ongoing effort to provide students with access to effective uses of technology. There are eight networked computer labs where computers are used as instructional tools to deliver, support or enhance the curriculum. Fifty additional rooms have network computer resources. The Digital High School grant, the government E-Rate Discount, and the LAUSD Proposition BB network enhancement program should facilitate the integration of technology into the classrooms.

*C2.   * All students experience learning opportunities that emphasize higher order thinking skills and integrate academic and applied content. Collaboration about teaching and learning occurs (1) among staff, (2) between staff and students, (3) among students, and (4) between school and community.*

The Bell Self Study Report indicates that students experience learning which emphasizes higher order critical thinking skills. The students are often involved in activities where students formulate and solve problems, criticize their own work, work in teams, communicate about what they are doing, and achieve mastery of a topic or skill.

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Teachers and students agree that not everyone has access to the advances in technology that are available on campus. Those who are actively involved are moving toward a more interactive style of teaching and learning. Again, the challenges (low academic skills, limited English proficiency, lack of motivation to participate in certain academic endeavors, and the problems presented by year-round school) are mentioned by staff as reasons for slower growth. Some teachers feel that the need for basic skills dominates.

The Bell Cluster integrated the staff and student activities of Bell High School with those of the other schools in the Cluster. The School Based Management Council includes staff, students, parents and community in the overall planning for Bell High School. Many of the staff collaborate with the community through such programs as Humanitas, the Perkins (ACE Program), and the Multilingual Teacher Career Academy, Healthy Start, and ROP programs. Some academic departments meet regularly to develop cross curricular visions.

C3. * Students routinely use a variety of resources for learning and engage in learning experiences beyond the classroom

The Bell Self Study Report indicates a broad program of involvement beyond the classroom. These include athletics, Computer Production Lab, competitions, field trips, Niner's Program, Student Congress/Leadership, Voice of the Eagle, robotics, and clubs. The Digital High School Grant has provided students with increased accessibility to technology. Students are routinely assigned work that requires outside class research and student collaboration.

Staff development activities and teacher enthusiasm have created a foundation of curricular integration of technology. The report suggests that "the obstacles" are a constant factor in instructional change. Some teachers are well in advance of others in making use of the technology resources to enhance the curriculum.

Areas of Strength

- The commitment on the part of the staff to the Niners Program which targets at-risk students with an aggressive series of interventions.
- A school/community commitment to provide access to technology for all students.
- A program of beyond classroom learning activities for students.

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Key Issues

- Offering of all courses on all tracks so students will have access to the same course offering.
- The integration of critical thinking skills into the classroom.
- Ensure that the resources of the Internet are available to all students.
- Foster the development of curricular applications with a variety of technologies.
- Implement a staff development program that focuses on reading across the curriculum.

Important Evidence

- Dialogue with focus groups.
- Dialogue with students, staff and community
- Observation of instruction
- Examination of use of technology
- School evidence – Self Study Report

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D. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

What Currently Exists

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

Bell High students receive a comprehensive variety of programs to ensure academic success. The support mechanisms for all students include EL/SDAIE classes for Limited English Proficient students, Special Education classes for students with special learning needs, and Honors/AP classes for advanced learners. In addition, a Library Media Center with expanded hours, a variety of counseling services, and a wide variety of computer and technology classes and services are also available.

The learning experiences of Bell High students are expanded through opportunities to enroll in a wide variety of course offerings, a comprehensive college counseling center, Humanitas classes, the Niners Program for at-risk ninth graders, and a wide range of tutoring opportunities.

The on-site presence of Proficiency/Stanford 9 Test preparation programs, a Multilingual Teacher Career Academy, the Perkins Program, SAT/ACT workshops and tutoring, and "Computer Boot Camp Training" are indicators that Bell High staff are aware of the diverse learning needs of students and support programs/activities that encourage student success and matriculation.

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

Bell High School provides many opportunities for students to feel connected to the school and supported by it. Numerous support personal provide students with a variety of counseling, as well as psychological, health, college and career services. For example, counselors meet with students and parents to establish both academic and career goals, a psychiatric social worker provides counseling regarding more serious problems, and career education and college advisement is staffed with full time certificated personnel.

Impact, Healthy Start, TUPE and the Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Program are good examples of programs, which focus on personal health, and academic success of students' lives. There are 26 clubs/organizations and 15 interscholastic sports as reported in the school self-study to connect students to the school and the community.

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

Bell High School has a system for involving parents as partners. BAC, CEAC, Title 1, SBM, and GATE serve as vehicles for involving parents and community members in the decision-making process. The school also provides Back to School Night and Parent-Teacher conferences to further encourage parental involvement. Translators are available for parent conferences.

An excellent example of encouraging community involvement is the "Ding-A-Ling Productions" booster club, which raises funds to help support drama productions. Some members of the school staff are community residents who are involved in various community organizations.

School bulletins and "El Portavoz" (a bimonthly newsletter) are both printed in Spanish and English and regularly mailed home. In addition, teachers often make home contacts for individual students and a Pupil Services and Attendance Counselor makes home visits for chronically absent students. A phone master system and hourly attendance accounting allow the school to keep parents informed on daily attendance problems in a prompt manner.

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.*

Bell High School has a large number of experienced staff but also have nearly 30 emergency credentialed teachers. Of the 181 total staff members for the 1997-98 school year, 138 have 5 or more years experience. Seventy teachers are trained to teach LEP students.

Various funding sources are available to support the expected schoolwide learning results. The sources include District funding, IMA, Year Round Discretionary Funds, Block Grant Funds, SB 1882 and Textbook Funds. Separate resources are also available for programs such as Gifted, tutoring, counseling, Cisco Academy, Special Education, Digital High School and the Multilingual Teacher Career Academy. Classroom instruction is also supported by several categorical funds, among which are Bilingual, Perkins, and Title I. An Educational Instructional Materials (EIM) Center was established last year to assist teachers in finding lesson plans and information on a variety of materials and subjects. Staff development opportunities exist through SB 1882 funds. On a recent staff survey, 52% of the staff responded as being satisfied with the professional development programs offered.

Much of the physical plant is an old and in need of renovation. Physical improvement projects continue to be implemented. Graffiti is an ongoing problem.

Much of the physical plant is an old and in need of renovation. Physical improvement projects continue to be implemented. Graffiti is an ongoing problem. Current needs include rewiring the phone system, installing a new PA system, repairing leaking roof, and repairing air conditioning systems. The facility is in constant use due to the year-round schedule, adult school, and school and/or community events. The school is safe and orderly, but only 29% of the students agree that the school buildings and grounds are clean.

The Media Center is in need of additional books and increased technology. The book-to-student ratio is 10 to 1. There are also 7 computers with Internet access, 2 computer card catalogs, and 3 computers utilizing CD-ROM programs. Currently, funds are being utilized to make additional book and computer purchases. A relatively new science building is currently meeting the needs of all of the students.

Areas of Strength

- A variety of extra-curricular activities
- A wide range of tutorial opportunities available for student achievement
- Extensive technological services accessible to all students
- Digital High School Grant will provide opportunities to positively affect the learning experiences of students
- A wide variety of student intervention support programs

Key Issues

- Coordinate efforts toward maintaining a more pleasant campus environment
- Develop a peer tutoring program
- Improve communications within the school community
- Continuing to mprove attendance at parent conference nights
- Provide more post secondary job-oriented technological instruction
- Increase Media Center resources: up-to-date books and card catalog/CD-ROM workstations

Important Evidence

- Observation of instruction
- Dialogue with focus groups
- Dialogue with students, staff and community
- School evidence – Self Study report

WASC 25005

E. Assessment and Accountability

What currently exists

*E 1 * 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.

The Self Study indicates that teachers at Bell High School utilize a variety of different assessment instruments. With support and assistance from the school district, Bell High School assesses its progress in meeting the content standards and the ESLR's by analyzing student performance on internal assessments, standardized tests (Stanford 9, Aprenda and SABE), and Proficiency Tests (SHARP, TOPICS, WRITE: Writing Sample and Language Objective). Additional assessment includes the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) redesignation test, SAT reports, AP tests, Golden State Examinations, teacher made tests, authentic evaluation and ASVAB tests.

The English department has used the pre- and post-writing assessment from the Language Arts Standards Project to assess student achievement of composition skills. The results of this assessment helped teachers to develop lessons that would raise the achievement of the writing abilities of the students in their classes.

Teachers state that they encourage students to constantly evaluate their own work through established rubrics. Teachers incorporate assessment tasks into instruction in order to stimulate thinking and learning, including students' ability to analyze, organize, plan, interpret, explain, synthesize, evaluate, and communicate important experiences or ideas. Students were given scores from the previous SAT 9 test and directed to set personal goals for improvement. Evidence regarding how knowledge and use of these scores helped to modify student learning was not demonstrated.

*E2 * The school district, and community regularly review student progress toward accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results.*

* Assessment results are reported regularly to the entire school community.

Bell High School uses the following methods of reviewing its student progress:

- The primary review of students' progress is performed by counselors who review grades, attendance, tardiness, work habits, and cooperation. Counselors telephone parents and arrange conferences as necessary. Students in the 9th grade are carefully studied, and at-risk students are

recommended for the "Niners" intervention program. Progress is continually assessed using scores from testing, written recommendations, and parent contacts. All students are contacted by counselors for program planning, setting goals, participation in school programs, selection for AP and Honors classes, and other classes.

- Students receive grade reports by mail every four weeks.
- Student progress is monitored by several academies, athletic, and activity programs, to determine student eligibility in these organizations.
- Parents review student progress through the report card, letters to parents, telephone communication, and/or by attending the Parent Conference night each semester.
- By the year 2002, all students and teachers will have an electronic folder, and all students will be maintaining an electronic portfolio of work in preparation for graduation.
- Assessment results are reported to various school and community organizations such as School Based Management Council, Bilingual Advisory Council, Title I Advisory Council and Gifted Parent Council.
- The School District provides the school with the performance scores of AP tests, SAT, Stanford 9, Aprenda, and SABE Tests. These scores provide assessment information for counselors, teachers and students to use for future planning.
- The "Los Angeles Times" and "Daily News" publish the test results that are made available by the District for community knowledge.

E 3 * The assessment of expected schoolwide learning results drives the school's program development and resource allocation.

Bell High School is focused on developing a systematic approach to data collection and analysis oriented toward long-term program planning and development. Standardized tests appear to form the basis of school planning to improve processes and programs for students as well as to guide future resource allocations. Departments are working toward using assessment results in the classroom to realign lessons and curriculum.

Areas of Strength

- Teachers are meeting by departments to discuss and implement ways to incorporate assessment tasks and the ESLR's into their instruction, and to help students assess their own progress.
- Bell High School is developing a process to analyze the accomplishment of its ESLR's, and all data relative to student achievement.
- Some teachers have attended workshops and seminars on the understanding of scores relating to normed tests and test taking skills.

WASC 25007

Key Issues

- The training of staff in utilizing alternative forms of student assessment to improve student achievement.
- Utilize surveys and questionnaires, in addition to all achievement testing, to analyze student performance and to drive instructional practices in implementation of ESLR's.
- Use results of assessment data to realign course curriculum content.
- Develop ways to better utilize the current means of communication with parents, staff, and students as a means of sharing appropriate assessment data with the school community.

Important Evidence

- The Self-Study Report
- Discussion with students, parents, and staff
- Classroom visitations
- Examination of evidence provided

WASC 25008

*   *Synthesis of Schoolwide areas of strengths and Schoolwide criteria areas for follow-up.*

The Visiting Team found a dedicated staff that approached the accreditation process in a professional manner. It is difficult to hold up a mirror to your own program and Bell High School staff members are to be commended for their efforts and objectivity.   The importance of Bell High to the community was demonstrated in the first parent meeting which was attended by two of the three mayors of cities served by the high school, the Chief of Police of the City of Bell, the President – and the Manager – of the local Chamber of Commerce.

Under the leadership of the principal and administration, Bell High School enjoys the benefits of a safe and orderly school, respect for the staff from students, and support from the community.

The schoolwide areas of strength and the critical areas were developed according to the following evidence: the school's self-study, examination of student work, interviews with students, parents and community members; conferences with members of the Schoolwide Focus Groups, support staff; observation of classrooms and support areas (computer labs, counseling offices, library, cafeteria, quad/open areas, security office, attendance office, and health facilities); and discussions with the School Based Management Council.

Schoolwide Areas of Strength.:

1.   The staff for providing a strong support program for ninth grade at-risk students, such as the "Niners" program which provides them with assistance necessary to succeed in standards-based curriculum.

2.   The school community for creating and maintaining a safe and orderly school environment which promotes student learning.

3.   The administration and staff for a wide variety of intervention support programs that promote achievement for all students.

4.   The Technology Committee for significant progress in establishing and promoting a schoolwide technology program.

5.   The staff for implementing new attendance policies and procedures that have resulted in Bell being recognized, for the last four school years, as the number one high school (out of 53 in the District) for in-seat attendance.

The Visiting Committee agrees with the major growth areas identified by the school.

The following list of critical areas for follow-up is a synthesis of 1) growth areas addressed by the school in the action plan, 2) suggestions to strengthen these areas already identified in the action plan sections, and 3) additional areas identified by the Visiting Committee.

Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up

1. That the administration and Curriculum Committee review the current curricular pathways to integrate the academic and vocational curriculum of the school program to assist students in seeing the relevancy of a personal learning plan.

2. That the staff develop ESLR indicators and align the ESLR's with the content standards in all subject areas so as to help all stakeholders connect the curriculum with the school ESLR's to ensure student achievement.

3. That the District and site administration implement a comprehensive staff development program to ensure that all staff members are knowledgeable and able to incorporate technology, standards, adjustment to diverse learning styles, current educational thinking, alternate teaching strategies, and assesment techniques in student learning activities.

4. That the administration provide appropriate security for the protection of staff and equipment.

5. That the administration and staff improve communication among all stakeholders regarding the variety of available program.

6. That the administration and staff update and increase the print and technology resources in the Library Media Center to provide students and staff with the intellectual and physical access to materials in all formats.

7. That the administration and staff implement a systematic and comprehensive plan to use a variety of assessment data in instructional planning, evaluation, and attainment of the ESLR's that will result in improved student achievement.

8. That the administration provide and communicate disaggregated data in an easily understood format for all stakeholders of the school.

WASC 25010

Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

Summary of the Schoolwide Action Plan

The six items identified by the Schoolwide community for improvement are to:

1. Expand and enhance the Freshmen Academic Intervention Program.

2. Improve communication and collaboration between all stakeholders.

3. Enhance student learning.

4. Enhance student access to school services and opportunities.

5. Develop a locally designed and implemented staff development program.

6. Improve school environmental concerns caused by overcrowding.

The Action Plan was created and written with direct input from the entire staff with Track A teachers giving the most input followed by a review and input process by Track B and C teachers. The Visiting Team concurs with the School Based Management Council that this process maximized commitment to the six action plans by the Bell faculty and staff. The Action Plan addresses resources, persons responsible, the timeline, assessment evidence, and the process of reporting updates and results.

Student learning will be enhanced by the Action Plan. It addresses such items as the significant retention of 9th graders after completing their first year, establishing a motivational program to increase student achievement, increasing parental involvement, aligning curriculum to District and State Standards, developing interdisciplinary cores, increasing student access to technology, and exploring scheduling options. In addition, the Action Plan addresses the implementation of a staff development program that is school based and is based on pre-identified school needs and school ESLR's. Although communication has improved since the last WASC Accreditation, it remains a problem. The Visiting Team agrees that as the population of the school has grown, so have difficulties.

Increase in student learning is aided with the acquisition of several large grants including the Digital High School, the NASA/ARPA/SAIC Network Implementation Grant, The E-Rate Discount, Healthy Start, and the Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Program. Title I has helped to address the need to increase student learning.

The Bell High School staff expressed their frustration with external factors including an increasing student population, the shortage of facilities, the traveling of teachers, the need to add three more special education classrooms, and the implementation of the

new SDAIE instructional program. From the Parent Survey, although poorly responded, 47% of those responding were satisfied with the quality of instruction. District Administration has also voiced their support for the successful implementation of the Bell High School vision.

Existing factors that support school improvement

The comprehensive instructional support program provide all students with access to vocational career paths offered at Bell High School given limitations of space and track. These include, but are not limited to electives, Perkins vocational electives, ROP electives, and the Multilingual Teacher Career Academy.

In an effort to include all stakeholders, Bell High School defines its school community to include faculty, support staff, non-certificated personnel, administration, parents, students, District, and community partners.

Furthermore, the Schoolwide Action Plans include overall improvement strategies that result from the self-study process. With the suggestions from the Visiting Team, action plans (Improvement Areas 1 - 5) can be implemented in a reasonable time and with existing resources. These action plans will impact quality learning for students and are realistic and reasonable.

Impediments to school improvement

The school's physical plant is in less than an ideal state of repair. It still supports a positive learning environment. The realities of the issues of an old school, such as a P.A. system that is inoperable in many classrooms, many traveling teachers, and the multitrack system does tear at the improvement process. Action plan number 6, improving the School Plant, will require more support from District and State revenues. Those issues must be addressed in a timely manner since they directly impact progress of the other action plans.

Aside from the concern for adequate instructional supplies and materials, a philosophical issue must be addressed. Many teachers feel that, because of their low achieving students, there is a tremendous need for remediation in basic skills supported by low test scores; and that there is little opportunity to provide a more enriched instructional program in accordance with higher-end rubrics. Further discussion is necessary to strike a balance between remediation and an enriched, supportive curriculum.

The Visiting Team recommends that the reporting of action plans progress to all stakeholders (i.e. through the Accreditation Coordinator) be clearly established. There is a need to ensure that progress toward achieving the goals of the action plan is reported to all stakeholders in a timely manner. There is a need to review an action plan to identify indicators and rubrics for success. And finally, there is also a need to ensure that the recommendations of the WASC Visiting Team are systematically reviewed by the School Based Management Council.

Soundness of follow-up process to monitor accomplishment of the Schoolwide Action Plan

Overall the school stakeholders feel committed to a follow up process. There appears a commitment to have the Committees of Improvement meet to discuss, plan and modify action steps. The School Based Management Council will need to ensure that resources are allocated to ultimately accomplish Bell High School's Action Plan.