

MIDTERM REVIEW VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

Focus on Learning

Alain LeRoy Locke High School

ON-SITE REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

March 23, 1999

Committee Chairperson:

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Committee Member:

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Alain LeRoy Locke High School
325 East 111th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90061
Los Angeles Unified School District

Date of original visit: April 21-24, 1996

Date of on-site review: March 23, 1999

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Committee Chair

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Committee Member

1. Introduction

A. General Comments

Alain LeRoy Locke High School is one of 49 comprehensive high schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District. It is considered an inner-city school, in a predominantly residential area that includes some federal housing projects, some scattered retail areas, and some light industry.

Of the approximately 2100 students, 55.9% are Hispanic, 43.9% are African American and the remaining percentage is composed of Asian and Pacific Islander. Since the last visit, the percent of Hispanic and African American population has reversed. Hispanic students are the majority population, whereas, in 1996, African American students were the majority population. This demographic transition occurred without any racial incidents, thus reinforcing the ESLR commitment to "appreciate and respect cultural, linguistic, mental and physical diversity."

Approximately 85 percent of all seniors graduate with the majority of them attending two-year community colleges. Although the transience rate has not decreased, the number of seniors graduating remains constant.

Special programs and services include compensatory education, limited English proficient, migrant, GATE, special education, NJROTC Academy (Department of Defense, Perkins Academy (Vocational Education) Transportation Careers Academy (Metro Transit Authority), Child Development (Sex Equity Grant), Shell Academy, Thelonius Monk Foundation, Herb Alpert Foundation and Career Education.

The Special Education Program has grown from one resource class to six. Two additional learning handicapped classes have been added and enrollment in community based instruction is still growing.

Out of the 97 classroom teachers at Locke, 19 are substitutes, 5 are emergency credentialed, and 11 are new to the teaching profession. With changes in the staff due to promotions, transfers and class size reduction, many of the classrooms are staffed with day-to-day substitutes. Consequently, the instructional program is negatively impacted by increased behavior problems and a lack of continuity in instruction.

Community parent support remains strong and committed to the administration and improvement of the school.

The Staff Development Plan in the past three years shows flexibility to the changing needs of the school. It revisited certain topics and placed emphasis on district standards, Stanford 9 Test results, and writing across the curriculum.

B. Significant Changes/Progress Since The Last Visit

1. Adoption of District Standards-The LAUSD has adopted districtwide standards in the areas of Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Health and Visual/Performing Arts. The Standards represent what students should know upon the completion of the 9th, and 12th grades. A Standards Team has been identified at Locke with teachers from each of the disciplines represented. This team has received and continues to receive training from district personnel as well as outside agencies, i.e. Achievement Council, on how to incorporate the Standards into their daily instruction. The team, in turn, leads the faculty in the use of Standards. The District Standards support the academic ESLR's of empowering students to be effective communicators and critical thinkers.

Parents are presented with the Standards at parent meetings and Back-To-School Night. Administrators receive training in the implementation of the standards at their respective administrator organization meetings. Additionally, the District provides a colorful standards chart which is displayed in each classroom.

In 1996, the Superintendent identified 100 schools which were experiencing low performance in student achievement. Locke was one of those schools. He listed seven areas that would be used as criteria for assessing school achievement for the following year with improvement on the Stanford 9 test as the principal indicator. Those areas were: Student attendance, Redesignation, Teacher attendance, Drop out rate/Graduation Rate, Students meeting A-F requirements, AP Course Offerings and Parent Involvement.

In 1997, Locke High School was removed from the 100 schools list as having shown improvement in 6 of the 7 indicators.

2. Advanced placement course offerings, which had previously declined, rose from 5 to 14. Additional teachers were identified to teach AP classes and were subsequently trained by District personnel. Additional funding was also provided for textbooks and supplementary instructional materials and supplies. Honors Course offerings also increased to build the number of students prepared to take the AP courses.

The number of redesignated students has increased. With the help of administrators, cluster specialist, teachers, students and the bilingual coordinator, Locke High School will have one of the highest redesignation rates to date. Last school year 56 students were redesignated. It is anticipated 100 to 150 of the 189 eligible students will be redesignated in the '98-'99 school year. The Cluster Office has provided training to teachers in our ESL and English departments on the redesignation process and how they can support students in the classroom to prepare for redesignation.

The '98-99 school year began with the Superintendent's pledge that all students would have a textbook to take home in the four major core classes of English, Math, Science and Social Studies. Locke was the recipient of over \$350,000 worth of new textbooks. This allows students the opportunity for further study at home and gives the teacher more flexibility in assigning homework.

These accomplishments are measurable achievements of the school ESLRs 1, 2, and 4.

3. Locke High School is a part of the Career-Based Outreach Program designed to raise the academic competitiveness of educationally disadvantaged students applying for admission to college. UCLA-CBOP Services to High School Scholars will include:
 - Instruction to help develop students in becoming optimal learners.
 - Four to five Saturday academies for new scholars and three Saturday academies for continuing scholars. The academies take place on the UCLA campus where scholars will have opportunities to gain exposure to various careers and professions through lectures, and/or workshops by UCLA graduate and professional school faculty, students, staff, alumni, and industry leaders. Scholars will engage in activities to develop and improve their writing, analytical thinking, test-taking and study skills as well as provide opportunities to enhance and develop their leadership skills.
 - Development of a 3-year individualized academic plan for college admission, graduate/professional school admission, and their ultimate career objective. Students will receive academic college advisement throughout the academic year. CBOP staff will monitor their academic progress.

- Tutorial assistance and/or referral, Mentoring from CBOP Fellows, Parent Workshops at UCLA, and A College Preparatory Resource Binder are additional services that are provided.

Sixty students were selected for CBOP on the basis of strong academic performance, overall GPA and teacher/counselor recommendation.

4. WBE.net is an international trade course piloted at Locke. Student learn how to broker trades from companies around the world using a database of identified companies desiring to sell or buy goods. Students set up businesses, produce business cards, letter of introduction and go on to negotiate a mutually agreeable price between the buyers and sellers over the Internet. Through this class, students integrate knowledge gained in business, language Arts, geography, math and economics classes.
5. Last spring the library received five computers with an on-line catalog to all Books located in the library and a CD ROM with magazine summaries for over 200 magazines published in the United States. Books are all bar coded plus each student has his/her own personal bar code number, which makes the process of checking out and retrieval of books manageable. With the new automated library, monthly reports, students delinquencies, book lists and much more are readily accessible.
6. Locke High School was selected by the District to pilot a Food Court in the '98-'99 school year. The cafeteria area has undergone complete renovation and is similar to the food courts found in local malls. A variety of food offerings is available to students who are on the federal lunch program as well as those who purchase lunch.

C. Description of Follow-up Process

The midterm report was the result of the input of all stakeholders in at Locke High School. The information received from the stake holders in their Focus Groups was given to the Leadership Team for inclusion in the report.

The follow-up process began shortly after the exit of the Visiting Committee. The staff supported the decision that the Focus Groups would be maintained as the vehicle for addressing and discussing schoolwide issues and providing input on the implementation of the action plan and the recommendations. The Focus Groups met on June 4, 1996 to review the Visiting Committee's Report and to plan strategies for addressing the recommendations and the action plan. The Leadership Team reviewed the input from the focus groups and revised The action plans, to reflect the recommendations from the Visiting Committee.

The progress of the action plan was monitored by the Curriculum Council which composed of all department chairperson, administrators and coordinators. During the '97-'98 school year the Curriculum Council, in its monthly meetings, reviewed school data, standards, and the superintendent's goals as they evaluated the school's progress from the previous year. In February, 1997 a mid-year evaluation was conducted through the Focus Groups. Members of the Focus Groups responded to a survey on how well they felt Locke had implemented/met the ESLRs and schoolwide objectives from February, 1996 to February, 1997.

II. FOLLOW-UP PROCESS

Schoolwide Action Plan

- A. That the school community further structure the assessment and accountability procedures in order to make them more effective in designing the instructional program.**

The assessment data is reviewed annually by the staff in order to make curriculum and program decisions. Department grades are examined in each respective department. Strategies for decreasing the D's and F's are discussed, and the master schedule is modified to accommodate needed changes.

The math department continues to take the lead in the development of a uniform means of assessment. Collaboration continues within the department to provide feed back and improvement.

The task of developing a uniform means of assessment in other departments is an ongoing process with the departments at various stages towards Completion.

The on-site review committee concurs with the school's progress report that The implementation of this recommendation is still at the early stages of Implementation.

- B. The student support services have been identified. The task now becomes to develop an organized and collaborative approach to coordinate services to better address the needs of the students.**

In 1996, Locke was a recipient of the Healthy Start planning grant. This grant seeks to coordinate the various resources in the community to better assist and address the health and social service needs of the students at Locke and their families. Monthly meetings are held with representatives from the cluster, Locke and various community based organizations. A coordinator from Locke has been designated to implement the program.

The on-site review committee finds this recommendation to be in the initial stages of implementing a coordinated program. The administration and staff are taking serious steps to improve coordinated student services that will better meet the needs of the diverse student population.

C. The staff development plan needs to have a built-in long-range component to facilitate flexibility of needs, diffuse conflicts, and meet the overall needs of the staff.

A three-year staff development plan was written as a result of the Focus on Learn self-study. At the end of each school year, however, the staff completes a needs assessment identifying areas they would like to address for staff development the following year. Each staff development evaluations are reviewed by the staff development committee, a sub-committee of shared decision making, which meets twice per month.

The on-site review committee confirms that despite the long-term staff Development plan, the need arose where changes and flexibility in the plan Accommodated inservices on the implementation of District Standards, Stanford 9 Test results, and writing across the curriculum.

D. The school administration and counseling services must continue to investigate strategies that address attendance reform.

Since the last visit, in-seat attendance has continued to increase each year. A schoolwide attempt, and motivational strategies to increase and reward attendance has been established.

The district also provides monies to assist the school in supporting some of the attendance activities. Most recently, Locke was the recipient of the trophy for the high school with the best attendance for the month.

A full time Pupil Services and Attendance counselor is employed to make home visits to students who cannot be reached by phone.

An attendance committee meets regularly to address attendance, investigate strategies and evaluate the current attendance trends. The bicycle police assigned to Locke, Tardy Room, regular tardy sweeps, and the phone master calling machine act as deterrent to truancy.

The on-site review committee applauds the school for the aggressive strategies it has implemented to improve daily attendance.

E. The present quality of student work reflects a need for evaluation. The instructional programs must continue to raise the standards of student work until quality is aligned with state frameworks.

Departments have purchased instructional materials that are aligned with the state frameworks. The instructional materials, manipulative, software, and reference books, enable the students to produce work that reflects high standards. The number of Honors and AP course offerings have significantly increased.

The Los Angeles Unified School District has adopted districtwide standards in the areas of Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Health and Visual/Performing Arts. The Standards represent what students should know upon the completion of the 4th, 7th, 9th, and 12th grades. A Standards Team has been identified at Locke with teachers from each of the disciplines represented. This team has received and continues to receive training from district personnel as well as outside agencies, on how to incorporate the Standards into their daily instruction. The team, in turn, inservices the faculty in the use of the Standards. The District Standards support the academic ESLRs of empowering students to be effective communicators and critical thinkers.

During the summer of 1999, the UCLA Chemistry/Physics Bridge Program will be offered at Locke. This is an enrichment program designed to better prepare students for success in college preparatory chemistry and physics. This program targeting entering 10th and 11th graders will significantly increase the number of students who take and earn an "A" in chemistry, physics and AP science Course.

The on-site review committee is satisfied that the district office and school site efforts are to be complemented for taking concrete measures to raise academic standards.

F. The positive influences of the academics on the school environment is evident. A concerted effort must begin to incorporate the concept into the total academic program.

The concept of the academy has been incorporated into the curriculum through other means. The CBOP (Career Based Outreach Program) partners 45 identified 9th graders with UCLA Fellows for academic support and enrichment. These students meet weekly through their English classes. Two teachers in Science, Math and Social Studies have been identified with the goal of integrating the curriculum.

The on-site review committee discussed with the Leadership Team and curriculum council that more work is needed toward the full implementation of this recommendation. Again, the concept of the academies need to be infused into the on-site academic curriculum.

III. SUMMARY STATEMENT

The on-site Review Committee after careful review of the progress report and validation of the report does not find justifications for any further recommendations. The committee is rather pleased with the school's a.) Progress and accomplishment of the recommendations in the school wide action plans, b.) The progress toward the achievement of all seven ESLRs, and c.) Positive changes and progress since the last visit.

Locke High School faces certain challenges for the remainder of the six years accreditation term such as: Maintaining the commitment to the full achievement of all seven ESLRs, Academic Achievements, the effective use of assessment data to affect curriculum improvement improvement. of Reading and Writing Skills, and Graffiti abatement.

The district office administration must make a more concerted commitment to support and maintain stability in the teaching staff, pupil support personnel and administration.

The district office administration, site administration, and staff must be commended for: keeping the focus groups alive as an integrated entity in the improvement and decision making progress. the noticeable improvement in actual attendance in the classrooms, students involvement in the learning process, display of a variety of student work, integration of the diverse student body, gradual upgrading of the school facilities, an impressive food court, the availability of textbooks in the core curriculum, a dedicated, supportive leadership team, and most importantly the strong leadership of the principal.