

FOCUS ON LEARNING
OAKLAND TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL
ON-SITE REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

May 10, 2000

Committee Chairperson

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Oakland Technical High School
4351 Broadway
Oakland, CA 94611
Original Visit: April 7,8,9, 1997
On-Site Visit: May 10, 2000

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Introduction

Oakland Technical High School was built in 1915 and is one of six comprehensive high schools in the Oakland Unified School District. The facilities have gone through many changes and underwent a 7-year period of earthquake renovation with the reopening in 1983. During the past three years, eight classrooms and a child day care program have been added. Due to overcrowded conditions in other schools, Oakland Technical has been the recipient of over 400 new students in the past two years that have been redirected from other schools.

The enrollment is 61% African American, 20% Asian, 12% Hispanic, and 5% Caucasian. Filipino, American Indian, and Pacific Island represent fewer than 2% of the student population. The school has six academies enrolling over seven hundred of the school's eighteen hundred students.

The school staff consists of five administrators, four counselors, seventy-eight teachers, part time activities director, six part time lead teachers, one librarian, one part time psychologist, one part time speech therapist, and a TechniClinic staff for mental health and health services. Fifteen percent of the teaching staff are currently engaged in training to complete credential programs. There are sixty-seven classified staff who are involved as classroom aids, special education instructional assistants, aids to handicapped, campus supervisors, cafeteria staff, custodial staff, school site officers, and clerical staff.

Grade distribution in core subjects tend to follow a normal distribution. The overall completion of college prep coursework last year was 22.4%

with an overall GPA of 2.13. Forty-nine percent of students taking AP exams scored at 3 or better. The 1999 SAT scores of 896 were better than the District average of 848 but below the state average of 1011.

During the past three years, a Bay CES Trek team (6 teachers, 1 parent, 1 student team) worked on data segregation and equity related issues. A Bay Area School Reform Collaborative team (1 administrator, 3 teachers, 1 parent, and 1 classified) helped the staff to focus their reform efforts through an ongoing cycle of inquiry. These two efforts have led to a school governance structure that is shared by a School Site Council, Bilingual Advisory Committee, a Faculty Council, and school Site Empowerment Leadership Team. Academy Advisory Boards, and a Bilingual Council assist in curriculum decisions.

Follow-up process

The follow-up process started in the spring of 1997 with the Visiting Committee recommendations being shared with the school community. Then the key stakeholders came together and submitted a school portfolio to the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative that supported WASC. The School Site Council also aligned its plan to support the recommendations of the WASC Visiting Committee. The school was also selected by the State Department to become a "Digital High School". The Coalition of Essential Schools also supported the schools implementation efforts.

All these efforts helped to define an atmosphere of professional respect, a sense of cohesion and a feeling that staff members and stakeholders could take risks that validated the WASC recommendations. Two leadership reform teams attended summer training workshops designed to align the cycle of inquiry model to the schoolwide plan and ESLR's.

The 1998-99 school year focused on student achievement and assessment.

The ninth grade class was chosen for the pilot since it was the largest class representing 33% of the student body and most of these students were redirected to the school from other schools in the District. The Coordinating Council submitted a schoolwide staff development plan that addressed ESLR implementation, schoolwide content standards, best practices sharing, project-based learning, and personalized learning. Teams were formed and reported out on the progress.

The new Superintendent focused on increased student achievement for 1999-2000.

During this year, best practices were to be more fully integrated through departmental structures, academy structures, and within individual teaching. There has been an effort to clearly delineate the governance structure and to create action plans to implement the recommendations of the 1997 Visiting Committee.

Significant changes that have affected the school since the last visit include:

- The school becoming a Bay Area School Reform Collaborative Leadership School, a U.S. Department of Education 21st Century Community Learning Center, and a California State Department of Education Digital High School
 - As a part of the redirection process, the school's LEP population is growing faster than the non-LEP with Spanish speaking students growing faster than any other language group
 - The staff profile has changed by 25% and the administration by 100%. The District is on its third Superintendent in three years
 - 15% of the teachers are currently working on completing credential programs
 - The school focus has been on the success of 9th graders and classroom practices
 - The school is blending a variety of recommendations and requirements according to District mandates as the result to changing Superintendents, Bilingual Compliance settlement, and the Office of Civil Rights agreement
 - School attendance has increased from an average of 80.5% to 89%

Schoolwide critical areas for follow-up

Critical Area #1 The stakeholders need to develop an assessment process that measures and documents student achievement of the ESLR's in all content areas and continues the process of implementing ESLR's across the curriculum. The result of the assessment process should be a large body of evidence that indicates the staff has designed curriculum and teaching strategies that teach to the ESLR's. *The departments are in the process of reviewing ESLR's and determining where in the curriculum they will be assessed, monitored, and recorded for verification. The next steps are to make students aware of the ESLR's, their significance for graduation, and the development of standards for assessment.*

Critical Area #2 A. The staff should conduct needs assessment of the problems related to implementing the ESLR's and arrive at consensus as to how the problems will be faced. B. The school needs to produce evidence that long-range planning into pathway articulation has taken place. C. All stakeholders need to know how the academies will function and what the role will be in making the academies a success. D. The plan may take years to put into place, but there should be a clear vision in the mind of all stakeholders of what Oakland Technical High School will look like in the future. A. *After reviewing the Visiting Committee's report, the school staff arrived at a consensus the the most critical need was 9th grade attendance, grade point average, and progression towards graduation for African American, non-Chinese Asian, and Latino students.* B. *Since the previous visit, 4 academies have been added. Staff development workshops have enabled academy co-directors and teachers to plan curriculum, link outcomes with the SCANS requirements, and collaborate with teachers from similar academies across the District. The leaders of the academies meet with site administrators and site liaison to set up pathway articulation.* C. *"Academy Information Faires" have been held every year for every 9th grader. This year, 75% of the 9th grade class opted to enroll in an academy for the school year 2000-2001* D. *No response.*

Critical Area #3 To work together should produce a staff development plan that constitutes powerful teaching. The outcome of this staff development plan should be the use of strategies that lead all students to high performance of the ESLR's. Once the plan is written, the staff should continue to use available staff development time to ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide all students with powerful learning experiences in concert with the school-wide academies. *The staff has devoted 2 days per month for the last two years with the focus on "best practices". During the summer, two leadership teams learned how to align the "Cycle of Inquiry" to the school-wide WASC plan and the ESLR's. Additional staff development has been done in the areas of personalized learning styles, project-based learning, meeting facilitation, establishing collaborative group norms, and data analysis The staff development program has been enhanced by the use of "buy back days", Academy funding, sharing common prep periods, and working together on weekends and after school.*

Critical Area #4 Increase effective parent participation in designing and implementing programs and policies to increase student performance, school safety, climate, and cleanliness. *Parents of 9th graders have been participating in 9th grade orientations, and "shadow your child to*

class". Parents have been involved in the attendance committee, parent patrol, the BAYCES summer retreat, and the Site-Based Decision-Making Team. The PTSA organized a potluck and talent show.

Critical Area #5 The need to afford all students access to a rigorous and challenging program. The District has increased graduation requirements and adopted new graduation standards. An effort has been made to see that more students have access to courses of rigor. More students are given an orientation to the six academies. Working with the Secondary School Literacy Project and the Bay Area Coalition of Essential Schools, the school hopes to increase the reading proficiency of all students and assess literacy in the content areas. Upper end courses have been redesignated by title so as to open them up to a wider range of student achievers. The after-school tutoring for students has been expanded.

Critical Area #6 The need for consistent school-wide focus on "Best Practices" to continually improve the instructional program. Integrated learning, integrated projects, cross curriculum units of study, project-based learning, and teaching to different learner modalities are some of the "best practices" that require a more active hands on approach to teaching. Teachers are committed to looking at the type of work students are producing and looking at the best practices that provide the resources students need to produce this caliber of work.

Critical Area #7 The need to fully implement a tardy, attendance, and discipline policy to ensure an environment where learning can take place for all students. A new tardy policy has been developed and tardy sweeps, the SART and SARB processes have been used. Parents and community members have assisted by volunteering as Parent Patrols. Plans are being developed for an on-site continuation/alternative school. School representatives are working on a method to reduce students roaming the halls during class time.

Critical Area #8 The need for a conflict management or a peer counseling program to provide early intervention to help improve the school climate. A conflict mediation program has just been implemented with student mediators to be trained during the fall semester, 2000.

Critical Area #9 The need for the continued use of innovative programs that address the truancy and dropout problem. The TECHNICAL services have been expanded and a child care center has been

established for students who are also parents. The services of the SB65 Outreach Consultant have been expanded and Project Launch mentoring services have been extended to 30 students. A Summer Bridge program helps new students that were identified as "at risk" by 8th grade teachers. The OTX Take Home Computer Program and the Renaissance Quartet have provided a variety of services and learning opportunities for students. A 9th grade Teacher Team is providing support to 9th graders whose GPA is less than 2.00.

Critical Area #10 The need to develop, maintain, and update technology as a means to facilitate the transition from school to career. In 1998, Oakland Technical became a DIGITAL HIGH SCHOOL. Computers and monitors are installed in almost every classroom along with a TV/VCR hookup that can be used for class presentations. Staff have been provided with inservice on the use of the technologies in the curricula.

Critical Area #11 The need for all stakeholders to be aware of the choices presented by the economic resources of the site to assure alignment of the school program to meet the needs of the students. Parents are involved in various decision-making bodies. The budget is shared with the Leadership Team, the School Site Council, Department Chairs, and the Academy Directors. Initial allocations are based on staff proposals and categorical funding. Multiple funding mechanisms are enhanced to support reform work.

Critical Area #12 The need to assure adequate staffing at the beginning of the school year. Establish a mentoring program for teachers new to Tech to provide resources to make them feel an integral part of the school and the district. The Human Resources Department is notified by the Principal of anticipated vacancies for the next school year. Teachers were then hired by the Human Resources Department. The Principal has carried out aggressive recruiting at Job Faires and continues to make the school's case for staffing with the Human Resources Department. Beginning with the 1999-2000 school year, the school has been much better staffed according to student enrollment. With BASRC funds, the school has established a lead teacher position as a mentor and support person for new teachers.

Critical Area #13 Although there is evidence of some collaboration among staff members, there is a need for consistent and continuing departmental and school-wide collaboration with an effort to ensure attendance and participation of all staff members. Extra planning time for collaborations was gained by using Academy funding, teacher sharing through common prep periods, extended contracts, by after school and

weekend work, and meeting as Action Research Teams and Focus Groups. Presentations have been made to other schools on innovative programs and strategies and joined with other minds to work on increasing student performance levels. The Design Studio has been used to show other schools about personalization within the classroom and a future program will deal with a revised program for 9th graders.

Action Plans

The leadership team is now in the process of developing new action plans to address the new needs of the students. A number of large-scale projects for the "betterment" of students dealing with ESLR's have brought "obvious" results. The Leadership Team is in the process of approving and setting up the implementation of action plans for the following

- Professional Development
- Assessment of ESLR's
- Increased Parent Participation
- Equal Access to a Rigorous and Challenging Curriculum
- Smooth and Timely Budget Process
- Support for New Teachers

ADDENDUM

Upon our arrival at Oakland Technical High School we received a revised report with the action plans attached. (We have attached a copy). This clarified a great deal that was unclear in the original report we received. It raised two concerns - the assessment of the action plans as a whole and the reporting of the progress and the results of the action plan to the stakeholders.

We were impressed by the amount of evidence in the evidence room and also the information received from the BASRC Coordinator. It is crucial that the school community immediately establish quality student performance standards for all ten ESLRs. Within each ESLR there are listed a number of ways students can achieve the ESLR. The school needs to establish quality performance standards for each ESLR. The school must be careful to insure that while the method is

different, the standard remains the same . Once that's been accomplished, the school needs to spell out exactly how students will be assessed by each method listed under each ESLR.

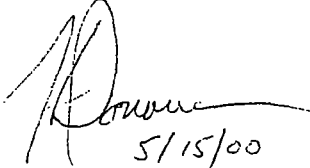
The next step is for the leadership team, department chairs, academy directors and the directors of the various programs to review all assessment practices that are ongoing and align them with the ESLRs if appropriate.

The leadership group requested the following:

1. They would like benchmarks on a timeline (our recommendation as to when they should proceed with the next report on a monthly basis).
2. They would like a statement to show the staff how important it is to work on the WASC process.
3. They would like us to show the importance for the various stakeholders including: administration, teachers, department chairs, academy chairs and students.
4. The principal would like a statement to show how to relate the ESLRs to the standard for literacy and to life long learning skills. Would like to know who is accountable for what.

We responded in the following ways:

1. We urged them to reread carefully pages 14, 16, 18, and 29-31.
2. We gave them a suggested timeline based on a December 2002 publishing date for the school book.
3. We also gave them handouts related to the WASC process, strategic planning and assessment practices.
4. We summarized all of this for the faculty at our reporting out at the end of the day and stressed that they send people to WASC training and the Leadership Team focus on the implementation of the action plans during the summer.
5. We felt that the action plans presented in the ATTACHED REVISED SCHOOL REPORT needs to contain an assessment process for the entire action plan and a means of reporting that assessment and progress on implementation to all stakeholders.
6. All stakeholders were advised to read the Vision and Culture Interview with Mr. Todd conducted on 3/29/00, found in evidence file A.



5/15/00