

Watsonville High School
Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
California State Department of Education
Accreditation Visit
April 30 – May 3, 2000

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Visiting Committee Report

CHAPTER I
Student/Community Profile

The Student/Community profile (attached) includes a view of the history, geography, politics, demography and economics of the Pajaro Valley. This overview provides insight and perspective about school issues (e.g. the city has an Hispanic population of over 60% and a nonwhite population of 76%).

Demographic information points out a regular growth pattern for the District that is expected to continue. The District is currently planning to open 4 new schools in addition to its existing 28 schools. While the District has only two comprehensive high schools, it serves over 19,000 students and 7,000 migrant students within its approximately \$120,000,000 budget.

Watsonville's special needs population appears to be substantial, with approximately 10% (299) special education, 30% (929) Migrant Education, and 56% (1679) English Language Learners. Watsonville enjoys a high (62%) redesignation rate of English Learners to fluent status.

The Watsonville High School Goal Statement:

Watsonville High School graduates will be academically proficient and socially responsible. Students will be productive members of the local and global community, critical thinkers, effective decision-makers and lifelong learners.

The Pajaro Valley Unified School District is in a partnership with the State of California to provide Beginning Teacher Support & Assessment Program (BTSA) training to its first and second year teachers. Watsonville High School lists 24 funded programs to assist in meeting the needs of its students. It was awarded an \$850,000 Digital High School grant in '98-'99 and is currently training teachers and implementing its program.

A number of programs are identified; *Academic Learning Center, AVID, ASB, Career Center, Conflict Resolution, Friday Night Live, Independent Study, Guidance & Counseling, Healthy Start, Library/Media Center, MESA, PVPSA, Puente, ROP, SAPID, SST, TAM, Tutorial Program, UC Partnership, and WHS Foundation.* With some notable exceptions, little evidence is provided to demonstrate the scope or impact of these programs. Fights on campus appear to have been reduced by more than half. Library circulation includes 30,000 volumes each year and 546 users took advantage of the computer lab. The schoolwide program description is similar to many California comprehensive high schools.

With 35 clubs to support students, the school feels it maintains a strong and positive learning environment. The 'downtown' campus is well maintained. WHS is a closed campus except for lunchtime.

The school administration reports 14 programs to invite parents into the school along with an accessibility policy. Parents also have access to staff through the voice mail system.

CBEDS data shows the rapid growth of WHS from 2300 in '96-'97 to 3013 in '99-'00. The number of Migrant Education students at WHS rose dramatically this year, from about 200 to nearly 900. The annual dropout rate has remained steady at about 3.6%, while the four-year dropout rate has risen from 12.7% to 16.2% over the past two years. 86% of the WHS students are Hispanic, with the next highest group white students (11%).

Student performance data includes a steady rate of students, about 20% completing the UC A-F sequence of courses. 16.5% of Hispanic students meet the requirements for admission to the University of California system. The school reports that 15% (72) of its 1999 graduates entered a four year university. "The vast majority of the students plan to enter the work force". Rates of enrollment in advanced science and math courses remain constant, or with a slight downturn.

SAT 9 scores in reading, math, and English hover around the 40th percentile, showing little changes from '98 to '99. The number of students taking Advanced Placement tests doubled in '98/'99 (to 114), with 71% receiving a score of 3 or higher. Courses included Physics (9), Spanish (50), Calculus (7), Statistics (11), and English (22). Many students take Golden State exams with 10% to 20% receiving some form of

recognition. The number of seniors taking the SAT has dwindled from 50% in '94-'95 to only 24% in '98-'99. The average score has gone from 914 to 847 in the same time period.

Disciplinary data shows fights reduced by 2/3, expulsions reduced by 1/2, and total sus-pensions up by more than 1/4. The school acknowledges a large number of period and all day cuts.

The school employs seven campus supervisors. This is especially important due to the broad, downtown layout of the school. Six are bilingual. WHS also utilizes the services of a full-time Watsonville police officer.

Notably 43% of the staff speaks Spanish, 50% speak a foreign language, 18% are CLAD certified and 78 have received SDAIE training. 18% of the staff are WHS graduates and 50% of the classified staff speaks Spanish, as well.

Expected Schoolwide Learning Results

In chapter two Watsonville High School restates its goal statement and shares its adopted Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs). They are:

Lifelong Learners

Students will:

- ◆ Gather information from a variety of sources, evaluate, analyze and apply it to solving problems
- ◆ Exhibit organizational skills both personal and academic
- ◆ Demonstrate awareness of personal health and wellness

Integrated Technology

Student will:

- ◆ Demonstrate competency in word processing, Internet research, and spreadsheet productions
- ◆ Apply appropriate technology to enhance understanding and solve problems
- ◆ Present work using a variety of technologies and media

Financial Independence

Students will:

- ◆ Explore careers and better understand how to pursue their goals
- ◆ Work productively in diverse settings, individually or in teams
- ◆ Manage time, money, materials and facilities

Effective Communicators

Students will:

- ◆ Be articulate and confident speakers with an awareness of audience
- ◆ Read and write proficiently using standard English
- ◆ Contribute effectively in collaborative situations using speaking and listening skills

Social Responsibility

Students will:

- ◆ Understand how actions or lack of actions affects oneself, others and the community at large
- ◆ Behave with courtesy and respect
- ◆ Demonstrate an appreciation for diversity
- ◆ Demonstrate an awareness of global issues
- ◆ Be environmentally responsible and recognize the interdependency of all living things
- ◆ Practice ethical behavior according to established rules and codes

Watsonville High School described the process used for determining the ESLRs, which took place between January 13, 1999 and March 22, 1999. It included staff participation through focus groups and parent and student participation through surveying of their priorities.

CHAPTER II
Progress Report

Major recommendations from the 1992/93 visit plus comments on the school's follow-up and evidence.

Recommendation 1

The site administration and faculty review and clarify the roles and relationships of the various decision making bodies of the organization, including the management team, the principal's cabinet, the school site council, the bilingual advisory council, the subject area departments, and others, so that all stakeholders are aware of how they may be involved in decisions affecting them.

A number of proposals and changes have been made in this area, but there has been little schoolwide stability in administration and thus, a need for this still exists.

Recommendation 2

The site administration and faculty develop a structure for the management of change to include procedures for selection, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and revision of change efforts made to improve the educational environment and programs for students.

A Grant 2000 was written, but was not funded. One minimum day a month was implemented, and will be continued. This recommendation still needs to be addressed.

Recommendation 3

The School Board, district and site administration develop a means of providing basic maintenance and up-grade services to the deteriorating older facilities, the interior and exterior condition of which has a negative impact on the educational environment.

It is obvious that serious attention has been given to upgrading and maintaining the facilities and having a positive impact on the educational environment.

Recommendation 4

The site administration, faculty, students and parents develop ways to display evidence of student success and school pride on campus to create a more positive environment for students.

The self-study refers to the addition of a kiosk on campus as well as motivational banners.

Recommendation 5

The district, site administration, faculty and staff conduct a needs assessment and develop a means whereby teachers and classified staff have more direct input into the direction and content of professional development programs.

A needs assessment has not been done with the exception of the Digital High School grant needs assessment. There is no formal way for classified staff to have direct input into staff development program.

Recommendation 6

The district, site administration, faculty, staff, students and parents monitor and execute the implementation of the Safe Schools Action Plan including those provisions which address the enforcement of a schoolwide behavior code.

The school has made changes in this area in accordance with the Safe Schools Action Plan that has led to the enforcement of a schoolwide behavior code.

Recommendation 7

The site administration and staff actively promote the involvement of parents who reflect the diversity of the school population in the change and decision-making process of the school.

Some attempts have been made, but more work needs to be done in this area.

Recommendation 8

The district, site administration, faculty and staff review the site-based management model currently in use and provide appropriate training for all participants in such areas as decision-making, problem-solving, consensus building, and managing change process to ensure successful implementation of improvements projects.

This remains unaddressed.

Recommendation 9

That the site administration and faculty examine the causes of the high dropout rate in an effort to develop strategies and programs to foster greater retention of potential dropouts.

The school reports that full time counseling has been restored to the school and that an Alternative Learning Center for social promotions has been established. School data also indicates a reduction in the dropout rate.

Process Committee Recommendations

The school indicates that "attempts have been made" but they feel the lack of administrator continuity has prevented them from fully addressing these recommendations.

Program Committee Recommendations

The restoration of counseling appears to meet this recommendation.

Special Needs Recommendations

The school district now provides the requested training for working with special needs students.

Integrated Skills Recommendations

The self-study does not respond to the recommendation beyond the statement that some staff has attended professional development programs.

Co-curricular Recommendations

A full time activities director has been added. A librarian has not. All safety issues have not been addressed. Facilities are greatly improved.

Student Committee Recommendations

Many stakeholders believe that much progress has been made on safety and behavioral issues and improving facilities. Some Advanced Placement classes have been added. Curricular integration of skills has not been adequately addressed.

Parent/Community Committee Recommendations

This remains an area of need, and these recommendations have not been fully addressed.

English Department Recommendations

The English staff appears to have worked diligently to implement recommendations, including writing K-12 writing rubrics, identifying core literature, anchor papers, oral language rubrics, SCANS competencies, Digital High School grant, reading computer lab.

The school and department appear to have worked diligently to provide common planning time for teachers.

Foreign Language Department Recommendations

The foreign language department shows evidence of stronger communication and collaboration. The department has worked with administration to strengthen safety in designated classrooms. The department has also taken steps to articulate literacy skill development with the English department.

Mathematics Department Recommendations

The department has purchased the recommended graphing calculators. The need for adequate space remains. Staff collaboration and implementation of state framework moves forward fitfully. Most math teachers are now SDAIE trained.

Physical Education Department Recommendations

Several of the Physical Education recommendations appear not to have been acted upon. However, dance has been added as recommended.

Science Department Recommendations

Block scheduling issues have not been resolved. However, the Science department has added 5 mini-computer labs.

Social Studies Department Recommendations

While the department has not offered the recommended AP courses, they do offer honors classes. Slow progress in departmental articulation is occurring. The recommendation for strengthening research skills appears to be emerging slowly due to many obstacles. Student behavior appears improved.

Fine Arts Department Recommendations

The department works at achieving common planning time.

Career-Vocational Education Department Recommendations

The department continues to work to add courses such as Agriculture Economics, Floral Design, and Agricultural Mechanics but battles many obstacles. The department provides career guidance for students within the program.

Special Education Recommendations

Concerns about departmental isolation are being addressed. Departmental staff works with core curriculum staff to modify instruction and to meet the special academic and vocational needs of students.

CHAPTER III **Self-Study Process**

Did the school accomplish the five expected outcomes of the self-study?

- **The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement.**

It is evident from looking at evidence and talking to staff that virtually all adults who work at Watsonville High School were heavily involved in collaborating, working, reaching consensus, writing the school's self-study. The school staff began their work in earnest in January of 1999 and finished in April with a "Want to Be a Millionaire" good-hearted spoof of the whole process. Some 17 separate meetings were conducted to deal with all aspects of the self-study process, including the development of the school's ESLRs.

The involvement of other key stakeholders is less apparent. Some parents completed the self-study parent survey. Some responded to the draft ESLRs. Elements of the self-study and the self-study process were presented and discussed at School Site Council meetings, Migrant Education Advisory meetings, and ELAC meetings.

Some 1650 students were involved in completing a student survey. Students were also involved in reviewing the proposed ESLRs.

- **The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through expected schoolwide learning results and academic standards.**

The school's ESLRs have only recently been adopted. They are posted in most classrooms. Clarification and reliable measurements about student achievement of the ESLRs appears to be far into the future.

- **The gathering and analyzing of data about students and student achievement.**

A quite comprehensive 'Data Source Book' is produced by the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. The school appears to collect and use those reports – SAT, UC entrance, Golden State, AP, SAT/9 and other. There appears to be less evidence that the school collects, publishes, and analyzes its own data around local standards or ESLRs

- **The assessment of the entire school program and its impact on student learning in relation to expected schoolwide learning results, academic standards, and WASC/CDE criteria.**

The teachers and staff appear to have struggled sincerely to assess the impact of the entire school program on student learning. Much of the evidence shared in the self-study is anecdotal and little of it is related to the Essential Schoolwide Learning Results, as these are still really quite new to the school and community.

- **The alignment of a long-range action plan to the school's areas of need; the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the plan.**

The school's long-range action plan appears to be appropriately limited to a few within-reach goals.

Does the self-study accurately reflect the school's program for students?

The self-study reflects the school's program for students. However, many reflections are anecdotal in nature. It is more difficult to determine if these are truths for most students most of the time or not. The efforts seem to be more individual in nature and less systematic.

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

Since the school's ESLRs have not yet been internalized, evidence of what students are doing relative to achievement of the schools ESLRs are very likely what they would have been before the school had adopted the ESLRs.

CHAPTER IV **Quality of the School's Program**

VISION, LEADERSHIP and CULTURE

What currently exists?

A1

- **To what extent does the school have a clearly stated vision based upon its beliefs, student needs, and current educational research?**
- **To what extent is the vision supported by the governing board and the central administration?**
- **To what extent is the school's purpose defined by expected schoolwide learning results (ESLRs)**

Watsonville High School vision statement is their own in terms of reflecting the school's goals and expectations. The school has identified a need for all stakeholders to incorporate the vision statement into the school at all levels to make it more meaningful. The school also has identified the need for the vision statement to be adjusted to more accurately reflect the needs of their students. The vision statement is rarely, if ever, used or referred to in making decisions or formulating campus policy. The school is beginning to connect the vision statement to the ESLRs. There appears to be some incongruity between the Mission/Vision statements and the ESLRs. There is no indication that the governing board has approved either statement or that they address the post secondary needs of their students. Veteran staff is aware of the statements but new staff lack awareness. The school has developed ESLRs and is in the beginning stages of implementation. They are global and appropriate in scope and sequence. There appears to be no mechanism for assessment of the ESLRs or using the data for modifying curriculum and instruction.

A2

- **To what extent does the school leadership make decisions and initiate activities that focus on all students achieving the ESLRs?**

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

The school leadership has stabilized since the last WASC process. The last WASC had recommended that the school *“review and clarify the organizational structure of the school so that the roles of all participants are clarified and the decision-making and problem-solving processes of the school are established and communicated so that the departments, faculty, parents and students may be actively involved in the improvement process”*. The school indicates that this is an ongoing concern. Staff and faculty do feel they have a voice within the established hierarchy through department and cabinet meetings and that there is a more cooperative spirit than in previous years. The school also identified a need for schoolwide policies to be published and followed by all stakeholders.

Students and parents alike approve of the administration’s efforts to address attendance and tardiness, and some students feel an increased ability to communicate with the administration. The last WASC major recommendation regarding the *“restructuring of services to provide maximum time for planning and monitoring improvement efforts to progress toward the most effective education for all students”* is still seen as problematic and recognized as a need by the school. The focus group identified a need for developing a plan to meet the needs of all students, particularly English Learners and those at the middle and upper end of the spectrum.

The students’ interests are somewhat considered when developing the master schedule, however electives are limited by the students’ needs for meeting basic requirements. There are inadequate numbers of sections for bilingual students. Many students do not feel their requests are honored without parental intervention. The school has identified that students’ needs and interests must be considered in scheduling and that departments and administration need to work together in making master schedule and facilities decisions. Additionally, the school has identified a need for the district and the board to work with the school leaders to ensure that student achievement of the ESLRs as well as content and performance standards are the focus of the school’s efforts.

A3

- **To what extent is the staff supported, utilized and monitored to facilitate student achievement of the ESLRs?**
- **To what extent are leadership and staff part of an organized structure that is committed to professional development?**

Staff support includes coaching and mentoring. There are ongoing training programs for interested staff, and a program in place to help new teachers. The school identified the need for the administration to actively support the students’ achievement

of the ESLRs. Decisions are still made without adequate consultation with those involved. There is little evidence to support the alignment of student achievement of the ESLRs to staff development activities. The school identified a need for the district to create a new system for monitoring teacher success. The focus group identified a need for more consistent and meaningful evaluations throughout the administrative team.

There is not a comprehensive professional development plan in place, nor is professional development based on either a needs assessment or educational research. Staff development appears unfocused or unified and is departmentalized. The need for an organized and equitable structure for professional development was identified as a need during the last WASC visit and is still seen as a problem.

A4

- **To what extent is the school a safe, clean and orderly place that nurtures learning?**
- **To what extent is the culture of the school characterized by trust professionalism, high expectations for all students, and a focus on continuous school improvement?**

The Vision, Leadership and Culture focus group found that the school is a safe, clean and orderly place that nurtures learning. Many improvements in this area have been made since the last WASC visit including: upgrading and beautifying the physical plant; implementing and enforcing a uniform behavioral code; reducing the number of fights and tardies and increasing attendance; placement of a full time law enforcement presence on campus, increasing the visibility and mobility of campus security; removing lockers, and a proactive approach to problems. Both parents and students surveyed feel that the school is a safe place and that teachers care about them. Students voiced concerns about their ability to be heard by administrators and counselors in matters of co-curricular activities, scheduling and discipline. The student survey also indicated that counseling services are now adequate, and parents feel that there are appropriate personal support services.

The Vision, Leadership and Culture focus group found that the level of professionalism is high with a few notable exceptions. The school identified a need for management to maintain a higher profile on the campus and in the community. It is felt that there would be a greater understanding of the issues facing students and staff through increased involvement in the above. The focus group meeting indicated that many teachers are frustrated by the difficulty in accessing some administrators although they acknowledged that the administrators have tremendous demands on their time. The focus group found that the staff exhibits a high degree of caring and professionalism through their availability during lunch periods to assist students with academic and personal problems, along with their willingness to take on extra-curricular activities. The

creation of academies has increased the degree of interdisciplinary collaboration between some teachers.

Schoolwide Strengths	Criterion	Evidence
◆ Staff, parents and students feel that Watsonville High School is a safe, clean and orderly place.	A-4	Surveys, Focus group discussions
◆ Teachers feel that the spirit of cooperation has increased in the last few years.	A-2	Self Study, Focus Groups
◆ The staff and students have significant pride, support and mutual respect within the Watsonville High School community.	A-4	Interviews Focus Groups, Observations
◆ Many changes have been made to implement support systems for students to improve the culture of the school.	A-4	Self-study, Focus Groups
◆ New teachers are effectively supported through the New Teacher Project.	A-4	Self Study, Focus Groups, observation
◆ Many changes have been made to the physical plant and school procedures and policies that have increased the attractiveness and safety of the school.	A-4	Self Study, Focus Groups and Observation

Critical Areas for Follow-up	Criterion	Evidence
◆ The district goals, site plan, vision and mission statements, School-to-Career, literacy initiative, Digital High School, and ESLRs should be unified and aligned to improve achievement for all students	A-1	Focus Groups and schoolwide groups and Self Study
◆ The school should have an ongoing, data based professional development plan for all staff to achieve the WHS learning plan.	A-3	Focus groups; Self Study and other school plans
◆ The school should clarify and communicate its decision-making and governance processes to the students, staff, parents, and community.	A-2	Previous recommendations Focus Groups and Self study
◆ The school should develop a culture	A-4	Student performance data, Focus groups and

that demands success for all students.

self study

CURRICULAR PATHS

Curricular Paths

B-1 Do all students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent curriculum that supports the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results?

The Watsonville High School courses are arranged, for the most part, in traditional departments. Departments used State of California Frameworks and Standards to guide instruction. Some development of academies has occurred. Watsonville staff desire further development of the academy concept to avoid tracking students into basic, general and college preparation courses. Honors and Advanced Placement classes exist in the English, Social Studies, Science and Math departments.

An increasing number of teachers are implementing more integrated project-based assignments. Teachers are aligning course work to the recently adopted Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs). Watsonville staff recognizes the need for greater interdepartmental curriculum and collaboration and cooperative planning. A newly created vertical Language Arts team is working to align curriculum across grade levels and with University of California expectations.

While textbook-based basic skills in Math and English build skills for low performing students, it is difficult for English Learners (EL) and general class students to move within the traditional structure into college preparatory classes. However, EL students who read below the sixth grade level receive a remedial reading class. The addition of computer laboratories has allowed for the increased use of technology in the curriculum. As computers are made available to the classroom teachers, the need to integrate technology into the classroom will be met.

A wide variety of assessments are used to place students in appropriate courses. First year English and most Social Studies courses are heterogeneously grouped. However, the Watsonville staff desire better sequencing of courses so that all students will receive thinking, meaning-centered curriculum. All teachers in the English department use the Pajaro Valley Unified School District writing rubric at least once a quarter to evaluate student writing.

An ROP program exists to provide school to career options to Watsonville students. Some ROP programs are in direct conflict with college-required courses. Many departments are implementing SCANS competencies for school to career standards.

B-2 Do all students have access to the school's curricular paths, assistance with development and ongoing adjustments of a personal learning plan and knowledge of post-secondary opportunities?

Due to the recent additions of counseling positions to the high school staff, guidance to students has improved. While career pathways have been developed by the school district, not all courses integrate career planning, personal learning plans, and career goals into their curriculum.

A majority of 10th grade students attend 10th grade counseling. All students receive group counseling. Students share and discuss their personal learning plans with their parents. Parents are invited to discuss student plans with the counseling staff. All parents are asked to sign and approve student class schedules for the coming school year.

Site budget constraints and overcrowded school facilities affect the school's ability to offer desired classes. Adjustments to students' personal learning plans are limited by the master schedule. The Watsonville staff believe a less traditional schedule would permit college preparatory students more opportunity to take career related courses.

B-3 To what extent are all students prepared upon graduation to continue their academic and occupational goals?

Because of the recent addition of counselors to the staff, not all Watsonville students and parents have been informed about college and career requirements and opportunities. In the past this lack of information has resulted in irrelevant curriculum, poor and inequitable distribution of career and post secondary information, little follow-up on junior and senior scheduling, and no systematic presentation of what college is and what is required of students for them to go to college. Due to their lack of information and low academic skills, many Watsonville students do not perform well at community college.

Exceptions to these findings are the academies. The academy model lends itself to integrated curriculum and teacher collaboration. Academy teachers work together with the same students for three years. Skills and experiences learned in one class in one year are drawn upon in the following years. Academies use SCANS skills to direct learning in the academic subject content. The academies use senior projects tied to the community and/or the world of work. Academy practices expose students to community businesses where they learn skills critical for success in the world.

While the annual dropout rate has remained less than 4 %, the four-year dropout rate has increased to 16.2%. The school grade point average has improved, but the number of students on the Honor Roll has decreased. CSF membership has dropped. The number of graduating students who have met the University of California A-F requirements is decreasing. The number of students who plan to attend college after graduation remains somewhat constant. The number of students taking and passing Advanced Placement examinations has increased. The vast majority of students plan to enter the work force after graduation.

Schoolwide Strengths
Criterion
Evidence

- ◆ Rigorous, relevant, coherent curriculum exists with individual teachers and with academies, but is not systemic or schoolwide

B-1

Self-study, Focus Groups, Student and Teacher Interviews

- ◆ Reinstatement of counselors may be significant in developing learning plans and knowledge of post-secondary opportunities.

B-2

Self-study, Focus Groups, Support staff

- ◆ The ROP program provides extensive school to career experiences for post secondary opportunities.

B-3

Self-study, Focus Groups, Student Interviews

- ◆ 9th and 10th graders receive preparation to continue academic and career goals.

B-3

Self-study, Focus Groups, Student interviews

Critical Areas Of Follow-up	Criterion	Evidence
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◆ In order to ensure success for all students the school should reexamine formal and informal tracking and ensure access for all students to a rigorous, relevant, coherent curriculum.	B-1	Self-study, Focus Groups, Parent and Student Interviews, Performance Data, Master Schedule
◆ In order to ensure success for all students the school administration should reexamine master scheduling practices, assignment of staff and allocation of resources and facilities to ensure access for all students to a rigorous, relevant, coherent curriculum.	B-2	Self-study, Focus Groups, Teacher, Parent and Student Interviews
◆ The school administration and guidance staff should develop, maintain and monitor four year personal learning plans for all students that lead to academic and occupational goals	B-2 B-3	Self-study, Focus Groups, Students Interviews and Existing Plans

POWERFUL TEACHING AND LEARNING

C-1 Are all students involved in challenging learning experiences to achieve ESLRs?

Because of the current overcrowding at the WHS facility, concern for facilities and appropriate student placement sometimes overshadows actual teaching and learning issues. The lack of library space, new technology, and new books are cited by students, teachers and administrators as impediments to more powerful teaching and learning. Less was said about student centered learning activities and ways educational technology may be used effectively in the classroom. School-to-Career curriculum is not in evidence in core academic classes. Students and teachers alike complained that "watered down" curriculum and "busy work" that has no application beyond the classroom.

C-1 Do teachers use a variety of strategies and resources, including technology, to engage students actively and help them succeed at high levels?

Student work is most often done on an individual basis, made up of short tasks and not particularly challenging material. Although many teachers appear to provide engaging lessons, the "teacher lecture" method predominates and students are more often seen as passive, rather than active learners.

Many academic programs exist to help students learn, but they are not united by a focus on ESLRs. It is unclear how the staff and students actually "collaborate in daily class lessons". The self study notes "students are guided by their teachers in the use of technological tools and hands-on activities". However, only one case of teaching with technology was actually observed. The students appear to need more opportunities to demonstrate their ability to think, reason, and problem solve in small group and individual activities. Individual efforts are made to ensure that students are in challenging learning experiences aligned to the ESLRs. The Digital High School grant points to a variety of strategies and resources, including technology, to engage students actively.

Planning and cooperation between special and regular education appears to be ongoing and productive. Special education students are offered career training through ROP and regular vocational classes, like auto and woodshop.

C2 Do all students experience learning opportunities that emphasize higher order thinking skills and integrate academic and applied content?

Many students do not make a connection between school and the real world of work and/or college. Students engage in higher order thinking skills and inquiry on a limited basis. Typically they do not work together on long-term projects and their classes do not integrate academic with career/technical content.

C2 . Does collaboration occur among staff, between staff and students, among students, and between school and community?

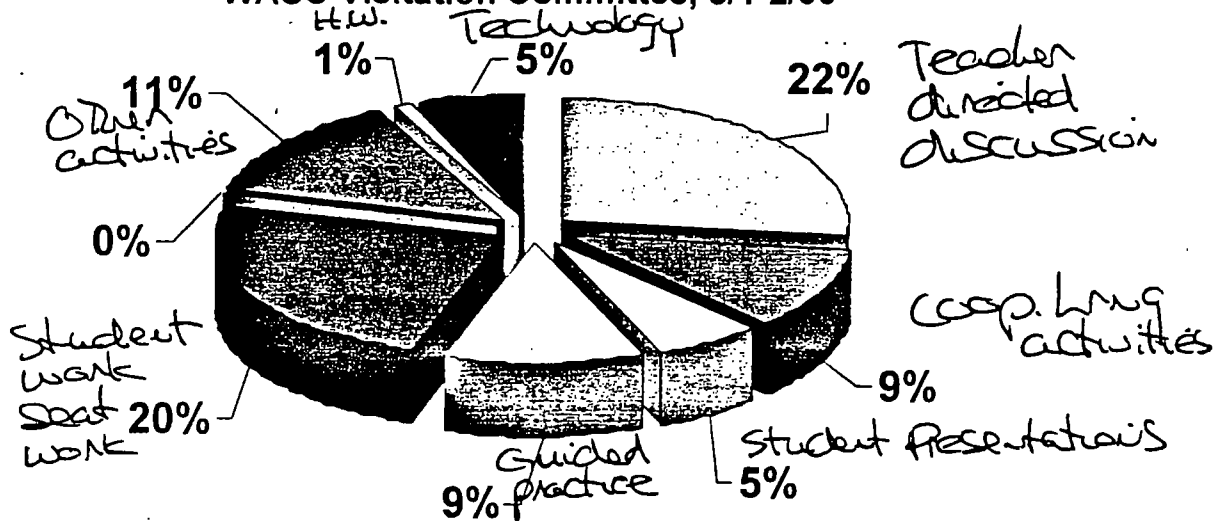
Some cooperative learning, integrated and project based curriculum, and small group learning is in evidence at the school, but more is needed. Active partnerships with community resources, field experiences, and technical preparation programs with authentic curriculum targeted to students' interests, career needs, and relevant community occupations (tourism and agriculture) are also needed.

C-3 Do students routinely use a variety of resources for learning and engage in learning experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom?

Many student work samples showed evidence of:

1. Higher order thinking skills
2. Creativity and imagination
3. Authentic learning activities relevant to the students' interests
4. Preparation for real career possibilities

**Class Observation of Teaching Strategies by
WASC Visitation Committee, 5/1-2/00**



<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher-Directed Discussion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cooperative Learning Activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Presentations	<input type="checkbox"/> Guided Practice
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individual Student Work/Seatwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Grading Homework
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Instructional Activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Non-Instructional Activities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use of Technology in Classrooms	

Schoolwide Strengths	Criterion	Evidence
◆ Many teachers provide challenging learning experiences in their classrooms.	C-1	Work samples Class visits
◆ Collaboration and cooperation exist among some staff groups, among students, between special and regular education and within the academies.	C-2	Focus groups, Special education meeting
◆ Some teachers provide learning experiences that go beyond the textbook and the classroom.	C-3	Work samples Class visits

Critical Areas Of Follow-up	Criterion	Evidence
◆ The administration and staff of WHS should continue to develop a schoolwide plan and process	C-1	Self study Focus Groups

that involves all students in challenging learning experiences. This process must be continually nurtured and reinforced, and must be continually realigned to the ESLRs.

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| ◆ All teachers should use a variety of strategies and resources, including technology, to empower their students to achieve at higher levels. | C-2 | Class visits
Focus groups |
| ◆ All students should use be engaged in learning experiences that prepare them for careers and for higher education. | C-3 | Focus groups
Class Visits
Work Samples |
| ◆ Staff should collaborate more actively with students, with each other, and with community members. | C-2 | Focus Groups |
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SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

D1 •To what extent do all students receive appropriate support to help ensure academic success?

WHS has made every effort, as they see it, to ensure all students receive appropriate support. All freshmen English and math classes are supported with reduced class size, having a ratio of 20 students per teacher. There are 7 AP courses offered, AVID, Puente, the UC Vertical Team Partnership and MESA for strong students who could be successful at the UC system.

Three bilingual paraprofessionals and one full-time language resource teacher support English Language Learners. The Watsonville faculty speaks twelve different languages. 43% of the certificated staff speaks Spanish. 61% are either CLAD or SDAIE trained. The Migrant population is given extra tutorial assistance during lunch breaks four days a week; there are four credentialed teachers and two counselors who work specifically with them to ensure academic success. The Portable Assisted Student Studies (PASS) program is available to help migrant students complete missing credits of work. The Close-Up Program has been reinstated.

Special Education classes and services are offered to students who have learning, severe or physical disabilities. These include multi-handicapped, autistic, deaf/hard of hearing, visually impaired, emotionally disturbed and speech/language disabled. Thirteen full-time teachers, a full-time speech pathologist, two full-time school psychologists and seventeen paraprofessionals support the special needs students. Their RSP students are mainstreamed over 50% of the day. Every special education student has an annual Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting.

Any student himself, parent/guardian, teacher, counselor, staff or the SARB is able to make a referral to Student Study Teams (SST) for a student in need of academic assistance, academic performance or attendance, an alternative setting or style of education, special education and/or counseling services.

At-Risk students receive a variety of academic services. The Academic Learning Center provides educational support for students who did not graduate from their junior high schools. Available to students for one to four periods per day, there are academic core, academic class, directed studies and monitoring of academic progress services available. Twice-weekly tutorials are available during lunch break in the library. Finally, there are five credentialed teachers available for tutoring at Saturday Schools; even though Saturday School is primarily punitive.

The Teen-Aged Mothers (TAM) program supports student mothers in the continuation of their high school education. School Age Parenting and Infant

Development (SAPID) assists new mothers to gain parenting skills and further their education.

There is also an Independent Study program on campus as an alternative comprehensive academic program. Currently it is able to accommodate fifty full-time students and forty concurrent students.

All students are supported by the Career Center. Each grade level has a central focus: freshmen to complete a wheel in a career pathway exploratory; freshmen and sophomores to participate in the educational planning night involving parents, teachers and students; sophomores to take the ASVAB and receive four-year program development information; juniors to have occupational skills assessment and development, ROP classes, work experience, internships and college planning; seniors to receive assistance with college and financial aid applications and support. In addition the Career Center brings in speakers from various colleges and universities, arranges field trips to college campuses, and receive assessment for the community college after graduation. All students are provided with the chance to take part in the Passport to Work Program, which promotes employability skill standards and creates a practical relationship between school and work. Students receive training and practice in writing resumes and in having interviews. Students come to the Career Center for work permits and for job shadowing. The center is responsible for ensuring work experience students properly document their hours and pay.

D2 •To what extent do students have access to a system of personal support services, activities and opportunities at the school and within the community?

Watsonville offers a variety of personal support services, activities and opportunities. Five full-time counselors are available throughout the day for scheduling classes, arranging parent/teacher/student conferences and for providing academic counseling. Additional counseling services are provided by a part-time Marriage, Family and Child Counselor (MFCC) and UCSC student interns.

Another major support system is the health services. Besides the two full-time school psychologists already mentioned, a school nurse and two nurse's aides provide health services for students. Athletes are given physical examinations; all sophomores receive vision and hearing tests, as does any other student who requests this service. Healthy Start is a nearby health service that provides further psychological counseling and medical assistance on a referral basis.

Drug-, tobacco- and drug- prevention services are provided by the Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance, Inc. (PVPSA) agency. Students can refer themselves, or be referred, for individual or group counseling sessions on suicide prevention, drug abuse, anger management, family problems or smoking cessation.

Gang intervention programs in operation are Basta and Ganas. The latter also encourages school attendance.

Students are actively involved in three programs geared at supporting other students. LINK Crew assists with incoming freshmen and works with them and their teachers throughout the year. Friday Nite Live is a club providing clean and sober activities for all students. The Conflict Resolution Team (CRT) consists of a group of students trained to resolve disputes between individuals and groups on campus. Over one half of the conflicts referred to CRT last year chose to seek peer mediation, with 98% of those resolved to the satisfaction of both parties.

D3 •To what extent does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to encourage parental and community involvement?

One of Watsonville's strong community involvement resources for many years has been the Community Partners. Granite Construction, City of Watsonville, Seaside Company, Alladin Nursery and the Chamber of Commerce provide support and advice on infrastructure, technology and school community.

Yet another private group, the Enterprise Community Youth Network Computer/Homework Center is a technology lab, located in the town's center. It is funded by the Watsonville Enterprise Community and provides computer-training weekdays to all students over 16 years of age who have undertaken orientation training.

Another strong parent/community group is the Watsonville High School Foundation, a nonprofit organization, which help raise funds for student activities and promotes positive interaction between the community and the school. The Grants Committee and Hall of Fame Committee are two of the most prominent subcommittee groups for it. The Grants Committee awarded \$12,000 in grants in 1998-1999, as well as an additional capital improvement grant of \$2,500.

The Local Scholarship Program brings community members onto the school to interview seniors who match their criteria for scholarship monies, thereby enabling the seniors to further their education at the college level.

Regional Occupational Program (ROP) classes interact with the area and receive substantial community involvement. There are twelve different programs, representing a cross-section of the community.

Mentioned earlier, the Vertical Team Partnership and Puente programs are collaborative efforts with UCSC.

Communication with the community is an ongoing effort. Written communiqués include a quarterly newsletter, a monthly bi-lingual parent newsletter, and articles in the *Sentinel* and the *Register Pajaronian*, the local newspapers. Written correspondence to the home notifies parents of student behavior and attendance. Academic reports are sent eight times a year, including mid-quarter progress reports, quarter and semester grades. Upon request, parents can receive additional progress reports at any time.

An automated phone system sends programmed messages home to inform parents about student absences. Parents and community members can contact teachers by phone, voicemail or in person through conferences. Parents can also meet with classroom teachers on Back to School Night and Open House.

D4 •To what extent are the human, material and financial resources, as well as facilities, available to the school?

Watsonville uses the entire plant, including 20 portables. Every classroom, with the exception only of the portables, which do not have security, has been provided with at least one computer and a wide-screen TV that has central video center access. A grant of \$850,000 has enabled WHS to become a Digital High School. Teachers received training to reach Level 1 of the California Technology Assistance Program (CTAP). Staff has been trained in word processing, Internet research, e-mail and spreadsheet use. WHS has incorporated the Challenge Standards for Applied Learning Standards for students in the 9th through 12th grades.

New teachers are supported through the New Teacher Project, in collaboration with UCSC providing mentor teachers as models, trainers and support professionals for teachers who have been in the classroom less than two years.

In-house custodians and maintenance workers supplied by the district maintain the plant facility and grounds. This includes groundskeepers, electricians, plumbers, carpenters and other maintenance personnel as needed.

There is a technology committee, consisting of 12 members (administrator, teachers and bilingual resource teacher), that meets weekly. Four of the members are tech mentors who serve computer/multimedia needs of teachers as well as acting as liaisons between the departments and the Digital High School committee. There are also two full-time roving tech assistants who place hardware and software in place and help maintain the equipment. Finally, there is an ROP class leading to employment for students. These students provide assistance by installing and maintaining the school's equipment.

No less than 24 different financial resources provide funding that directly affects support for student personal and academic growth. These sources incorporate

everything from supporting English Learners to UCSC entry and many area partnerships.

Schoolwide Strengths	Criterion	Evidence
◆ Reorganization of counseling services including rehiring of counselors has resulted in a more comprehensive guidance program.	D-1	Group Interviews, Observation Printed Materials Self Study
◆ A variety of targeted student support services have been implemented, including college bound, tutorial, migrant, and at-risk students.	D-1	Self Study, Interviews, Observations Printed Materials
◆ A strong system of personal support services is maintained.	D-2	Crisis counseling Health services TAM and SAPID Gang intervention Link Crew and FNL Conflict resolution team Alcohol Tobacco and other Drug prevention
◆ Maintenance of community personal and financial support is encouraged through a myriad of community and educational partnerships.	D-3	Community partnerships Enterprise Community Youth Network Migrant Parent Association Bilingual Parent Advisory committee School site council Vertical team partnerships Puente Local news papers
◆ The existing technology infrastructure and plan will provide delivery of information and applications to all stakeholders is excellent.	D-4	
◆ The classified staff of Watsonville HS are cooperative, stable and committed.	D-4	Observation and classified meeting

◆ Some evidence is present for using school resources for accomplishing ESLRs.	D-4	Observation, Student and Teacher Interviews
◆ The WHS teachers are dedicated and are available for students during extended hours.	D-4	Observation, Student and Teacher Interviews
◆ Staff and students are responsible for an enthusiastic student activities program that celebrates the diversity of the Watsonville High School culture.	D-2	Observation, Student and Teacher Interviews
◆ The district, school administration, staff and students demonstrate extraordinary work, understanding and flexibility in accommodating the burgeoning student population in clearly inadequate facilities.	D-4	Data, Observation, Self-Study Staff, Student, Parent Interview
◆ The School administration, staff, students and parents are open, candid and passionate in publishing and discussing the critical issues of WHS.	D-4	Self study, Focus Group meetings, Observations, Interviews

Critical Areas Of Follow-Up	Criterion	Evidence
◆ Student academic support systems should be coordinated and delivered more effectively based on individual student performance data.	D-1, D-2	Student and parent interviews
◆ Should continue to improve guidance services in order to allow better access by students and teachers.	D-1, D-2	Self-study, Observation, Student, parent and staff Interviews
◆ Should improve library services and access to technology.	D-4	Self-study Observation Interviews
◆ Should provide primary language access for all information on campus.	D-1, D-2	Student and Teacher Interviews

ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

E-1 Teachers employ a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate students and to modify curriculum and instructional practices. Students use assessment results to modify their learning in order to enhance educational progress.

It would appear that there are a variety of assessment tools used across the curriculum: both standardized and teacher developed. However, the focus of the school is departmental and there appears to be no schoolwide, systematic process that uses assessment to drive and modify curriculum and school programs.

There is some evidence that student assessment is used to modify and enhance programs. For example, the ELD program uses benchmarks in its assessment. Other departments indicated that assessment results had little or no bearing on student programs. The school itself acknowledges that it needs to evaluate this area schoolwide. It would appear that students, in general, have little input into the assessment process and that they see little relationship between assessment and their educational program.

E-2 The school, district, and community regularly review student progress toward accomplishing the schoolwide expected learning results. Assessment results are regularly reported to the entire school community on a regular basis.

The school has established a system of assessment based on traditional forms of assessment: teaching guides and standardized tests. The appendix contains the SAT summary and the STAR Test summaries. There is evidence of project-based assessment and the use of portfolios. This is seen in the departmental summaries in the self-study report and in the matrix in the appendix. There is some evidence that the school assesses its effectiveness by listening to some parents, community groups, and teachers; by compiling student scores on standardized testing; and by collecting data regarding dropout and college entrance rates.

The school acknowledges two major areas of weakness:

1. Assessment results are not regularly reported to the community.
2. The ESLRs do not appear to be a factor in assessment at this point. There appears to be no process in place to implement, evaluate and assess the ESLRs impact on curriculum and programs.

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

The school is just beginning the process of systematically collecting data and analyzing data with an eye toward improving student learning. The school collects data on student performance; however, this data is not used in a schoolwide, comprehensive manner. The ESLRs do not drive schoolwide program development and resource allocation. The school acknowledges this. The ESLRs have been in place for just a year and the school is beginning to deal with how the ESLRs will impact the school.

Schoolwide Strengths	Criterion	Evidence
◆ Many teachers embed assessment into instruction in order to enhance learning.	E-2	Self study departmental evidence, teacher interview, focus group
◆ The school has established ESLRs and has made an effort to educate students about them.	E-3	Self study departmental evidence, teacher interview, focus group

Critical Areas Of Follow-up	Criterion	Evidence
◆ The administration should develop and implement a schoolwide plan to evaluate, assess, and modify the ESLRs. (Expected Schoolwide Learning Results).	E-2	Self Study departmental evidence, focus groups, Teacher, Student and Parent interview
◆ The school should develop a plan to regularly report assessment results to staff, students, parents, and the community.	E-2	Focus Groups, Observations
◆ The staff should analyze data regularly to enhance student performance	E-2	Focus Groups, Observations
◆ The school should develop a plan to use the results of integrated, schoolwide ESLR driven assessment to modify curriculum for all students.	E-3	Focus Groups, Observations

Watsonville High School

Watsonville High School administration, staff and students are cordial, and the school site is safe, clean and attractive despite overcrowding.

The recent development of two academies, the addition of counselors, and a variety of academic and personal support enhance the opportunity for all students to be successful, and for all staff to cooperate and collaborate.

The classified staffs are partners in providing a supportive educational environment. The Watsonville parents and community exhibit significant pride and respect for each other.

The school administration, staff, students and parents have been open and helpful throughout the WASC visitation.

Schoolwide Areas of Strength and Critical Areas for Follow-Up

Schoolwide Areas of Strength

The Visiting Committee commends:

1. Watsonville High School for being a safe, clean and orderly place at which to learn.
2. The Watsonville High School staff and students for the collaboration and cooperation among some staff groups, among students, between special and regular education and within academies.
3. The administration and staff for the reorganization of counseling services including the reinstatement of counselors resulting in a more comprehensive guidance program.
4. The administration, guidance staff and service providers for offering a variety of academic support services including college bound, tutorial services and migrant education services.
5. The administration and staff for maintaining a strong system of personal support services.
6. The classified staff for their strength, stability and commitment to Watsonville High School.
7. The entire Watsonville school community for the establishment of the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs) and the ongoing effort to educate students about them.
8. The district and school administration, staff and students for their extraordinary work, understanding and flexibility in accommodating a burgeoning student population in clearly inadequate facilities.

9. The school administration, staff, students and parents for their openness, candidness and passion in publishing and discussing the critical issues of Watsonville High School.
10. The staff and students for their significant feelings of pride, support and mutual respect within the Watsonville High School community.
11. Those staff and students responsible for an extensive and enthusiastic student activities program that celebrates the diversity of the Watsonville High School culture.

Critical Areas for Follow-Up

The Visiting Committee recommends:

1. That the district goals, site plan, vision and mission statements, School-to-Career, literacy initiative, Digital High School, and ESLRs should be unified and aligned to improve achievement for all students.
2. That the school, administration, staff and community should develop an inclusive decision-making and governance process.
3. That the district, school administrators and staff should develop an ongoing, data-driven, professional development plan for *all* staff to gain skills necessary to achieve the Watsonville High School goals for improved student learning.
4. That the school administration, staff and community reexamine the issues of formal and informal tracking in order to ensure access for *all* students to a rigorous, relevant and coherent curriculum.
5. That the school administration reexamine, including input from staff, master schedule practices, assignment of sections and staff, and allocation of resources and facilities to ensure access for all students to a rigorous, relevant and coherent curriculum.
6. That the staff regularly utilizes a wider variety of instructional strategies and resources, including technology, to empower all students to achieve at higher levels.
7. That the District and school administration improve library and technology services.
8. That the school administration and staff more effectively coordinate the organization, publication and delivery of academic and personal support services.
9. That the school administration and staff develop and implement a schoolwide plan to evaluate student achievement of the ESLRs.
10. That the administration and staff develop and implement a plan to regularly report assessment results to staff, students, parents and community.

11. That the school administration and staff regularly analyze student achievement data to improve student performance.

CHAPTER V

On-Going School Improvement

The Watsonville High School Action Plan focuses on three areas:

- Meeting the needs of students not reading a grade level
- The Library
- Career Pathways

The strategies provided for improving student reading levels are straightforward. They call for reading classes for students, grades 9-12, who are more than 2 years below grade level in reading. They are also doable. The plan calls for staff development for all staff in reading across the curriculum strategies. The plan calls upon the school community to consider various changes in scheduling and how instructional time is arranged (block schedules) as a potential key tool in improving reading.

The strength of the reading plan is that it is conceptually direct and simple. The key element of the plan, however, is staff development in reading across the curriculum strategies. The plan appears somewhat unfocused and voluntary. In-services are called for over a three year period and the assessment and report of progress called for are lists of people who have attended training. Follow-up, coaching, best practices employed, baseline data gathered, progress reports to inform work are possibilities not clearly spelled out.

The Library project calls for a committee of stakeholders to be formed. These stakeholders would then devise a master plan for library that includes removal of offices and redesignation of space with a library only focus. It also calls for extending the hours of student use and ensuring an increase in student use. It calls for a librarian and a library technician.

The issues of improved library facilities and services is near and dear to many in the Watsonville High School community. Who could be opposed to increased library services? Does it have to do with increased reading achievement? Quite possibly. Does it have to do with increased student success? Maybe. Does it promote career pathways, interdisciplinary instruction, use of technology, wider variety of teaching strategies? All are possible and even probable. The visiting committee supported the library issue because of its obvious importance within the school community.

The School to Career goal calls for investigation, visitation, surveys, models, partnerships, new courses, alternative schedules. Watsonville High School is in the very beginning stages of pursuing this important goal area. The investigation work is planned for February to December, 2000. Phase two calls for implementation. This includes inservice training, district office support, release time, scheduling support, technology support, facilities support. The timeline calls for implementation in the fall of 2001 and on-going.

School to Career could provide a wonderful dimension and focus to education at Watsonville High School. The plan, however, is in its infancy. It will take a great deal of focus and energy by many stakeholders to make it a reality in the next 18 months.

Do the action plan sections address the *critical areas for follow-up*?

The action plan sections are compatible with the critical areas for follow-up recommended by the visiting committee. We recommended focus on library services. School to Career might provide an important focus to the school program. It might also provide a focus for collecting student achievement data and using those data to inform work. All action plan items have the potential to meet critical areas for follow-up.

Will the action plan steps enhance student learning?

Clearly, improved student reading will enhance student learning. Improved library services and a school-wide school to career focus have important potential to enhance student learning.

Is the action plan feasible within existing resources?

A strong element to Watsonville High School's action plan is that it is straightforward and limited in scope. While their goals will not be easy to achieve, they have not burdened themselves with trying to do everything. Watsonville should be commended for choosing an appropriate narrow range of action that is clearly supported by the majority of the school community.

Is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and system-wide?

It is not clear that there is yet enough detail to the action plan to ensure its success. The next few months will probably be crucial to determining the commitment to the action plan. If the school community takes its ideas and develops them with more specific actions, timelines and clearer outcomes, it could well transform a general commitment into deep and meaningful action. We wish Watsonville High School good luck in their journey.

Given the mobility of administration and some staff, citing "administration and staff" as the person(s) responsible for the critical areas for follow up is questionable. Developing career pathways, providing authentic curriculum, and helping students to meet grade level reading standards will take the formation and nurturing of ongoing ad hoc committees where staff from various departments, community members, students, and administrators are integrated. All student, staff, and community members must be recognized as potential leaders. Real implementation of the improvements mentioned will be made with schoolwide student, staff, and community participation in committees that pilot ongoing interventions to see what works and what doesn't.

In citing the need to assist those students not at reading level, there might also be a description of the plan for how those students, two years below reading grade level, will be placed in reading classes, and which cross curricular strategies would be used to help them. If these questions are still in the "consideration stage" then how will planning occur to reflect upon the necessary teaching strategies and scheduling options?

The lack of library materials and space does not prohibit the development of a feasible action plan within existing resources. This plan must be aligned to other plans for school improvement (e.g. the digital and other grants, SIP, and the ESLRs) and district goals and objectives.