

Focus on Learning Midterm Progress Report

Spring, 2008

**La Costa Canyon High School
Carlsbad, California**

Craig Lewis, Principal



**Report Prepared by:
Randa Fast-Medley, Counselor
Carissa Mattison, Music Teacher
Eric Smith, Science Teacher
Damian Wallace, Special Education Teacher
Kevin Fairchild, Science Teacher**

I. Introduction

Student/Community Profile Data

La Costa Canyon High School is an exemplary high school within the San Dieguito Union High School District. The approximately 2,500 students in grades 9-12 represent students from the coastal communities of Cardiff, Encinitas, Leucadia, Olivenhain, and south Carlsbad.

Established in 1996, LCC is a beautiful campus situated in a canyon. The school facility includes 120 classrooms, eight computer labs, a 470-seat Performing Arts Center, library media center, audio-visual technology facilities, music performance classrooms, architecture/engineering lab, a two-story gymnasium with capacity to seat 2200 people, a state-of-the-art all-weather track and field with a stadium seating 5000 people.

The school's commitment to student success has resulted in recognition at the state and national levels. LCC was named a California Distinguished School in 2007 and a National Blue Ribbon School in 2002. The school's current API is 806. A clear vision and sense of mission are shared among faculty, staff, administration, students, parents, and community and are supported by a challenging and up-to-date curriculum. The staff and students have the enthusiastic support of families who share the commitment to help all students achieve high standards.

Student success is supported through a variety of means. Programs such as Work Experience, Internship, academic and personal support groups, CAHSEE support classes, reading labs, the PLATO Lab, Aeries student information system, on-campus tutoring centers, and over a hundred active parent volunteers help to provide an environment that supports student growth at all levels. The school also offers a comprehensive Division I interscholastic athletics program with 26 different varsity-level sports, earning LCC 82 League and 34 CIF championships. An active Associated Student Body (ASB) supports over fifty clubs in a multitude of interest areas. LCC recognizes the increasingly important role community service or "service learning" plays in the education and personal growth of its students. Large numbers of students are involved in service projects that are curriculum-based, community-oriented, and largely student-initiated.

LCC enjoys the many benefits of volunteer hours and additional funds that are raised each year by the La Costa Canyon High School Foundation and the Parent Association. Many programs on site are significantly enhanced by support from the Foundation, which raises funds and in-kind donations annually to improve educational and developmental opportunities in areas such as athletics, visual and performing arts, and academic programs.

School Vision and Mission

Building the Canyon Community Through Equity and Excellence

Our mission is to develop a community of life-long learners, creative thinkers, and responsible individuals, by providing innovative, quality educational programs in a safe supportive environment.

LCCHS Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLR's)

La Costa Canyon High School graduates will be:

- I. Students who will acquire a basic knowledge consistent with state standards.**
- II. Capable and Responsible Citizens Who:**
 - understand and appreciate their roles and responsibilities in our democratic society
 - are responsible and accountable for their actions and choices
 - demonstrate concern, tolerance, compassion, and respect
 - understand the impact of human activities on the environment
 - actively provide service to both the school and local communities
 - understand the choices necessary to develop a healthy lifestyle
- III. Self-Directed Lifelong Learners Who:**
 - are able to analyze and evaluate their own learning
 - ask questions in order to solve problems
 - are committed to excellence in their work
 - understand the importance of new experiences and continual education
 - demonstrate creative thought in problem solving
 - possess the skills necessary to succeed in the global community
 - effectively collaborate in a variety of learning environments
- IV. Effective Communicators Who:**
 - are able to listen and communicate well in written, verbal, and nonverbal modes
 - understand and use technology in communication
 - show respect for diverse perspectives
 - research, create, and evaluate in written, verbal, and artistic modes
 - use communication skills to resolve conflicts through positive, non-violent alternatives
- V. Creative and Critical Thinkers Who:**
 - successfully acquire, analyze, organize and apply information
 - develop and express creative ideas and solutions
 - examine moral, ethical, and cultural issues from multiple perspectives
 - integrate and synthesize information across disciplines
 - demonstrate growth in higher-level thinking skills

FOUR PILLARS OF CHARACTER

**R
E
S
P
E
C
T**

**R
E
S
P
O
N
S
I
B
I
L
I
T
Y**

**T
R
U
S
T
W
O
R
T
H
I
N
E
S
S**

**K
I
N
D
N
E
S
S**

Figure 1. LCC Character Education

Student and Staff Demographics

In the fall of 2006, La Costa Canyon enrolled 2532 students; 52% of those were male and 48% female. This represents a drop of 4% in student enrollment since the fall of 2004. Further declines in enrollment are predicted for the next several years.

Student ethnicities are shown in Figure 2. In the 2006-07 school year, 164 students were enrolled in the English Language Learner program; over 90% of those had Spanish as their primary language. Other primary languages included Japanese, Thai, and Russian, among others. Thirty-three other EL students have been redesignated FEP within the past three years. The ethnic distribution of LCC students has changed very little since the school's opening in 1996. Almost three hundred students are enrolled in the Free/Reduced Lunch Program.



Figure 2. Student Ethnicities

La Costa Canyon employs 49 classified staff members and 122 certificated staff members. Of the classified staff, 20 are full-time and 29 are part-time. Of the certificated staff,

- 108 are classroom teachers, 10 are in pupil personnel services, and 4 are administrators;
- 121 are fully credentialed; 1 holds an emergency credential;

- 82 have earned Master’s degrees or higher;
- 2 have earned National Board Certification;
- 102 are tenured, permanent employees; 20 are temporary or probationary;
- 28 have been teaching for ten years or longer;
- 25 have been teaching for twenty years or longer;
- 14 have been teaching for thirty years or longer;
- 89 have a CLAD, ELD, Bilingual, or ESL certification.

These numbers are very similar to those in the 2005 self-study, with two notable exceptions. Budget reasons have caused the district to reduce the number of classified staff from 82 in 2005 to 49 currently, a reduction of 40%. Certificated staff during the same time period have been reduced by 11%. Additionally, the number of certificated staff members with fewer than ten years experience has risen from 11 in 2005 to 55 currently, with a concomitant decrease in staff members with greater than 10 years experience and those with greater than 20 years experience. The school’s certificated staff has gotten much younger in the last three years.

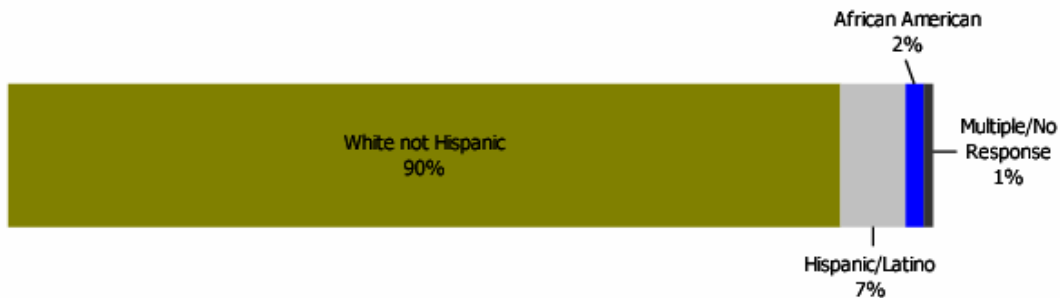


Figure 3. Staff Ethnicities

Self-reported staff ethnicities are shown in Figure 3. Note that the staff ethnic distribution broadly mirrors the student ethnic distribution, with two exceptions. Hispanics/Latinos make up only 7% of the staff, compared with 16% of the student body; furthermore, there are no staff members who identified themselves as Asian/Pacific Islander/Filipino, while 6% of the student population did so.

Student Achievement Data

API & AYP

La Costa Canyon’s 2007 API was 806, up from 803 in 2006. More importantly, the API for statistically significant subgroups has also increased. See Figure 5 on page 8 for details about LCC’s narrowing achievement gap.

The school has met all goals for Adequate Yearly Progress, both school-wide as well as for each subgroup, in both 2006 and 2007.

CAHSEE

In the 2007 administration of the CAHSEE, 549 tenth-grade students took the Mathematics portion, with 91% passing. In the ELA portion of the exam, 602 tenth-graders tested, with 89% passing. CAHSEE support classes for students who have not passed one or both sections have helped nearly all students successfully pass upon retaking the exam. More than 98% of LCC students eventually pass both sections of the CAHSEE.

Content Standards Tests

Results for the 2007 administration of the California Content Standards Tests are shown in Figure 4. Since 2005, there have been small but steady upward trends in ELA and Science proficiencies; no significant trends have been observed in Mathematics or History proficiency levels.

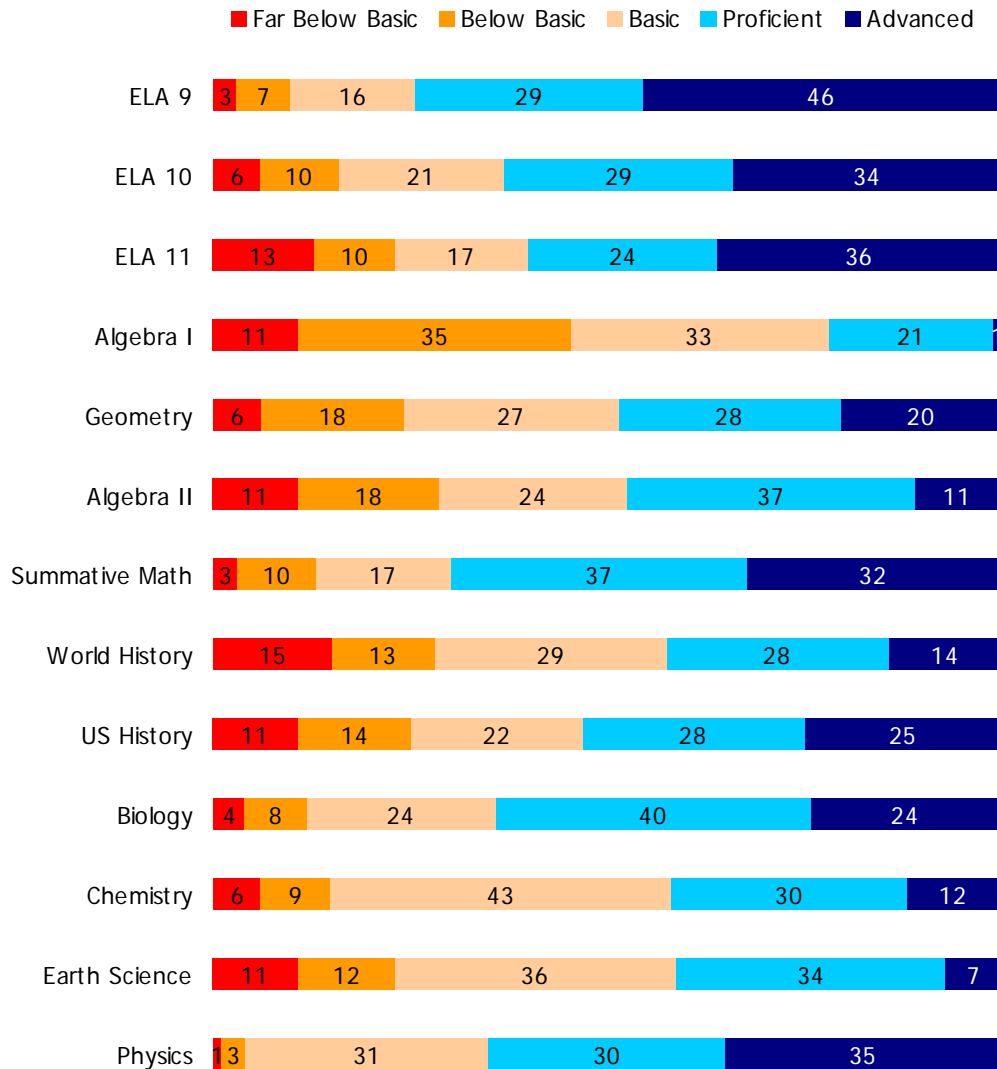


Figure 4. 2007 CST Results

AP and SAT Participation and Success

As a high-achieving school with more than 90% of students attending college after high school, LCC offers rigorous academic preparation through a combination of Honors level and Advanced Placement Courses. In May 2007, proctors administered 1673 Advanced Placement Exams to 727 candidates. 478 students sat for the SAT exam, earning an average mean total of 1619. The emphasis on expanded access to AP and Honors classes has led to increased participation in this college-preparation and eligibility process, including an increase in AVID students enrolled in one or more AP courses.

Significant Developments

Professional Collaboration Time

The staff and administration at LCC have agreed to build time into the academic calendar for teachers to collaborate. This was first instituted in the 2006-07 school year, during which teachers met for 30 minutes at the beginning of the day every other Tuesday. Students had a “late start”, with classes beginning at 8:15. After a year’s experiment, the staff voted to have fewer but longer collaboration days; during the current (2007-08) school year, there is a 60 minute collaboration period once a month, still at the beginning of a Tuesday. In addition, there are four minimum days used for the same purpose.

The primary goal of collaboration time during these first two years has been for teachers of the same course to agree on essential standards, develop common assessments, and evaluate student achievement data from those assessments. In this way, this program has contributed to increasing course consistency, which has been a focus of the district and site, in accordance with the Action Plan. Progress has been mixed across the campus, with some groups moving forward very rapidly, and others requiring more time to create and use common assessments. Across the board, however, teachers agree that the time and effort are worthwhile. A survey of staff members in the spring of 2007 showed that collaboration time enjoyed widespread support.

Focus on Character Education

In the summer of 2007, a group of staff members, parents, and students met several times with one of the Assistant Principals to develop and implement a character education program. The group worked with the entire staff during the August inservice days, and came up with the Four Pillars of Character (see Figure 1 on page 3). It was decided to emphasize only one of the four “pillars” in any given school year; “Respect” was chosen for this year. Teachers have been encouraged to emphasize this character trait whenever possible.

The tangible and specific program that comes out of the school’s focus on “Respect” this year is a new policy for students who are habitually tardy to class. Using the computerized attendance program, administrators can monitor tardies and apply a progressive system of consequences for students who reach certain thresholds. Through the first semester of this school year, student tardies have been reduced by 35% compared to the first semester of last year. Additionally, the number of students with 20 or more tardies during that same period has been reduced by 77%.

Curriculum Changes and Additions

- Students are able to meet state standards for Health and Physical Education in an integrated course. This year-long course provides organized, measurable, and attainable skills for students and families.
- Special Education students have been increasingly placed in the appropriate mainstream standards-based classes, with necessary modifications and accommodations. This has resulted in the elimination of non-standards-based Fundamentals classes in Science, and an increase in the number of team-taught courses in Math, English, and Social Science. The Transitional Alternative Placement (TAP) program has also provided greater opportunities for students to be placed in classes of appropriate level in the least restrictive environment.
- The district has also provided increased support for EL classes. In certain cases, departments were allowed to split EL classes, assigning students by CELDT level, which resulted in very small classes with an accomplished teacher.

- The number of Career and Technical Education classes has increased to 14, including Introduction to Engineering Design, Screenprinting, Computer Aided Drafting, digital media and design courses, and Surf/Lifesaving. Many but not all of these courses are funded through ROP.
- A 7th period academic support class has been instituted for long-term English learners and those who are transitioning out of the ELD program. Students receive one-on-one support in all content areas, while they also develop their academic literacy skills. In addition, a math/science support class that will focus on students who need targeted support in these content areas is being offered for the first time in the spring 2008 semester.
- The district and site continue to implement “expanded access” to AP and Honors courses. Students are positively encouraged to attempt the most rigorous courses that are appropriate. In conjunction with this effort, the World Language department has added an AP Spanish Language course specifically designed for native Spanish speakers.

Administrative and Staff Turnover

A major influence on the school during the last three years has been the continuing turnover of staff members and administrators. The current principal has been on site for less than a year; the previous principal was in the job for less than two years. Two of the three assistant principals are in their second year at the school. In addition, many teachers have retired, transferred within the district, or left the district entirely. One factor for the number of intra-district transfers was the staggered opening of Canyon Crest Academy, a new comprehensive high school in the southern part of the district. The current staff has a much larger proportion of teachers with less than ten years of experience than the staff of three years ago. Despite this turnover, staff members remain committed to improvements based on established action plans.

In order to ease the transition for the new principal, in August of 2007, a group of veteran teachers worked on a transition plan, as led by a representative from the San Diego County Office of Education. This team evaluated staff survey results and identified the highest priority tasks for the incoming principal. This plan was presented to the entire staff later in that month; staff members then assigned their own priorities to the plan that the transition team had generated. These priorities have been used to guide staff meetings and to help the new principal focus on the important needs of the school; they were revisited in January of 2008.

Ongoing Improvement

The School Site Council is primarily responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Single Plan for Student Achievement. The SSC now has improved procedures in place to closely monitor allocation of funds to support the goals of the SPSA. Staff members and site leadership teams (including department chairs) are involved with generating the activities used to meet the benchmarks and objectives of the SPSA. The SSC then uses a formalized decision making process that includes all stakeholders, as necessary and appropriate.

The generation of objectives, benchmarks, and activities began with staff members examining data on student achievement; primarily but not exclusively disaggregated CST results. An inservice meeting of the staff featured a presentation on interpreting data from statewide testing, to ensure that all parties worked from the same set of data. Similar data from subsequent testing was then used to evaluate the effectiveness of the SPSA and to drive modifications of the plan.

At the end of each year, the principal has prepared a progress report on the effectiveness of the SPSA. He or she then presented these reports, along with supporting data and evidence, to the School Board, Superintendent, and District Office personnel.

This third year mid-term report has been prepared by staff members after collecting data from all stakeholders. It was then reviewed by staff, administration, parents, students, and District Office personnel.

II. Report on Schoolwide Action Plan Progress

1. Achievement Gap

We will reduce the achievement gap by 25% over 5 years, as shown by the annual API score, between high achieving and low achieving students by providing academic support for our significant sub-groups (low SES and ELL).

The data collected from 2004 to 2007 show that LCC has exceeded the goals and expectations set forth by the above Action Plan written in the 2005 self-study. The target for 2009 was to close the gap to 225 for the Low Socioeconomic Status students and 166 for the Latino subgroup. In fact, by 2007, the subgroup consisting of socioeconomically disadvantaged students scored only 161 points behind the school as a whole, while the Latino subgroup scored 138 points lower than the entire student population. This represents a growth of 16% in API for the Latino subgroup and 21% for the socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup, during a period in which the school's API grew by less than 1%. Full results are shown in Table 1 for 2004-2007 and in Figure 5 for 1999-2007.

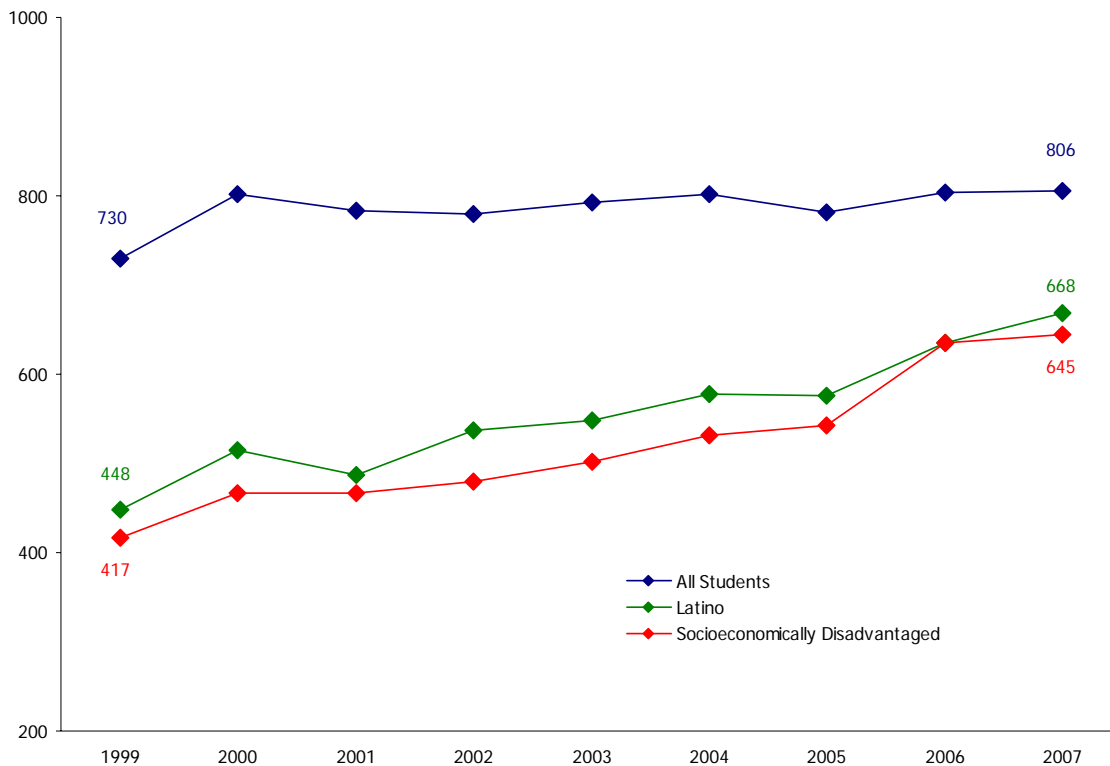


Figure 5. API, 1999-2007

Year	All Students	Latino	Socioeconomically Disadvantaged
2004	801	577	532
2005	782	576	543
2006	803	636	635
2007	806	668	645

Table 1. API, 2004-2007

A number of factors have contributed to the accomplishment of the goals of this action plan.

- AVID has seen significant increases in enrollment in the past three years, as shown in Figure 6. This increase has come in the number of Latino students enrolled, as the number of non-Latino students in AVID classes has remained constant. The increased effort given to identifying students who could benefit from AVID has paid off in increased achievement for those students, as evidenced by the increase in API for the Latino subgroup during the same time frame.

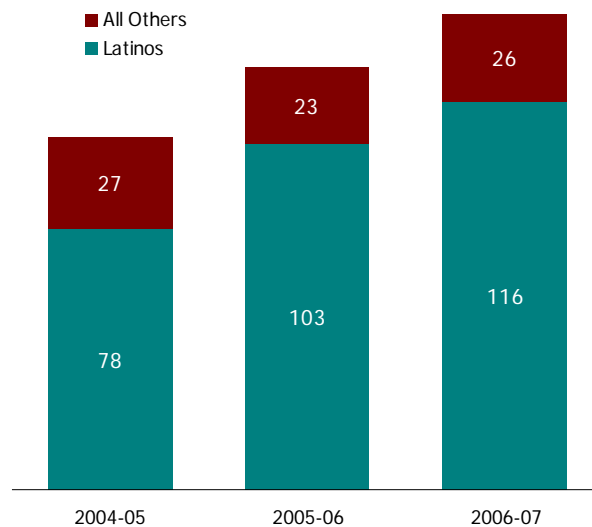


Figure 6. AVID Enrollment by Ethnicity

- A variety of support classes have been added to the school's schedule to meet student needs. A Sheltered Reading class is offered for recent immigrant students transitioning in Sheltered English/ELD IV. An Academic Literacy course was developed and implemented, targeting long-term English Learners and other educationally disadvantaged students. CAHSEE support classes in both ELA and Math are provided for 11th and 12th grade students who have not yet passed the exit exam. A 7th period academic support class has been instituted for long-term English learners and those who are transitioning out of the ELD program. Students receive one-on-one support in all content areas, while they also develop their academic literacy skills. In addition, a math/science support class that will focus on students who need targeted support in these content areas is being offered for the first time in the spring 2008 semester.
- In addition to specialized support classes, academic language and vocabulary support is provided within sheltered content-area classes by an ELD resource teacher.

- A large proportion of teachers have gone through SB 395 training and all new hires have EL Authorization. In addition, increased emphasis has been placed on providing professional development in SDAIE and academic language development for teachers of ELD and sheltered content-area classes.
- For EL students who have an IEP, the school has developed goals and an objective bank based on ELD standards.
- The implementation of professional collaboration time has increased the ability of teachers to examine student achievement in depth and develop focused intervention strategies for struggling students.
- The implementation of AB 1802 added counselors who are specifically targeting students in the lowest performance band on CSTs or who have not passed CAHSEE, and are meeting with parents and students to offer intervention.

The progress made towards the goal of this action plan addresses the second of the visiting committee's schoolwide critical areas for follow-up: "Continue to focus on improving the academic performance level of Hispanic and socio-economically disadvantaged students."

2. Career Pathway Exploration and Opportunities

We will increase the awareness of career opportunities for all students by providing expanded access to career exploration research and career oriented courses, as measured by schoolwide surveys, course offerings, and enrollment in Internship and ROP classes.

A combination of new class offerings, open access to Work Experience and Internship classes, and the ongoing restructuring of the district-wide Workability Program offers increased opportunities for all students. Additionally, the growth of LCC's existing job recruitment event, the Teen Expo, has seen sustained growth in employers attending the event. Finally, the combination of job interest and ability assessments offered on campus for students, schoolwide PSAT administration, field trips to local junior colleges to explore career certification programs, AVID students' participation in college-prep coursework, visitation of local area universities, the EL Program's coursework and partnership with the district's adult school and local junior colleges, and Special Education students' past and newly planned access to transition opportunities, have all not only maintained, but expanded the number of high school transition opportunities for LCC students.

ROP course offerings have expanded greatly since 2005. Currently, LCC students are able to earn certification in ROP Virtual Enterprise, ROP Child Development, ROP Silk Screening, ROP Photo Technology, ROP Digital Media Production, ROP Stagehand Technology, ROP CAD Design, ROP Principles of Engineering, and ROP Surf/Lifesaving, in addition to the original ROP Culinary Arts class. In addition, while not an ROP class, an Introduction to Engineering Design elective has also been added. As a result of these additional course offerings, students now have opportunities to earn certification in a myriad of different areas which could lead to entry level jobs in these fields.

To complement these classes, in the 2008-09 school year the VPA department will be offering Illustration for Publishing, Audio Engineering, Design Foundations, and a revised Graphic Communications course. Each of these courses will be year-long and linked to a career path. In addition, three "Career Pathways" have been identified and implemented: an Engineering Pathway, a Media and Design Arts Pathway, and a Finances and Business Pathway. Each pathway consists of an introductory or foundational course, one or two specialization courses, and a capstone course that often includes an internship.

Between 140 and 150 students enroll in Work Experience each year. The number of students successfully completing the course requirements for the Internship class averages 55-60 students annually. The number of students taking these classes has declined recently, largely due to the number of increased ROP offerings at LCC.

The Teen Expo, an on-campus job fair, is held each year one day in the spring, at lunchtime in the student center. Area employers are invited to recruit for summer jobs, but career-minded students can also speak to members of the armed services and various law enforcement agencies. The numbers of local employers attending the Expo has grown from approximately 8-10 employers three years ago to 18-20 employers expected for this year's event, with goals to eventually grow the Expo to 30-40 employers in attendance.

Many students need guidance and information about various career paths in order to make an informed decision about which direction to take. Students can sign up to take the ASVAB each spring and an on-line 'Choices' career assessment at any time. At College Night, counselors present a workshop to students and parents on how to effectively use the Choices program.

Approximately 100 students took advantage of the ASVAB administration on campus last year. Additionally, students have access to the Choices assessment either through the counseling center, or if they are receiving Special Education services, students are given the access code as part of their IEP meeting. As a result, they can access the test either at school or at home. The assessment program prints out a report which they can share with their parents/guardians and counselor. With their counselor, the student can then research which universities, junior colleges, or trade schools offer degree programs in his or her area(s) of interest.

The AVID program assists students by helping them to study for college prep coursework, to apply to four-year universities and to pay for the applications fees if necessary, to round out their volunteer hours, and will even help pay for sports fees when needed, all in the name of helping students diversify their high school experience. The program has grown to over 140 students and as part of their coursework, those students travel to local universities to experience the college atmosphere. Last year, the students visited San Diego State and Pt. Loma Nazarene University.

EL classes include thematic units which cover résumé drafting and job interview skills. The students and their parents are also contacted to attend monthly ELAC meetings where they can learn about and listen to experts speak on how their student can attend local junior colleges or universities after they receive a diploma. For the few students who meet graduation requirements for total units, but have not yet passed the CAHSEE, the transition to the district's adult school is encouraged where they can continue to take classes specifically geared to passing the CAHSEE, in addition to those they have taken while at LCC. Additionally, EL teachers have created liaisons with two of the local junior colleges to facilitate a less intimidating entry and therefore greater access to their programs and classes.

In Special Education, students have an ITP, or Individual Transition Plan as part of their overall IEP. ITP activities for students on this campus include local area junior college visits to meet with the Disabled Student Services coordinator and accessing services through the local California Department of Rehabilitation office, which sends representatives to campus each Spring to discuss eligibility criteria and to set appointments with students. By the end of this school year, LCC will have a Transitional Task Force dedicated to focusing curriculum in Special Education toward transitional skills such as creating résumés, interview practice, on-the-job skills, assisting students in finding internships or jobs, and the use of more sophisticated transitional assessments to help students discover and research their areas of interest.

Students also have access to on-campus and local area jobs through Workability. The Workability program is currently being revised, under the direction of the district's Executive Director of Special Education, to offer students with special needs even greater access to job and internship opportunities. The plan is for Special Education students in 9th-10th grade to have access to on-campus

jobs and for 11th-12th grade students to work in the community, in order to transition them into greater positions of autonomy and responsibility. Subsidized employment is available through the Workability grant to encourage local businesses to hire Special Education students. The position of Workability Coordinator has been created to facilitate job shadowing opportunities for all students in special education with mild to moderate learning disabilities who are interested, and for those with moderate to severe disabilities who are capable of working.

The progress made towards the goal of this action plan addresses the first of the visiting committee's schoolwide critical areas for follow-up: "Increase student participation in school to career opportunities."

3. Course Consistency through Standards-Based Assessment

La Costa Canyon High School will provide more consistency within courses and departments with respect to grades assigned to individual students and will increase the correlation of the ESLRs to our current rigorous instruction, embedding them in daily lessons to ensure explicit attainment.

The action plan from the 2005 self-study included several specific steps for increasing consistency within courses and departments. Progress towards each of these steps is outlined here.

Rubric Development

Progress has been made towards this step in some departments, while most of the other departments are still working towards this goal. The initial timeline of this goal has been amended, and it was not until the fall semester of the 2007-2008 school year that each department was given direction to work towards establishing these rubrics. While each department has some form of common assessment in place to assist students in meeting state standards and the ESLRs, only a few departments have developed a common rubric available to be used by all teachers within the department. The Visual and Performing Arts department has created a basic rubric that could be applied to all classes within the department, and this rubric is posted in each of the classrooms and available to both parents and students. Additionally, the English department has a common rubric available for use in assessing students' writing. Certain programs within departments have also made great strides toward using common assessments. Biology teachers as well as Spanish I & II teachers have worked together to create and deliver questions to all students on quarter and semester exams, and then to examine the results.

Though the departments are working towards developing common rubrics for use in assessing regularly assigned work, a number of teachers have developed rubrics for use in their individual classes. In addition, most teachers on campus have developed detailed course expectations explicitly stating the requirements for grading, which are posted in the majority of classrooms, as well as through the school website. There is still much progress to be made in this area, specifically in developing rubrics, and in increasing the regularity of intra- and inter-departmental follow-up meetings to specifically assess and insure the uniformed interpretation and application of the rubrics.

Course Review

Initial progress towards this goal has been made, as each department has met to review the existing courses of study, and to propose modifications where needed. Current courses of study are available through department chairs and district coordinators, with current course descriptions available through either counseling, or the district website. The majority of students are provided information about their course of study through detailed syllabi handed out at the onset of the school year. Most

departments also make these syllabi available on a department-specific website. These websites can be accessed by students and parents through links directed from the school and district web pages. Core subjects have met and continue to meet in order to discuss the shared curriculum goals for their students at each grade level, as well as to discuss strategies for incorporating the STAR testing into the individual courses. This resulted in successful scores in English-Language Arts, and upper-level Mathematics and Science courses on the 2007 STAR test.

Further, individual departments have made changes to the types of classes offered in order to meet the demands of the contemporary student and ever-evolving workforce. For example, more practical arts courses are being piloted during the 2007-2008 school year, with further courses slated to be introduced in the 2008-2009 school year. These courses, which teach students relevant skills for their future careers, also incorporate the ESLRs, as well as state and national standards.

Collaboration

Another step towards course consistency is that core academic departments that share similar skills and themes (i.e., English and Social Science; Mathematics and Science) will meet to share the outcomes of their departmental work (i.e., rubrics and courses of study). While this step is ongoing, a timeline for this goal was set for the 2007-2008 school year for the core academic subjects to collaborate and review the outcomes. Department chairs will be responsible for gathering the rubrics and courses of study, organizing meetings, and encouraging maximum faculty participation. All faculty members will have the responsibility of providing rubrics and supplying samples of student work to illustrate inter-departmental points of commonality.

A strength in working towards this step is the inclusion of Sheltered Classes in the core academic areas. Sheltered Classes are courses with a strong emphasis towards improving language skills while learning Social Sciences, or Mathematics, for example. These courses, which seek to provide students with the tools to improve reading, writing, and speaking skills, have helped to improve the STAR scores of students in the targeted subgroups. Despite the great strides that are being made in Sheltered Classes to share similar skills and themes, this step of the action plan to improve course consistency is one that needs more attention. While a number of faculty members choose to share rubrics and collaborate on common themes with inter-departmental colleagues, there has not been time set aside for the faculty as a whole to do this.

The progress made towards the goal of this action plan addresses the fourth and fifth of the visiting committee's schoolwide critical areas for follow-up: "Strengthen the infusion of standards into the instructional delivery system" and "Implement articulation strategies that will review courses of study to ensure that standards and ESLRs are explicitly included in the instruction and learning."

4. Student Connectedness

La Costa Canyon High School will implement various models for promoting responsibility, acceptance, and a sense of community by increasing student involvement in a variety of clubs, programs, and extra-curricular activities that will enable students to connect to the school in meaningful ways.

The action plan from the 2005 self-study included several specific steps for increasing the sense of community within LCC. Progress towards each of these steps is outlined here.

CommUnity Days

In 2005, LCC was awarded a Smaller Learning Community (SLC) grant, which was used to expand the existing program of "CommUnity Days." More than 1000 students participated in 18 individual CommUnity Day workshops in the 2005-06 school year. These events were conducted and facilitated by students enrolled in the Humans Relations class, an elective course offered within the regular school day. Students and staff responded favorably in evaluating the CommUnity Day activities; many students stated that they appreciated the opportunity to participate in open dialogue discussing differences, biases and judgmental attitudes in order to break down barriers and better understand and connect with each other. Due to a change in staff leadership of the SLC grant, along with the low enrollment in the Human Relations class, CommUnity Days did not continue into the 2006-07 school year, despite the positive response from students and staff.

In the fall of 2007, 30 students were trained in "A World of Difference" lead by the Anti-Defamation League. This workshop focused upon developing the students' leadership skills, specifically in addressing anti-bias education and diversity issues. Four staff members also volunteered to participate in the training, as well as to serve as faculty advisors for this program, which will be implemented in the spring of 2008. It is the goal of the program to identify student leaders who, after completing the intensive three-day training, will serve as Maverick World of Difference Ambassadors. This program will continue on into the following school year, providing the training for identified students and additional interested staff members.

In addition to extra-curricular programs, a new course has been developed to help students recognize their connections to larger communities. Social Justice is a UC-approved elective course that creates a space for students to research, discuss and get active about global issues related to human rights, animal protection, and environmental ethics. Students engage with each other, the campus community, and leaders in non-profit organizations to work towards a more compassionate world. The Social Justice course provides students with the training and opportunity to have a positive effect on their campus, local, national, and global communities.

Student Support Groups

In the spring of 2005, eight support groups were offered, ranging from general issues groups to specific areas of need, including grief groups, substance issues and gender specific topics, all facilitated by site counselors. In the 2005-06 school year, a total of 19 groups were offered, surpassing the thirteen groups initially called for in the 2005 self-study action plan. Most importantly was the addition of a group, facilitated by the school psychologists, which addressed the needs of our special education population. The group focused upon self-advocacy, dealing with stress and anxiety, as well as addressing values and personal issues. The other groups in place were identified through student surveys and were formed based on student identified needs. In the 2006-07 school year, 20 groups were offered, including a group for students within the Special Education program, as well as a group

specifically created for students who had participated in the Recovery Education and Alcohol/Drug Instruction (READI) program. This wrap-around group focused upon substance abuse issues, as well as stress reduction and general support. In the fall of 2007, there were 14 support groups available for students, including the READI follow-up group, two grief groups, several general issue groups, two Latina female groups, a Latino leadership group, three support groups facilitated by the school psychologists for students with special needs and a new group specifically designed to meet the needs of students within the TAP program, focused upon pragmatic skills. The groups led by the school psychologists have been streamlined into modules to focus on identified student needs, to allow the students to work out school issues in a safe and supportive environment. All groups have been identified based on student, parent, and staff feedback, with the flexibility available in the spring to offer additional or different groups, as needed. Each support group consists of 10-12 students, so the 14 currently active groups provide a service for nearly 150 students.

Link Crew Program

While not a new program to LCC, Link Crew (now called Canyon Crew) has been revitalized over the last three years. In the spring of 2005, 150 juniors and seniors were trained as peer leaders and facilitators for the Canyon Crew program. 500 incoming freshmen participated in the program beginning in the fall of 2005, which was designed to provide a connection with older peer leaders and help them transition into high school. Another component of the program is to mix students of diverse backgrounds to build communication, respect and tolerance for one another. Peer leaders served as role models and peer listeners throughout the school year. This program has been institutionalized within the school system, as all incoming freshman are invited to participate in what is now known as Maverick Day, a half-day event held prior to the first day of school, led by upper class students under the direction of three teacher coordinators.

Student Extracurricular Participation

Beginning in the spring of 2005, all incoming freshmen were given an interest survey regarding sports, clubs, and other extra-curricular activities, as part of the information to be returned with the enrollment packet. There were 58 offerings for extra-curricular activities for the 2006-07 school year, with an increase to 65 offerings for the 2007-08 year. The student handbook is revised annually to reflect the new or changed opportunities. Additionally, ASB has institutionalized a "Club Rush" Day at the beginning of each school year. Club Rush is a lunch-time activity, in which each group or club has an opportunity to disseminate information to interested students. It is a high energy event, highlighting each group's focus along with the types of activities and community service that are planned for the year. Students reported that the 2007 fall event was helpful in finding out about additional clubs or groups they might want to take part in. Another access point for students is through the ASB webpage, linked to the schools website. Many clubs have links through the ASB page, which allows them to update students, staff, and parents on their upcoming events and other planned activities. Hard copies of the club listings, meeting information, as well as club advisor names, are made available through the front office, counseling center, and in the Media Center. There is no central recordkeeping of the actual number of participants (active or otherwise) within the clubs and extra-curricular activities, but informal measures indicate high numbers of students taking advantage of the opportunities.

Another indicator of student participation beyond the classroom is the renewed energy of the ASB program under our new ASB Director. All-school pep rally assemblies have been reinstated beginning in 2006, and continue to serve as a focus of enthusiasm not only for ASB students who produce and perform the events, but also for the students who are being honored.

Staff Development

Under the direction and support of the SLC grant in the spring of 2005, 18 teachers received release time to participate in on-site staff development in student connectedness training and all staff received an introduction to the SLC program's goal of accomplishing greater student-student, student-staff, and student-school connectedness. In the summer of 2006, a delegation of teachers and administrators attended the Professional Learning Communities conference in Washington, D.C. That group shared their experiences with the whole staff over the course of the next school year. Additionally, 30 content-area teachers were trained in EL authorization through SB395 trainings to allow for a better connection with, and serving the needs of English Language Learners in core classrooms. Through the San Diego County Office of Education, teachers were also provided with training opportunities throughout the school year. The SLC grant also promoted ongoing professional development training opportunities during minimum day activities, monthly staff lunches which were hosted by each content area department, as well as activities infused into staff meetings. Over the last few years, Student Connectedness has also become a focal point at the district level. One of the six priorities addressed within the District Strategic Plan is Student Connection, which focuses upon the creation and support of programs and processes to connect each student to school, education and community, as well as to foster personal well-being. This inclusion of student connection within the overall district plan solidifies the site's focus on providing staff development in this area. The Strategic Plan Committee (consisting of school board members, administrators, certificated and classified staff members, students, parents and community members) reviews progress in each priority area on a semi-annual basis, which adds accountability and validates the efforts of La Costa Canyon.

Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-up:

Of the five schoolwide critical areas for follow-up identified by the visiting committee in 2005, four have been addressed by the action plans written into the self-study. The fifth is addressed here.

Continue to strengthen and improve communication with all segments of the school population.

Technology and communication at LCC has improved significantly with the introduction of new programs. In 2006-07 a new student data system (Aeries) was implemented for grade, attendance and all other student information reporting. All teachers are using it to submit information, allowing parents to view real-time attendance data as well as quarter and semester grades online. This attendance recording method provides parents with easy access to their children's current attendance information and also provides teachers with a tool to increase accuracy of attendance taking. In addition, Aeries allows teachers to also view students' detailed standardized test scores (including CAHSEE, CELDT, CST, PSAT, and SAT results) to facilitate instructional design. Aeries also allows staff members to access student information (student schedules, grades, contact information) more easily than in the past. Teachers can also view STAR results for their students from the previous school year, providing another common assessment that can be used to modify future instruction. In addition, most teachers are using the online gradebook component of Aeries, which can be accessed from school or home. This allows teachers to easily communicate with students and parents on a daily basis. More than 4000 students and parents have registered to view their grades online through Aeries; every effort is being made to register those who have not yet.

Increases in communication have resulted in increased participation in school events. Parents receive on average four emails per month from the school notifying them of schedules, updates, and key events. All information is also duplicated on the school's website and is known as the Maverick E-news.

The district has upgraded the automated calling system to one that is integrated with Aeries. The new system, ConnectEd, can be used by the Superintendent, any of the administrators, and other designees from any computer or phone at any time. ConnectEd also enables automated calls to go out in minutes, provides sophisticated reports, and is customizable. All of these features are significant improvements over the old system, which required a trained user, a dedicated phone station, and took days to complete all the calls. Parents now receive attendance calls for unexcused absences twice a day: once at 10:30 a.m. and another at 8 p.m., if necessary. Emergency calls or informational messages are now easier to send, as the school community found out during the October fires. All calls are made in both English and Spanish.

The current administration has returned to a schedule of regular monthly staff meetings, leadership team meetings, and department meetings. Such a schedule had not been in place in previous years, which had contributed to poor communication within the staff and between staff and administration. Staff meetings in the first semester of this school year have been welcome for their open discussions of site- and district-related issues, as well as professional considerations.