

**MID-CYCLE VISIT**



**VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS  
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

**FOR**

**REDWOOD HIGH SCHOOL**

**395 Doherty Drive**

**Larkspur, CA 94939**

**Tamalpais Union High School District**

**April 26 - April 29, 2015**

**Tuesday, March 6, 2018**

**Visiting Committee Members**

Mr. Rob REIBENSCHUH, Chairperson  
AP, American High School

Mrs. Yvonne L. WHITE  
Biology Teacher, Hayward High School

## I. Introduction

### Include the following:

- **General comments about the school, its setting, and the school's analysis of student achievement data.**
- **Include a description of any significant changes and/or developments, i.e., program additions since the last full visit, changes in student enrollment, staffing changes.**
- **Describe the impact these changes and/or developments have had on the school and/or specific curricular programs.**
- **Briefly comment on the school's follow-up process. Include a description of the committee that has been responsible for overseeing the progress of the school's action plan and the preparation for the visit.**
- **Describe the process used to prepare the progress report.**

### General Description:

Serving seven small suburban communities in southern Marin County, Redwood High School opened in 1958, and has a solid tradition of academic performance. One of three comprehensive high schools in the Tamalpais Union High School District (TUHSD), RHS is surrounded by expensive real estate prices which hides the economic diversity in the area. Winning the California Distinguished School award four (4) times, and being a National Blue Ribbon School as well, RHS also was named a 2015 California Gold Ribbon School due to its high expectations for students, dedicated teachers and staff, and visible parent support.

Parents are an integral part of the school community and are active participants in various facets of the school culture. First, they provide input and support on the Redwood Site Council which promotes empathy, kindness, and respect for self and others, using Wellness practices to cultivate a positive learning environment. Second, the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), hosts student assemblies, school beautification days, and other school-centered events. Third, the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) solicit parent input on a variety of school topics. Finally, parents offer both financial and volunteer support. RHS parents actively support sports teams through various Booster clubs, the Drama and Music programs, and assistance with campus tours, ninth grade registration, college and career center and attendance support.

Taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses are a common part of the school culture. Redwood High offers 17 AP courses and recently added an AP Capstone and an AP Art History course. More than half (68%) of the 11th and 12 graders are enrolled in an AP course. The only AP course available to 10th graders is AP European History and 36 % of the students have chosen to take this course.

A number of other parent organizations also support RHS. The Redwood Foundation has been an outstanding source of financial support - in 2017 alone, the foundation raised over \$800,000 which was distributed to staff and students through grants, scholarships for graduating seniors, medium to large capital projects, to name just a few. The Redwood Alumni Association supports the school community with

scholarships, athletics, arts and campus beautification. In partnership with the Marin County Office of Education (MCOE), the School to Career program provides students the opportunity to explore careers in a variety of areas through internships that typically last for 6 to 8 hours per week for six weeks. Internship partnerships include Kaiser Permanente, Marin Youth Center, and Marin Mammal Center. An organization with a specific focus on achieving educational equity is 10,000 Degrees. They work with Redwood students to provide college awareness, college preparation and planning advice, and financial assistance. Another community organization that utilizes both a prevention and an intervention model to address behavioral issues is Dynamic Solutions for Youth.

### **Vision and Mission**

The Tamalpais Union High School District is dedicated to the development of creative, passionate, and self-motivated learners. The district expects students that are prepared for engaged citizenship and are able to contribute individually and collaboratively in order to address the challenges of a dynamic and diverse world. Students should demonstrate mastery of core competencies and would have been exposed to meaningful learning experiences to enable them to access and critically analyze information, pose substantive questions, and communicate effectively.

### **Learner Outcomes**

- creative, passionate, self-motivated learners
- engaged citizens
- able to contribute individually and collaboratively
- able to address the challenges of a dynamic and diverse world
- demonstrate mastery of core competencies
- access and critically analyze information
- pose substantive questions, communicate effectively

### **LCAP Goals Updated for 2017-18**

1. Guarantee students' access to rigorous, relevant and engaging curriculum in all content areas. (Common Core Standards, Pupil Achievement, Course Access, Other Pupil Outcomes)
2. Improve the learning of all students while narrowing the achievement gaps among our student groups. (Common Core Standards, Pupil Achievement, Course Access, Other Pupil Outcomes)
3. Improve communication and relationship with the community and stakeholder groups. (Parent Involvement, Pupil Engagement)
4. Support each student's emotional and social growth and work towards a community where all students feel safe and valued and develop a system of intervention to support the academic and behavioral success of all students. (Pupil Engagement, School Climate)

### Redwood High School Site Goals for 2017 - 18

1. Increase success in grade-level and higher learning for all students.
2. Improve the sense of community, positive student behavior and wellness among staff and students.
3. Decrease the number of absences and tardies and the impact of missed class time on teaching and learning.

### 2014 Critical Learner Needs

1. **Access** - Provide all students opportunity and access to grade level instruction, higher-level course offerings (AP and Honors) and college and career options in the 21st Century.
2. **Equity** - Reduce the gap in performance between economically disadvantaged students, students of color and the general population, while raising student achievement for all students.
3. **Math** - Increase achievement in Math.

### Analysis of Student Achievement Data

Demographically, although student enrollment has increased, much of the diversity remains fairly consistent, although the Hispanic and the Low SES populations have increased.

#### Student Enrollment - 2013-2018

Year	Total	Low SES	EL	Spec Ed	504	Afr Amr	Asian	Hispanic	White	Amr Ind	Filipino	Other
2015-16	1776	4%	1%	8%	2%	2%	7%	10%	76%	0%	1%	3%
2016-17	1799	4%	2%	9%	2%	1%	7%	11%	74%	0%	1%	4%
2017-18	1851	8%	2%	8%	3%	1%	7%	13%	73%	0%	1%	4%

Reviewing and analyzing the CAASPP results, it appears as if RHS continues to struggle with the increasing Hispanic and Low SES populations in the school.

#### CAASPP - ELA : % At or Above Standard

	% At or Above Standard			# Students Tested		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
African American	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	1	4
Asian	88%	86%	91%	16	22	22
Hispanic	78%	62%	54%	38	34	41
White	85%	78%	82%	270	259	304
High SES	86%	78%	84%	348	331	368
Low SES	47%	60%	39%	17	10	26
All Students	84%	77%	81%	365	341	394

Low SES and Hispanic/Latino consistently lag behind the rest of the school's

population, and appear to have fallen even further behind according to the latest results. (It is difficult to analyze the achievement levels of African-American or Black students with this data.)

**CAASPP - Mathematics: % At or Above Standard**

	% At or Above Standard			# Students Tested		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
African American	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	1	4
Asian	79%	82%	82%	24	23	22
Hispanic	59%	40%	38%	32	30	42
White	72%	67%	68%	255	254	296
High SES	73%	68%	69%	322	324	362
Low SES	22%	10%	27%	18	10	14
All Students	70%	67%	66%	340	334	376

The same discrepant results are found in the CAASPP Math results, although the Low SES students showed significant improvement even with the slight increase in population.

Staff and the Site Council reviewed student achievement data in the fall of 2017, and made these observations:

- Steady overall achievement at a high level for the school, except for Low SES, Black or African-American, and Hispanic/Latino students still lag behind the White and Asian students. Clearly, the Asian students show steady high level achievement.
- Slight decreases in both CAASPP ELA and Math scores overall.
- Larger decreases in CAASPP ELA performance for both Hispanic and Low SES students.
- Larger decrease in CAASPP Math performances for Hispanic students.
- Increase in CAASPP Math performance for Low SES students.
- In other data not included in this report, RHS found that more students were participating in higher level course offerings such as UC a-g courses and AP/Honors courses, improved academic achievement for Low SES, Black or African-American and Hispanic/Latino students in the areas of GPA, meeting UC/CSU a-g requirements (African American only), participation in ACT (except Low SES), average ACT Composite scores, and participation in and passing rates in AP Exams.

RHS recognizes that there is still work to do. The school has made progress in each of the critical learner needs over the last three years, but they need to continue efforts to improve students participation and achievement for Low SES, Black or African American, and Hispanic/Latino students, while also continuing to improve student

achievement in Math.

### **Significant Changes**

Staffing both at the central office and at the school level highlight significant changes. Since the self-study in 2014, TUHSD has appointed a new superintendent (2015), two new Assistant Superintendents (2015/16) and elected two new Board of Trustee members (2016). RHS has also added three new Assistant Principals (2016 and 2017), hired 24 new teachers and/or counselors, and promoted 6 new teacher leads (out of 8). Over half of the clerical staff has changed positions or retired, and all three campus assistants are new. In addition, RHS has faced continued enrollment growth (13% in the last three years, 28% in the last five years), added new portable classrooms, a site ELD Coordinator, ELD paraeducator, and an ELD support class. As well, a Wellness Center has been added to the school's Counseling Services, while several new classes including AP Capstone, AP Art History, a 9th grade integration of English/Social Studies, Sustainable Agriculture, SAGE (Sustainable Agriculture and Government/Economics integration), AVID, Choir, and Spanish for Spanish Speakers have been added. Finally, the school has added an Advisory period once a week to strengthen peer-to-peer and adult-student relationships, and has continued to add Chromebooks to bring them close to the 1:1 student:digital device ratio.

### **Implications of Significant Changes**

Although the changes are significant, the school believes that they have not altered their school-wide goals or their focus to improve their efforts. Through the new hires, the staff has become more diverse and balanced across ethnicities, experience and age. Increased staff morale also appears evident as the turnover in staff has also reduced significant friction between staff and district administration.

The Wellness Center has allowed the school to provide more social and emotional support to more students, and has also reduced student off-campus time and missed class time for providing sexual health services on campus. Adding the integrated programs at the 9th and 12th grade levels has helped students see connections between academic disciplines, and addresses one of the areas of improvement recommended by the WASC VC three years ago. The addition of the two AP courses have increased the school's AP offerings, and are both interdisciplinary in nature, which also addresses the WASC recommendations. Additional support for struggling students is provided by the AVID class; the school hopes to expand the AVID program to include 9th grade and 11th grade for the 2018-19 academic year. The Advisory period, two years in existence, will be reviewed by staff and faculty this year (2018) to determine whether it has been effective or not. Finally, the addition of hundreds of Chromebooks and the use of Google Apps in the classrooms has allowed RHS to have technology when and where students need it. This technology also addresses the technology critical area for improvement from the last self-study.

## Follow Up Process

Through regularly scheduled meetings with teacher leaders, school staff and the school's site council, RHS's WASC team shared the school data in the fall of 2017. These meetings generated questions while also providing feedback about the data, both verbally at the meetings and through emails after. School administration shared the action plan with the entire staff and school community which is reviewed and revised each year as part of the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), which is then approved by the Site Council and the Board of Trustees before final submission to the state. School administration completed this Mid-cycle Progress Report in the Fall of 2017, and then reviewed by the teacher leaders, the school staff, and the site council. All change suggestions and most recommendations were incorporated into the report before it was approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2018.

## II. Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up/Schoolwide Action Plan

- Provide an analytical summary about the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section referencing the critical areas for follow-up addressed through each section.
- Note the evidence supporting the progress made and the impact made on student achievement.
- If any critical areas for follow-up were not included in the school's action plan, indicate what actions have been taken to address these issue(s) and include supporting evidence.

**Note:** The school's schoolwide action plan should have incorporated all the critical areas of follow-up or major recommendations that were stated in the last self-study visiting committee report.

### 2014 Critical Areas for Follow-Up

Redwood High School is located in a high social economic community and is able to garner the necessary resources to offer many academic opportunities and services for students. However, despite financial support and parent involvement, students of color and low socioeconomic (low-SES) students are not achieving at the same rates as White and Asian students. This discrepancy was identified in the prior WASC report and it was suggested that steps be implemented to address this apparent inequity. RHS has attempted to address these concerns by implementing new courses and support services to reduce the achievement and opportunity gap for this student population.

**Access** - Provide all students opportunity and access to grade level instruction, higher-level course offerings (AP and Honors) and college and career options in the 21st Century.

Equity, in the context of education, is providing the necessary services and assistance to enable students to access curriculum. RHS is taking steps to look at issues of diversity by offering professional development opportunities around culturally relevant

teaching practices to teacher leaders. These courses exam issues such as privilege and how these institutional challenges impact student learning. RHS students are extremely proud of their school and use the following adjectives to describe what they enjoyed most about their academic experiences: Spirit, Opportunity, Programs, Community, Effort, Teachers, Academics Opportunity, Opportunity, Community, Option, Variety of Sports Opportunity, Sports choice, Location, Opportunity, People, and Education.

**Equity** - Reduce the gap in performance between economically disadvantaged students, students of color and the general population, while raising student achievement for all students.

Prior WASC Report	Observatons	Suggestions
<p>Insure that all students have access to grade level learning.</p>	<p>RHS is providing teachers with professional development around issues of equity. They are employing Glen Singleton methdology which focus on Culturally Relevant Teaching practices.</p>	<p>Continue work around Culturally Relevant Teaching practices (CRT).</p> <p>Currently only a small group of teachers, the leadership team, has participated in Cultrually Revlevant Professional Devlopment. Next steps need to be discussed as to how this information will be disseminated to the teachers and staff.</p>
	<p>Overall, students feel that RHS provides a welcoming environment for incoming students and families. There are a variety of groups such as sports, drama , which students can join to build greater community connections.</p>	<p>RHS could establish a welcome committe to help new students aclimate to the RHS culture.</p>

<p>Explore ways of reducing the opportunity gap of students and becoming more inclusive of parent diversity, perhaps with the creation of community liaisons who would outreach and mitigate the cultural divide</p>	<p>RHS PTSA/Booster are extremely supportive and actively works to address the needs of the entire school community. They have successfully rased over 800,000 dollars this academic year. However, it is apparent that the PTSA/Boosters members do not reflect the diversity of the student population.</p>	<p>Discuss ways to increase the communication of meeting times. For example, informational phone calls and mailings could be provided in Spanish.</p>
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1. **Math** - Increase achievement in Math.

<b>Prior WASC Report</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
<p>Ensure that all students have access to grade level learning.</p>	<p>Intermediate Algebra now meets UC/CSU a-g college entry requirement.</p> <p>New course, Geometry A added to provide additional support for students who struggled in Algebra. Geometry A meets the math (UC/CSU) requirement</p> <p>After school math tutoring is offered</p> <p>Implemented an Academic Math workshop course to the Master schedule to offer additional academic support.</p>	<p>Continue work around Culturally Relevant Teaching practices (CRT).</p> <p>Currently only a small group of teachers, the leadership team, has participated in Cultrually Revlevant Professional Devlopment. Next steps need to be discussed as to how this information will be dissiminated to the teachers and staff.</p> <p>The Academic Math Workshop has been replaced by the AVID 10 class. Math Department reported that MAW was not as effective as the other workshops. As AVID</p>

		continues to grow, more AWs will be supplanted.
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### III. Commendations and Recommendations

#### Commendations:

- **Comment on significant progress the school has made in responding to the critical areas for follow-up and in carrying out the related action plan.**

We believe that the school is determined and has the capability to continue working on their goals as identified by their 2015 Self Study and Mid-Cycle review for the next 3 years. Because of the faculty's determination and passion, and their leadership, both teacher and administrative, RHS has shown that they can readily and accurately identify their areas of need. They have already attempted various strategies to address their critical learner needs, and continue to make adaptations where necessary.

The ELA department, particularly the ELD department, should be commended for their effort and progress with regard to supporting student learning and language acquisition. They have added an ELD Coordinator, a paraprofessional to work with second language learners and an ELD Academic Workshop to support and encourage non-Native English speakers to thrive. We were told that recent report cards showed a decrease in the number of ELD students failing classes because of these additions.

Some of the school's PLC teams have become interdisciplinary, following the suggestion of the Initial Visiting WASC Committee. Instead of just focussing on curricular solutions and essential standards, these teams have researched and then developed skills in varying instructional strategies to increase learning in the classrooms. They share best practice in strategies as the conduit, but use their own content. They have identified continuing threads and strategies that will impact learning at all grade levels, and continue to collaborate on making their programs more rigorous and successful.

Faculty have been involved in a variety of professional development including Math differentiation, sessions on equity and culturally responsive teaching, and Beyond Diversity training to ameliorate the discrepancies of Hispanic/Latino and Low SES students achievement. Teachers continue to hone their skills through learning and mastering Google Apps, project-based learning, integrating curriculum, and subject-area and instructional strategies. They continue to find ways of improving teaching and learning.

The Math department has worked to add more UC/CSU a-g compliant Math courses to

their choices in an effort to keep most students on-track for four year admissions. They have added Intermediate Algebra (Alg 2 w/o Trig) to their catalog, as well as Geometry A, a slower, more methodical version of Geometry. Students who successfully complete Geometry A are eligible for Intermediate Algebra. Math has already implemented pre-screening diagnostics to place incoming Freshmen in the the appropriate Math classes to build success.

In the spirit of Interdisciplinary learning, RHS has added a Grade 9 Humanitas program (2017-18), and are planning to add the 10th Grade program next year (2018-19). The Humanitas program shares the same students over two periods of classes - English 9 and Social Studies 9 - with two teachers who have planned projects that span both curricula.

To support special education needs, general education teachers' assignments have been adjusted to cluster Special Education Academic Workshop sections for 9th and 10th graders, reducing the number of teacher contacts for general education and special education teachers. The school has also added paraeducators to support all Math support classes, Science and Social Studies classes, and those classes with more than 5 Special Education students.

The Wellness Center has truly been well received. Student can receive grief, relationship, and support counselling, or have a place to come and unwind when they feel too stressed or burdened. It also offers mental health, reproductive guidance, and supplements what the school initially offered. The Wellness Center staff, along with Link Crew, Leadership, and Peer Resources, coordinates student activities on campus. The Wellness Center allows students the ability to seek medical and psychological help without leaving the campus.

We noticed rigor and student engagement in all departments observed. With the significant windfall of financial support the community provides the school through the Redwood Foundation, the school is well equipped and are able to offer a variety of courses that meet student interest.

On the whole, students and teachers love being at RHS because of the opportunities the school provides, the welcoming and friendly atmosphere, the rigor faced in the classes students are taking, and the realization that most teachers truly care about the success of the students. The faculty of RHS knows that they must continue to improve, and are willing and determined to make a difference to their students in preparing them for life after high school.

**Recommendations:**

- **Comment on any critical areas for follow-up/action plan sections that have not yet been completely addressed, if applicable.**
- **Identify any new areas of concerns, if applicable.**

Both the Math and English departments, in particular, continue to face some challenges in the areas of Hispanic/Latino student achievement, and Low SES student achievement. Although most of the staff have focussed on Culturally Relevant Teaching (CRT), teachers still appear to need to hone their skills at teaching in a cross-cultural or multicultural setting. The school's assessment results and report cards show that these Hispanic/Latino and Low SES students may continue to be left behind.

RHS could establish a welcome committee to help new students and families acclimate to the RHS culture. Sending out information in two languages, English and Spanish, could be one step in dispersing information. The school should discuss ways to increase the communication and readjust meeting times. For example, informational phone calls and mailings could be provided in Spanish, and parent meetings, including PTSA meetings, could be held later in the day when all families may be at home, instead of early in the morning when many families are at work.

RHS and the school community should continue developing opportunities for career involvement through CTE and ROP classes. One of the strengths the students related to was the number of options the school offered, but they also admitted that they felt stressed about the high academic standards expected; one method of reducing some of that stress would be open CTE/ROP courses to more students, not just in sustainable agriculture and computing, but in other technical pathways as well.

One area that students, faculty and parents agree on is the lack of participation by all members of the community. One suggestion from the parents and some students was to send out communication in both major languages, English and Spanish, in order to broaden the sphere of information. Because not all families have access to computers and emails, perhaps an effort to make phone calls to cell phones in both languages would also promote a greater sense of belonging and community for more members. An auto dialler, if not already in use, could be beneficial.

Two areas of concern that the students shared was consistency and communication. They felt that the school's discipline guidelines were not transparent, and therefore, students were not disciplined equally. They also felt that students were being profiled - that "because they hung out with these people, they were just like them" and, as a result, they may be punished more severely for various infractions. They also felt that communication could be improved. Except for information regarding AP Exams, they believed that much information regarding school events or situations did not get shared clearly or quickly. They understood that not all details could be released due to confidentiality, but they also wanted to be treated as part of the community and not an

afterthought.