

Mid-cycle Visiting Committee Summary Report

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

Hercules High School

Hercules, CA 94547

West Contra Costa Unified School District

Mid-Cycle Virtual Visit Summary

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Visiting Committee Members

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Introduction

Hercules High School serves approximately 800 students in grade 9 – 12. The school has a highly diverse student population with a current enrollment of African American, 23.66%; Asian, 22.74%; Filipino, 24.11%; Hispanic/Latino, 21.71%; White, 50.26%. The English learners compose 9% of the population. Hercules is one of six comprehensive high schools in West Contra Costa Unified School District, twenty-five miles East of San Francisco. The average daily attendance rate over the past three years is 94.8%.

Hercules High School offers a variety of courses designed to meet the needs of each student's chosen post-secondary life. All teachers meet the credential requirements in accordance with State of California guidelines. The curriculum at Hercules High School aligns to the A-G requirements. The majority of students enroll in six classes with a number of students taking advantage of a seventh class offering which allows students to participate in advanced elective programs, pathways and the performing arts without conflicting with grade-level courses required for graduation. English Learners and special education students number approximately 151 students in need of specialized academic instruction. Since the spring of 2019, designated English learners who are EL 1 or EL 2 designation have been consolidated with the students at DeAnza High School due to declining enrollment. In EL 3, 4, and 5 there were 61 students for school year 2019-2020. The SPED population is approximately 10% of the student population.

Below are the vision and mission statements and the schoolwide learner outcomes:

Hercules H.S. Vision Statement

Diverse 21st century scholars and leaders, with integrity and academic excellence.

Hercules H.S. Mission Statement:

All students will successfully demonstrate academic excellence in common core disciplines that enable them to be meaningful and responsible contributors to local, national and global communities.

Schoolwide Learner Outcomes:

Graduates from Hercules High School will be:

1. Critical Thinkers who:

1.1 have mastered fundamentals of language, history, math, science, foreign language, and the arts, and use them effectively to enrich their daily lives

1.2 demonstrate the ability to collect, analyze, and organize resources and information

1.3 effectively evaluate and analyze data from multiple sources to develop solutions to problems

1.4 use logical decision-making processes

1.5 demonstrate the ability to apply decisions or solutions to future situations by making predictions, connections, and/or recommendations

2. Effective Engaged Communicators who:

2.1 organize thoughts and emotions, and express them in oral, written and artistic forms

2.2 listen to, comprehend, and process information

- 2.3 explore, develop, and demonstrate creative expression in a variety of forms
- 2.4 read, write, speak, and listen analytically, thoughtfully, and reflectively
- 2.5 use technology thoughtfully, critically, and appropriately as a tool of communication (e.g. correspondence, display of information, expression of ideas, creative self-expression)

3. Responsible Citizens who:

- 3.1 adopt and value ethical principles and attitudes (e.g. honesty, integrity, responsibility, compassion) and apply them to their daily lives
- 3.2 recognize and value their responsibility to society and make positive contributions to their community (e.g. register to vote, care for the environment, drive responsibly, volunteer)
- 3.3 respect cultural, physical, economic, intellectual, age, gender, religious and sexual diversity
- 3.4 understand history, government, economics, legal systems and art forms from our own and other countries
- 3.5 participate in community, social, civic, cultural, and philanthropic services

The most recent 2018-2019 California Dashboard showed that overall students at Hercules High School score in the green for the following indicators: suspension rate, graduation rate, and math. The students score in the yellow for the college/career readiness indicator and the English Language Arts indicator. The results of the current Advanced Placement (AP) courses showed the following: the average number of the students scoring 3 or higher in the AP was 34.20% (144 exams out of 421 courses). Students taking the SAT score above the national and state averages. The disaggregated data has pointed out specific student groups where there needs to be targeted support.

Significant Changes/Developments

In 2017-2018 WCCUSD provided monies to support two pathways at Hercules High School; Medical Careers and Information Technology. Three courses for Medical Careers and four courses for Informational Technology were developed. Qualified staff was hired to develop and instruct these programs. The expansion of course offerings in the 2019-2020 school year precipitated a need for an additional instructor in the Medical Career pathway. Hercules was successful in hiring a highly qualified medical career teacher who is engaging even more students in this popular pathway. Information Technology course offerings have also been expanded and have a thriving student participation. Furniture, equipment and other resources support each program. All students have received Chromebooks and all classrooms are supplied with a technology cart that allows the use of document camera, overhead projector, and speakers. Teachers are also provided a laptop.

The Hercules Bell schedule has also been modified to accommodate the 1 hour and 30 minutes collaboration meetings held each Wednesday at the end of the school day.

The District and United Teachers of Richmond (UTR) have developed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a framework for an Instructional Leadership Team. The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) has been instituted to develop a culture of collaboration among teachers, to guide the teaching and learning process as well as to improve student learning and

achievement. Thirty hours of staff development per year are scheduled with topics chosen from suggestions submitted by all faculty with the top five topics chosen to focus upon each school year. The focus of the ILT at Hercules High School for the 2019-2020 school year was data driven instructional practices in order to build a culture of data literacy and to expand a schoolwide collaborative culture.

Programs across the curriculum have all adopted changes with support of WCCUSD, i.e. Springboard Curriculum which supports all college prep grade level English courses and is aligned to Common Core State Standards, Math uses online resources to supplement direct instruction; Science began a transition to NGSS; Social Sciences placing greater emphasis on ELA literacy standards using evidence based essay writing; All Special Education students are expected to pass general education college prep courses to satisfy district graduation requirements, etc.

Other changes include: Two academic counselors, the College Advisor and the post-secondary transition counselor for special education are now housed in the re-organized college career center space; A school supply Pantry has opened for students to be able to pick up any school supplies of which they have need; the purchase of new furniture, i.e. rectangular tables, computer stations enhance a work space for students; security cameras installed to properly investigate and resolve disruptive behaviors, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS) and a Climate TEAM have been introduced to upgrade behavioral standards. Collaboration between teachers and students is “key” to focusing on high-risk students and the creation of action plans that support the whole child through social, emotional and academic challenges. The formation of The Parent for the Educational Advancement Community of Hercules (PEACH) is a grassroots, parents-led, community-based organization that works to provide more sustainable source support for all students and to ensure all parents remain informed.

Follow-up Process

As the school has continued to focus on improvement, there has been review of student achievement data by the stakeholders through regularly occurring meetings and discussion on next steps. The ILT has overseen the implementing and monitoring and refining the schoolwide action plan.

Student achievement data has been presented and reviewed on a quarterly basis. . The ILT has developed a process to review data as part of the school’s professional development plan. Progress reports are shared with parents every nine weeks. There has been greater stakeholder involvement in school advisory committees so that more voices are heard and acknowledged in support of all students. Parent engagement is currently through the Parent Teacher Organization, School Site Council, Hercules Education Foundation, African American Parent Advisory Council, and PEACH.

The administration, the WASC professional development leadership, and the ILT collaborated to develop the school’s Mid-Cycle Report. Staff was provided the opportunity to review student achievement data, discuss and measure the extent of success within each program. Each section of the Mid-Cycle report was reviewed by all stakeholders. Feedback was reviewed, analyzed,

interpreted and placed within the various chapters culminating in the Mid-cycle Report presented for this visit.

Evaluation of Action Plan Progress

Hercules High School has made a concerted effort to ensure its Action Plan incorporates each area of concern identified by the school and those of the 2017 visiting committee.

- 1) The implementation and effective use of a four year plan for all HHS students that is collaboratively reviewed annually with parents and students to increase A-G compliance across ethnic and socio-economic groups and counseling staff will meet individually with all students and/or their parents annually to revisit, update and maintain the four-year plan, and will provide evidence of the meetings. (area to be strengthened #1)**

The school has implemented PowerSchool, a technology based report that serves as the four-year plan for each student to address academic progress and planning toward graduation and UC/CSU eligibility. There are parent/student meetings and class presentations that include review of FAFSA & financial Aid, A-G requirements, graduation requirements, summer enrichment programs, online credit recovery programs, university & community college enrollment processes. Online programs availability to support student achievement are reviewed and encouraged. Other support includes peer tutoring in the Homework Center and counselors working with students who are earning D's and F's. There has been an increase in the four –year average of A-G completion rate with a high in 2018 of 64.73%. The goal is to achieve 80% by 2023.

- 2) The development of interventions that address the educational needs of all students**

The school has initiated schoolwide intervention and supports through RTI and PBIS programs. The ILT planned and developed these initiatives. In 2019 a Multi-Tiered Support system was initiated by the district and fully supported by Hercules High School. The MTSS aligns directly with RTI and PBIS goals. This support system provides both behavioral and academic based interventions for all students. Above all else, Hercules strives to create a positive culture, one that establishes an emotionally safe, trusting and mutually respectful relationship throughout the entire school community. Students' social and emotional well-being is at the forefront so as to further enrich and support the academic life and long term goals for all students.

Professional development sessions underpin the progress of each schoolwide initiative. Hercules will identify specific student outcome data that will help to evaluate, monitor and measure the extent to which the school is meeting its objectives.

- 3) Staff will develop and implement a collaborative approach that aligns curriculum and instruction so that student performance is congruent throughout all forms of assessment.**

Through professional development participation the curriculum in math, science and English has been updated. Instructional practices and study guides have been shared within departments. COVID-19 virtual learning has allowed Hercules teachers to

showcase novel instructional strategies that ensure quality teaching and learning is taking place.

4) EL program needs strengthening to ensure appropriate and rigorous English Learner development including equity of access to curriculum, differentiated instruction, and inclusion of all stakeholders, including parents.

Due to the school's declining enrollment, EL 1 and 2 learners have been merged with De Anza High School's EL program resulting in a decline of EL students at Hercules High School. The EL 3 and 4 students are enrolled in ELA courses but are mainstreamed into general education classes. This decrease in EL enrollment has also lessened the number of sheltered classes needed. General education teachers individualize and diversify instructions to meet the needs of these students.

5) Hercules High School staff needs to collect, use and analyze data collaboratively and intentionally to increase student achievement

The ILT enhances the use of departmental collaboration to drive instructional practices using data driven decision making protocol. A more collaborative culture now exists in order to assess student needs and design instructional strategies that focus on meeting individual student needs.)

Hercules High school has updated the schoolwide action plan aligned with the school's vision, mission, schoolwide learner outcomes and the major student learner needs. The three goals are: 1) Improve college and career readiness for all students; 2) Develop and execute a schoolwide action plan of interventions that will address the educational needs of individual students as well as struggling subgroups; 3) Develop and implement a collaborative approach that aligns curriculum and instruction so that student performance is congruent throughout all forms of assessment (core academic pass rate, SBAC, and/or College Board). Within these goals, the school has clearly explained the rationale with supporting data and the identification of critical learner needs and SLOs being addressed. This provides the background for the growth targets, the measurement tools to be used, actions and the overall expectations of the impact on student learning.

Schoolwide Strengths and Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement

Based on the mid-cycle report and visit, the following Schoolwide Strengths and Growth areas for Continuous Improvement are noted:

Schoolwide Strengths

1. The district for the support of the school's initiatives and identified student and school needs.
2. The leadership, faculty, staff, students, and parents for their resiliency, flexibility, and adaptability in these challenging times to support the social-emotional and learning needs of the students.
3. The leadership and faculty for the increased data collection, analysis and implementation of diverse instructional strategies to modify and adapt the teaching to meet the needs of all students.
4. The leadership and faculty for the introduction and support of programs that provide both social-emotional and academic based interventions to strengthen the learning outcomes for all students.
5. The increased parent participation and support of the school's programs to focus on student needs.
6. The leadership and faculty for addressing equity issues throughout the curricular/school program.

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement

(The Visiting Committee Concurs with the school's identified goals.)

1. The leadership and faculty move forward in the implementation, monitoring, and re-assessing the schoolwide action plan goals and determined actions, including the impact on student learning. These include:
 - a. Goal 1: To improve college and career readiness for all students;
 - b. Goal 2: To execute a school-wide plan of interventions that continues to meet the educational needs of individual students as well as struggling student groups; and
 - c. Goals 3: To implement a collaborative approach that aligns curriculum and instruction so that student performance is congruent throughout all forms of assessment across the curriculum.