

**MID-CYCLE VISIT  
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT  
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES  
FOR  
BUENA HIGH SCHOOL**

**5670 Telegraph Road  
Ventura, CA 93003**

**Ventura Unified School District**

**Visitation Date: March 11, 2014**

**Original Visitation Date: February 27, 2011 – March 2, 2011**

**Visiting Committee Members**

John Finn, Visiting Committee Chair

Assistant Principal

Arcadia High School

## I. Introduction

The student population at Buena High School has decreased from a high of 2300 in 2005-2006 to the more recent average of approximately 2000 students each year. The demographics of Buena High school has also changed the past six years. The Latino population has grown at Buena High School from 38.3% of the student body six years ago to 46% currently. This change reflects the current trends in Ventura County. The Latino population in Ventura County is 41.6%.

Three years ago the Title 1 population at Buena High School was 30% of the student population, currently the Title 1 population is 39.6%. The Socio-economically Disadvantaged students (SED), as identified by their participation in the Free/Reduced Lunch program, is approximately 40% of the student body. The number of English Language Learners comprises 20.7% of the overall student population.

Buena High School's API scores have fluctuated over the past ten years. The peak score of 790 was attained in 2012. In the 2012-2013 school year Buena High School's API was 778. Buena High school has met their School Wide Growth API Score five of the past eight years. Two of the past eight years Buena High School has been able to meet all of their subgroup target API scores (2006; 2012).

Buena High School attained the Distinguished Schools Award in 2013 for the first times since 1999. The BARK (Buena's Advisory for Relationships and Knowledge) Program has been refined since the 2011 visit. This change was based on input from the Advisory teachers. Students who previously enrolled in the Advisory class were redistributed into Study Hall and Intervention classes, based on students needs. Buena High School allocated a 50% position for a SAP (Student Assistance Program) counselor for the 2013-2014 school year. In 2012-2013 an Anti-Bullying Committee was formed to address the issue of bullying at Buena High School.

The model set to prepare for the school's 2011 WASC visitation was not followed, this is attributed to the change in administrative staff and certificated staff. The model will be followed in the future with the Leadership Team meeting on a quarterly basis and the reintroduction of Focus Groups. The Buena High School administration, since 2011, is working to combine the various school plans and documents into one cohesive document for school governance.

The Buena High School administrative team prepared the rough draft document of the 2014 midterm review. This was then distributed to the steering committee and departments for feedback. Once updates for revisions were provided the administration made the necessary updates to the document. The WASC midterm review document was then presented to the district's governing board for approval.

## **II. School's Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up within the Action Plan**

- 1. Teachers need further practice analyzing common assessment data and the role that common assessments play in the student learning process. The staff needs more professional development training to understand the use and capabilities of the data management system.**

The Buena staff recognizes the importance of employing common assessments and utilizing the subsequent data. This is an area in which continued growth is needed. The Buena administration will continue to encourage departments to work together to create common assessments as well as continuing with the use of the district wide benchmarks that are incorporated into many subject areas.

The data collection program utilized by the Ventura Unified School District has changed since the WASC visitation in 2011. In 2011 the School City data collection program was employed by VUSD, two years ago the Illuminate platform was adopted and is being utilized by VUSD. In order for staff to utilize this program training opportunities have been provided by the district for all staff members and mandatory training is required for all teachers that are new to the district. Buena High School also has teacher technology specialists and peer training to assist staff as needed.

- 2. Every department/teacher needs to be involved in benchmark administration and analysis to guide re-teaching and interventions.**

Currently the English, Math, History and Science departments administer benchmark assessments in some of their courses. There is not a consistent use of the resulting data across the departments.

The Social Science and English departments are working with the district 's curriculum specialist to create and administer common benchmarks that are performance based in line with the introduction of the Common Core. The Science and Math departments continue to administer their current CST- modeled benchmarks for the purpose of student performance data collection and analysis. These have not yet been updated to reflect the performance based model in line with the Common Core.

**3. School City is a valuable educational data-collection tool. Parent involvement exists, but it needs to be improved. Attendance at school parent meetings is limited. Buena High School needs to develop more strategies to increase and strengthen parent support and involvement, especially from underrepresented groups.**

Parent involvement has increased at Buena High School over the past three years. The counseling staff has helped increase the distribution of Buena's monthly newsletter from 1800 parents to approximately 3500 parents each month. The monthly newsletter informs parents of upcoming school activities, grade/academic progress reporting, California Healthy Kids information, testing dates, athletic events and student support programs, as well as other important information. These publications are provided in English and Spanish to better meet the needs of the Buena High School community.

The Buena counseling department conducted a meeting for the Spanish-speaking families of freshmen students in order to provide information on graduation requirements and the steps needed to access Q Parent Connect. The counselors also provided Q Parent Connect training for parents at ELAC meetings in order to increase the knowledge and use of Q Parent Connect for the parents of the English Learner students. The freshmen parent meeting will continue as an annual meeting.

Since 2011 the counseling department has organized a fall and spring College Night for students and parents. Information regarding college admittance and entrance requirements is provided to students and parents during these evenings. This semi-annual event has grown and, due to this growth, the College Nights are held in Buena's large auditorium. In the future, the College Night will include NCAA college eligibility information which will benefit those families whose students want to continue competing at the college level. The counselors are currently planning a financial aid night that will be presented by a financial aid specialist from Ventura College. This workshop will be presented in the Career Center where parents and students will complete online applications with individual assistance from the Buena Counseling Staff members

In October, Buena High School's Foreign Language Department hosted its first annual Dia de los Muertos community celebration. This project was also involved Buena High School's Social Studies, English, Math, Art, Drama, Music and Science departments. Each department developed subject specific altars and displays. The PTSA, an elementary school, a middle school and community groups all participated in this celebration and over five hundred community members attended this event.

Buena High School will continue working to develop outreach programs to gain more parent and community involvement.

**4. There is a continuing need for all teachers to receive training on strategies that will make a rigorous, relevant and coherent curriculum more accessible to students of all capabilities.**

The Math and English teachers at Buena High School recently participated in a day long Common Core training seminar provided by Ventura Unified School District. VUSD has also provided department specific professional development for department representatives. These department representatives then share this with their colleagues. Assistant Principal Bobbi Powers educated the staff on the Common Core and worked with the staff on implementing Common Core strategies in their classrooms.

Representatives from the California State University system provided training on the Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) for members of the Buena High School English Department. This training increases the knowledge of teaching strategies and resources to incorporate relevant and rigorous curriculum that prepares students to meet the expectations of college and university faculty. Advanced Placement teachers in the social studies department attended professional development courses directed at expectations and strategies to better prepare their students for the rigor of a college course.

### **III. Commendations and Recommendations**

#### **A. Commendations**

- Buena High School Administration, Staff, Students and Parents for their attainment of the Distinguished Schools Award in 2013.
  
- The Counseling Department for their work in developing Parent evening workshops, Parent information nights and increasing the distribution of the monthly Parent newsletter. These programs provide the parents with much needed information to assist them in supporting their students.
  
- The Buena High School Administration for their development of ongoing evaluation of the school plan and critical areas. Fall of 2014 there will be quarterly meetings of the steering committee and the reinstatement of Focus Groups.
  
- The staff for their evaluation and adjustment of the BARK program to better serve the students of Buena High School.
  
- The academic departments for their support with the Foreign Language Departments first annual Dia de los Muertos celebration.
  
- The district for the support in providing training and support to Buena High School staff in the areas of Common Core, Benchmarks and use of the Illuminate platform for data collection.

- The Math department for their positive approach to adapting to the many changes such as Common Core and Integrated Math.

## **B. Recommendations**

- Buena High School Administration and Staff continue to work towards common assessments and benchmarks across the curriculum, in all courses.
- Staff continue to work towards consistent use of academic data , provided through the Illuminate program, to drive instruction.
- Administration formalize a written plan and goals to address school wide critical areas for follow-up within the action plan.
- Buena High School Administration and staff continue to explore avenues to better inform underserved members of the community.
- Administration and District continue to provide training for staff to prepare them for the changes, such as Common Core, in education.