SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

for

HARBOR

TEACHER PREPARATION

ACADEMY

1111 Figueroa Place
Wilmington, California 90744

Los Angeles Unified School District

March 24-26, 2014

Visiting Committee Members

Skip Nicholson, Visiting Committee Chair
South Pasadena High School (retired)
Instructor, UC Riverside Extension

Dr. Jason Allemann
Principal, Dana Hills High School, Dana Point

Dr. Mitch Hovey
Superintendent, Fullerton School District (retired)
Professor, California Baptist University

Ms Maria Okpara
Administrator (retired)
Apple Valley
The Harbor Teacher Prep Academy is an “early college high school” located on the campus of Los Angeles Harbor College in Wilmington. It currently serves 436 students in grades 9 through 12, primarily from the local area, although a few come from other southern and western parts of Los Angeles. The student body is roughly 58% Hispanic, 15% African-American, and 14% Filipino, mirroring the surrounding community. Seventy percent qualify for free or reduced lunch. Opened in 2002 as part of the Los Angeles Unified School District, the school admits students following application and interview, and 50% are identified as gifted and talented. The school attends to the gender balance of the student body, which averages approximately 55% female and 45% male.

Students and their families choose the school and complete an application process that includes interviews. Once enrolled, students attend their high school classes and classes at Los Angeles Harbor College (hereafter, “the college”). All students attend college-level classes taught by the college faculty to classes contracted for the high school students. These include Music, Spanish, Health, Physical Education, and Physics. Students are also permitted to request regular college classes with special permission.

The staff includes a principal, an assistant principal, a counselor, a “point-five” dean, and 13.5 classroom teachers.

The school has been recognized as a California Title I Academic Achievement School and National Title I Distinguished School, a California Distinguished School, and a National Blue Ribbon School.

A small but enthusiastic Parent Teacher Association welcomes teachers with a lunch and classroom supplies at the start of the year and provides college scholarships to graduates heading out of state.

The school provides numerous clubs for students, including those in art, debate, Spanish, and poetry as well as a Black Student Union, a Gay-Straight Alliance, a Key Club, and a Positive Girls Club.
School’s analysis of student achievement data (e.g., CAHSEE, AYP, API, AP, college SAT, graduation rates, and Program Improvement status).

Student achievement data at the school consists primarily of test results from the California Standards Test, the California High School Exit Examination, the SAT, the ACT, and Advanced Placement exams in addition to the District’s “periodic assessments” administered three times each year. The District provides tools that can produce a wide range of disaggregation.

On California state assessments the school’s students consistently score higher than both district and state averages. In the California Accountability Progress Reporting, the school has met its growth targets each year schoolwide, for all student groups, and for all targets.

The school’s Academic Performance Index has varied only slightly since a major gain in 2010. It has been consistently significantly higher than the district (749) and state (789) scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Performance Index</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>884</td>
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Students at Proficient or Advanced

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English-Language Arts</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>History-Social Science</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>93%</td>
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Students sit for Advanced Placement exams in twelve different subjects; in six of those, 20 or more students take the exam. Approximately half of those candidates score 3 or higher. Encouragingly, most of the students in AP classes meet the challenge of sitting for the national exam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advanced Placement 2013 (20 or more candidates)</th>
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<tr>
<td>EXAMS</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Language &amp; Composition</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Literature &amp; Composition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish Language &amp; Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>World History</td>
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<td>European History</td>
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<td>U.S. History</td>
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Average: 48%
On the CAHSEE, the school’s results for students taking the test for the first time in grade 10 is 99% passing in both English and mathematics, exceeding the district’s 77% and 78% and the state averages of 83% and 84%. At the school the passing rate is 100% by the time students reach grade 12.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>81%</td>
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The school generates tables of grade distribution by course.

The school identifies critical learner needs, although their linkage to schoolwide learner outcomes is unclear.
Since the last self-study:

The school and its community have changed only a little since the last visit by a WASC team. The school has been assured that $25 million have been budgeted for the construction of a new campus on the site of the current portable buildings and adjacent ground. The construction date has shifted, and is now set for completion in 2016.

Changes in the school’s liaison with the college have brought alternating reassurance and concern. The school operates under a recently renewed 25-year memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the district and the college. Different liaisons from the college have evidently interpreted the relationship in slightly different ways. The current liaison views the school positively and is seen by the school as a potentially constructive partner.

As the protocol for its last self-study, the school used Focus on Learning 2013.

Discuss how the school through its action plan has accomplished each of the critical areas for follow-up, including the impact on student learning.

The administration and three department chairs have the duty of ensuring that the Action Plan is carried out, and they report their progress to the staff. The school monitors and adjusts the action plan “as needs, situations, and funding emerge and change.”

1. **GOAL 1: Calibrate instruction across disciplines to increase student achievement in problem solving, higher order thinking skills, and oral and written language to strengthen their access to academic success at the university and professional levels. The school links this goal to the SLO specifying that “students will be effective multimodal communicators, critical thinkers, conscientious, collaborative leaders who take calculated risks, and responsible citizens.”**

The goal, as interpreted by the school is “to see growth in test scores ranging from CSTs, SAT, AP tests, Smarter Balanced and increase the number of students taking AP classes.” The link between those state and national standardized and the schoolwide learner outcomes is unclear.

Teachers of Advanced Placement classes have attended Pre-AP and AP summer institutes and district-sponsored multi-day workshops.

Individual departments have made changes to their curriculum and instruction. English now has 9th and 10th grade teachers incorporate a pre-AP curriculum in composition and an emphasis on Latin roots and prefixes to help build in students a more complex vocabulary. Focus in the 11th grade curriculum is on rhetorical analysis of fiction and nonfiction where students write critical
responses to text, citing source material. The social studies emphasize critical thinking and effective communication by having students read and analyze complex texts, write frequently, and give oral presentations. Science uses inquiry-based activities and projects. The Spanish Department uses a variety of individual and small-group projects to help students communicate effectively by understanding different Spanish accents, and synthesizing and re-presenting information.

Assessment of effectiveness in reaching the goal consists of teacher evaluation of student work, district ‘periodic assessments,’ and state and national standardized tests. Analysis of those measurements and the use of that analysis in reshaping curriculum and instruction appears informal.

**GOAL #2: Enhance students’ preparation and readiness for 4-year universities while simultaneously lowering the percentage of D’s and F’s in A-G core areas by 3%. The school links this goal to the SLO specifying that “students will be effective multimodal communicators, and critical thinkers.”**

The English Department has introduced a focus on expository writing at all grade levels from grades 9 through 12. The school attributes the rise in students’ Proficient and Advanced CST scores from 93% to 95% to that focus.

The school continues assigning students with lower than an 80% achievement in core and college classes to after school tutoring or Assignment Workshop or both and has hired college tutors for some of the ‘contracted education classes,’ (those taught by the college faculty for classes of high school students) namely Health, Music, Biology and Spanish

Staff, students, and parents all testified to the importance of the AVID program, and the visiting committee saw evidence of its effectiveness, particularly in the year-by-year reinforcement of skills and habits that serve students well.

As part of an effort to improve student placement in classes, the school began in the spring of 2011 to place students enrolled in any world languages or math class at the college into a corresponding lab class.

The visiting committee saw the lowering of D and F grades more as a measurement than goal for its own sake but observed evidence that the school continues to prepare its students for university-level study. Assessing success in preparing students for university involves tracking graduates, always a difficult task. The school points with pride, though, to anecdotal evidence of success.
Chapter III: The Self-Study Process

The schoolwide learner outcomes:

*Harbor Teacher Preparation Academy will prepare its graduates to be engaged, global-minded, multi-lingual students who are:*

- Effective multimodal communicators
- Critical thinkers
- Conscientious, collaborative leaders who take calculated risks
- Responsible citizens

*Comment on the school’s self-study process with respect to the expected outcomes of the self-study.*

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

With a small staff, the school was able to involve most certificated personnel in the dialogue and review of the self-study. Few students were involved. The visiting committee saw four parents, a number the committee saw as perplexing in a school where all parents must apply for their students to be admitted. All four were strongly aware of the self-study. The committee saw no evidence of contribution by the classified staff nor of the college. Professional development days were used to prepare for the WASC visit. Leadership participated in Focus on Learning training. Because of the small number of staff members, most teachers served on more than one focus group. The school and the district amass data, and the district provided disaggregation in several formats. Those data focus heavily on the summative assessment provided by state and national standardized tests.

*The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards (note the selected schoolwide learner outcomes examined by the school)*

The school’s admirable schoolwide learner outcomes appear to guide much of the thinking among the staff. Finding ways to assess achievement of those outcomes still lies ahead.

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

The self-study, and indeed the school, focus heavily on summative assessments, leaving formative monitoring to individual teachers. Most available data relate to the various California state tests and to scores on the SAT, the ACT, and Advanced Placement exams. The district has mandated three
“periodic assessments” each year in preparation for implementation of the Common Core State Standards, and teachers use those in different ways.

_The assessment of the entire school program and its impact on student learning in relation to schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards and WASC/CDE criteria_

The school reports much conversation about the schoolwide learner outcomes, but the program assessment focuses heavily on standardized test scores as the primary data used to evaluate the program. Individual teachers and departments monitor progress towards the standards less formally, and the WASC criteria take on added attention and meeting as the event approaches.

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

The school is currently reworking its action plan to provide a tighter focus than using one goal as an umbrella that covers such diverse areas as “problem solving, higher order thinking skills, and oral and written language.” The leadership is leading the staff to putting more emphasis on student achievement rather than setting the actual measurements of that achievement as the final goal (e.g. “raise test scores by 3%”).
Chapter IV:  
Category A: Organization: Vision & Purpose; Governance, Leadership & Staff and Resources

A1. To what extent does the school have a clearly stated vision and mission (purpose) based on its student needs, current educational research, and the belief that all students can achieve at high levels?

Supported by the governing board and the central administration, to what extent is the school’s purpose defined further by schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards?

The school’s mission statement rests on the belief that all the students can achieve at a high level:

“The dedicated staff at HTPA empowers students to think critically by analyzing and applying concepts in a creative manner to produce competitive students who are socially well prepared and college bound.”

Since admission to the school is by application, it attracts students whose needs fit the mission and who are dedicated to the “hard work” required to achieve at that high level.

The schoolwide learner outcomes are consistent with the mission and enumerate specific traits the school sees as the elements of the larger goals in the mission. Interviews with Area administration satisfied the visiting committee that the District finds the school’s goals in harmony with its own and supports the efforts to help students reach them.

The school turns to the School Site Council, which controls some special funding, to help assess annually the effectiveness of the mission and the schoolwide learner outcomes. The staff recognizes the advisability of adding surveys of broader groups to better gauge evaluate the school’s needs and to refine the mission and the SLOs.

The student leaders were clear on the school’s mission and schoolwide learner outcomes; other students appeared less sure of their meaning. The visiting committee found none, though, who questioned the accuracy of those documents in expressing the school’s purpose.

The staff and the School Site Council agreed that the schoolwide learner outcomes were those “necessary for students’ success in the 21st century.” A regularized system for review of the mission and the SLOs, for reassessing specific student needs, and congruence with global and national needs is in early stages of development. The school, though, is in the enviable position of being able to choose the students it admits and those it retains, and the goals of those students who choose the school tend to match those of the school.
Assessing student success in reaching those goals has proven more elusive. The school matches them with results on standardized district, state, and national tests, but is still seeking tools and processes to measure the achievement of the “softer” but at least equally critical objectives.

A2. *To what extent does the governing board have policies and bylaws that are aligned with the school’s purpose and support the achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards based on data-driven instructional decisions for the school?*

*To what extent does the governing board have delegate implementation of these policies to the professional staff?*

*To what extent does the governing board monitor regularly results and approve the single schoolwide action plan and its relationship to the Local Educational Agency (LEA) plan?*

The Los Angeles Unified School District is the nation’s second largest and includes well over 1,000 schools. Its policies and bylaws encompass an extensive range of widely differing school populations. Implementation of its general policies are delegated to the administration in eight “local districts,” and it is this administration that oversees the outcomes of individual schools. Both those bodies have left the school a good deal of autonomy in the design and implementation of its mission and schoolwide learner outcomes. Monitoring the achievement of those outcomes is left principally to the school.

The governing board and its central administration monitor five somewhat hopeful goals and provide the school with a “performance meter” on its operations. Those five are (1) 100% graduation, (2) Proficiency for all, (3) 100% attendance, (4) Parent and community engagement, and (5) School safety. The governing board’s policies are in no way in conflict with the school’s mission. The School Site Council reviews the school’s budget and the Single Plan for Student Achievement. Uniform Complaint Procedures for parents are established by the District, with a notice posted at the school. The principal is responsible for resolving complaints.

A3 *To what extent based on student achievement data, do the school leadership and staff make decisions and initiate activities that focus on all students achieving the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards?*

*To what extent do the school leadership and staff annually monitor and refine the single schoolwide action plan based on analysis of data to ensure alignment with student needs?*

The School Site Council reviews the Single Plan for Student Achievement annually for alignment with the school’s mission and schoolwide learner outcomes. Less formally, that correlation is discussed at faculty meetings and by an advisory committee of staff from the high school and the college. The school
finds a correlation among the different statements of purpose, but aside from the School Site Council review, analysis of that achievement is less regular.

**A4** To what extent does a qualified staff facilitate achievement of the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes through a system of preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development?

All hiring is done by the central district offices. Much of the teaching staff requested placement at the school. One teacher meets with all new staff and provides support, in addition to the informal support that occurs because all are in such close proximity. All teachers are required to undergo sixteen hours of additional instruction in teaching gifted/talented students and in differentiated instruction. Most collegial strategies appear to be shared through the frequent informal contact among staff members, who are often in each other’s classrooms, rather than through planned programs of shadowing, coaching, or observation. Teachers, though, do benefit from occasional “learning snapshots” completed by peers.

**A5** To what extent are leadership and staff involved in ongoing research or data-based correlated professional development that focuses on identified student learning needs?

The school reports that professional development sessions “are created by the faculty based on our needs and suggestions.” Some of the annual allotted time is devoted to District-mandated topics. A committee of teachers has a large role in planning the school’s professional development, although several of the meetings this year were devoted to preparation for the WASC visit, and to anticipation of the Common Core State Standards. The school is confident that the professional development “has had a positive impact on student learning because students are provided with different approaches to learning information,” but has not yet settled on a systematized plan for specifying how that positive impact can be assessed.

**A6** To what extent are the human, material, physical, and financial resources sufficient and utilized effectively and appropriately in accordance with the legal intent of the program(s) to support students in accomplishing the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

The school’s physical resources are severely limited, but the staff makes admirable use of the space available. An allocation of $25 million has been set aside for construction of a campus to sit on the site of the present one on the tennis courts but adding some adjacent territory on the Los Angeles Harbor College campus where the school is located.

A fiscal specialist oversees all budget transfers, and all Title I funds are allocated by the School Site Council. Some teaching staff reported having an uncertain understanding of the school and department budgets, although none described not having materials or supplies they needed or requested. Students reported having everything necessary for high achievement, except in science.
Science facilities present a perplexing problem. Both students and staff report frustration at the lack of laboratory facilities—or even running water for “mini-labs.” The College points to the 25-year Memorandum of Understanding that gives the school’s purpose as one tied to “Liberal Studies” and not including extensive science facilities. Students preparing to apply for admission to four-year universities appear to need access to facilities not included in the agreement. The College is most reluctant to open its own brand new science labs to the high school students it had not planned to accommodate.

Students and staff report that they feel safe on the campus, particularly surrounded as they are by the larger college campus. The visiting committee was concerned that only one exit is always open and access to the second depends on the nearest teacher having keys to open it. Some students knew clearly what they would be expected to do in case of a sudden emergency; others did not.

The District and the school both have in place regular and defined accounting procedures that include external auditing. The School Site Council reportedly brings the budget before teachers, students, and the community. Although the school struggles to provide clerical services and consistent internet access, the resources are sufficient to support the achievement of the critical learner needs.

Areas of strength for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership and Staff, and Resources

- A clear and coherent statement of an appropriate mission and of significant Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
- The highly qualified administrative, teaching, and support staff clearly committed to high student achievement in all areas
- The tenacity of the staff and some key personnel at the cooperating college to minimize friction in the relationship and the constant effort to find solutions to the ever-changing problems inherent in the unusual but ultimately profitable coalition

Key issues for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership and Staff, and Resources

- The need for a clearly defined program of assessment to measure student achievement of the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
- Long-range planning to establish and to assess a consistent and clear program of relevant professional development explicitly tied to student achievement of the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- Self-study document
- Staff, student, and parent handbooks
- Meeting with District 8 and with site administration
- Interview with the college dean serving as liaison to the high school
- Meetings and interviews with two groups of students
- Meetings with the parent focus group and School Site Council representatives
- Meetings with community members
- Classroom observations
- Dialogue with leadership team and focus groups
- Reports of analyzed achievement data
- Websites of the school, the district, and California Department of Education’s DataQuest
CHAPTER IV: CATEGORY B: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: CURRICULUM

B1. To what extent do all students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-based curriculum that supports the achievement of the academic standards and the expected schoolwide learning results?

To what extent are the expected schoolwide learning results accomplished through standards-based learning (i.e., what is taught and how it is taught)?

All students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-based curriculum that supports the achievement of the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes. Through standards-based learning (what is taught and how it is taught), these are accomplished.

English has started to implement Common Core State Standards using complex texts to challenge students, multimodal modes of communication, clips from news and media, current events, relevant topics that won’t be outdated.

A November math conference focused on the Common Core and math teachers are implementing Common Core strategies and lessons. Math concept lessons: Students explore a concept on their own and must explain the rationale, students work in groups and must critique each other.

The school has defined academic standards for each subject area, course, and/or program, and where, applicable, expectations within the courses that meet the University of California “a-g” requirements.

There is congruence between the actual concepts and skills taught, the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

There is congruence between the actual concepts and skills taught and the standards and school-wide learner outcomes, and lessons are standards based. AVID teachers focus on study skills, organization, and time management. The majority of classes are Honors or Advanced Placement, so students are exposed to a rigorous curriculum.

Teacher examination of representative samples of student work and “learning snapshots” of student engagement in learning demonstrate the implementation of a standards-based curriculum and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

The academic departments meet together and define what standards need to be covered. English has talked about what to cover in each grade level from readings to concepts (literary analysis) and vocabulary development. Everything suggested for English is also included in the Spanish classes. Academic standards are defined in the course syllabus for English and math. Math identifies the standards and objectives at beginning of each class. Tests are based on
particular standards. The California State University Early Assessment Program [EAP] test is used to determine which students should go into the AP class in 12th grade and their articulation into the CSU system.

There are clearly defined academic standards for each subject area. The stakeholders assess, review, and evaluate the curriculum offered to students in several ways. The counselor meets regularly with students starting in 9th grade to plan school course work throughout their four years in high school. The meetings take place in different formats: during AVID class time, individually, or during small groups.

As a staff, teachers meet and agree on grading and homework policy with few differences since every class and every teacher is different. Yet, the faculty reports that it tries to keep as much alignment as possible to agree on grading procedures for same classes and same grade level.

During professional development meetings, “when given the opportunity,” teachers discuss and exchange ideas about enhancing curriculum from choosing particular books, articles, artifacts to expose students to projects and tests, to material sharing and exchanging. Teachers meet often in small groups during their conference period.

As a participant in the Middle College National Consortium, the school has a relationship with the college that allows faculty to have direct contact with college professors. Regular meetings are held with stakeholders where different aspects of that relationship are discussed including curriculum. The school has made changes to the curriculum based on the college’s recommendations and suggestions in order to help students be successful.

Students do anonymous reflections on the teacher and the class. The reflections focus on the curriculum and activities and projects done in class and ways to improve. Parents, as stakeholders in their student’s education, are included through their participation in meetings with different ends: School Site Council, PTSA, graduation requirements for their children. The meetings are offered starting in the 9th grade.

The school spends assesses and reviews the curriculum. Since students are required to take classes at the college starting in the 9th grade, the high school staff take curriculum preparation, assessment, and coherency very seriously. The high school works in collaboration with the college to make sure students are ready to face the challenge of post diploma school work. The high school staff has made changes to accommodate the skills and abilities that students are supposed to display at the college in college classes.

The staff tries to vertically align the curriculum to build from one year to the next. As a school preparing students for four-year institutions, the school offers primarily honors and Advanced Placement courses. Some staff have attended workshops paid for by the district and offered by the College Board. Teachers meet as a staff to work on curriculum within the department and at times with
other departments. Teachers attend professional development opportunities through the College Board, the District’s Gifted and Talented Education office, or subject specific annual conferences, to help prepare students for AP classes. The staff feels it has surpassed the district requirements.

Former students back from college are asked how prepared they feel at college. From the areas that students feel they are lacking, the school reports that teachers work together to improve. Anecdotal feedback from graduates indicates that those pursuing science majors have commented that they feel their science preparation is deficient and the lack of access to a science lab in high school hinders their opportunity to compete with others in college.

As a middle-college high school, HTPA has a close relationship with its college. A small leadership team headed by the principal and a handful of teachers participate on meetings with the college eight times each year.

B2 To what extent do all students have equal access to the school’s entire program and assistance with a personal learning plan to prepare them for the pursuit of their academic, personal, and school-to-career goals?

Students understand the curriculum and have access to their four-year plans to check their progress.

The counselor discusses careers and postsecondary opportunities with the students. This conversation also takes place in the AVID classes through different activities the students do.

Students get help preparing for appropriate choices after high school through the activities and curriculum offered through AVID’s support of career exploration and postsecondary education through a number of activities that include career exploration and presentations in classes, visits by professionals as guest speakers from different careers. Through the YMCA’s Youth and Government program, students are trained in creating and lobbying for legislation. Because of the requirement for students to take college classes they have had the experience of college and what it takes to succeed.

Parents, students, and staff can monitoring a student’s personal learning plan and progress in person or by gathering detail from the Jupiter grades system.

Each year the counselor visits all AVID classes to goes over students’ educational plans. They keep track of classes taken and needed as well as credits achieved and needed. Suggestions are made as to college courses to take depending on potential major in college.

Monitoring of student four-year plans appear relaxed, but given the school’s graduation rate, the system appears to work.

Since the students are part of a middle-college high school, they spend substantial time in college classes with college instructors, so they learn about college academic life by living it. They understand the system of mid-terms and
finals and of college grading systems that may involve only two tests to determine final grades.

Through AVID students are given ways of talking with college professors. They become aware that they cannot miss college classes as they might miss a high school class for sports or other activities.

Students are trained in the use of Cornell Notes and taught to arrive to class having read the material a professor will cover.

Students in 9th, 10th, and 11th grade take the PSAT every October to help them prepare for the SAT.

**B3. To what extent are students able to meet all the requirements of graduation upon completion of the high school program?**

Students have access to multiple ways of experiencing the “real world” applications of their educational interests, including such activities as “Become an Engineer,” the Teaching Project, Earthwatch, field trips to Finance Park, guest speakers in AVID and English classes, a flight program that allows students to visit colleges and universities during their senior year as they are deciding what school to attend. They can also participate in the Questbridge program that allows juniors to participate in summer programs before senior year where they learn about the college application process and the POSSE program that leads students earn a college scholarship. Volunteer opportunities include those at Kaiser Permanente, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club of Wilmington, animal shelters, and the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium.

Students take a CAHSEE diagnostic test that allows teachers to know weak areas. To ensure all students pass on the first attempt, the school has implemented a mandatory math tutoring program that takes place on three Saturdays before the test. The English teachers feel they can offer enough support and preparation for students in the classroom and do a rigorous preparation two-to-three weeks before the test. Whenever necessary, individual tutoring takes place with those students who may need the most help. A program called “Assignment Workshop” brings in students who fail to complete a class assignment to make it up. When required by the teacher, extra support is offered to students through AVID.

**Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum**

- Implementation of Common Core Standards as staff members get more information on what will be expected of students
- Professional Development opportunities and sharing ideas with staff (gallery walks, technology, etc.) during faculty meetings and/or Professional Development days
- A rigorous and challenging curriculum heavy with Honors, AP and college classes
- High student attendance
- The teaching of AVID strategies at every grade level and the reinforcement of those strategies in core academic areas

**Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum**

- A regularization of opportunities for collaboration among departments and to make cross curricular connections
- Optimization of the technology and media, including grade and subject appropriate classroom settings such as lab setups for physical, biological, and earth sciences as well as consistent and reliable internet access
- Consistent professional development opportunities where subject alike, grade alike, and vertical articulation teams can plan and create appropriate curriculum
- Increased and consistent support and guidance from district level instructional leadership in the development of curriculum and the appropriate professional development to support these efforts

**Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Self-study document
- Classroom observations
- Meetings and informal interviews with the teaching staff
- Meetings and interviews with students and with parents
- Demonstration of Jupiter grades
- Displays of student work
- Meetings and interviews with students
CHAPTER IV: Category C Standards-based Student Learning: Instruction

C1. To what extent are all students involved in challenging learning experiences to achieve the academic standards and the expected schoolwide learning results?

As a part of the instructional process, both teachers and parents visited classrooms to observe teachers working with students using a Snapshots Learning checklist. Using the results gained from these visits, administrators determined that students were engaged in challenging/learning activities to achieve the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes approximately 85% of the time. To further engage students in learning, students are grouped by ability and learning needs in both heterogeneous and homogeneous groups that facilitate staff being able to work with students in one-on-one learning activities. Interviews and observations in classrooms by the visiting committee have validated that classrooms centered primarily on teacher-directed instruction. Additional instructional strategies to engage students in learning were also noted. Examples of some of these strategies included, but were not limited to, use of Socratic questioning, forming an argument, looking at historical events from multiple perspectives, dramatizations, debates, taking on persona of character from historical time period, vocabulary (Latin roots), real life learning activities (e.g. phone company charges), use of calculators, and Cornell note taking skills.

In online AP Statistics and AP Calculus, students are provided with the syllabus and the pacing plan at the beginning of each semester. Staff members allow extended time for students who do not complete their work as scheduled, and students may also work ahead if they desire to do so. As noted by the staff, there is no positive correlation between taking and passing AP Calculus AB online and passing the AP exam for this course. As validated by the visiting committee through discussions with staff, next steps to improve the passing rate of students on the AP exam include looking to align the concepts being taught in Calculus AB with the skills being tested on the AP test. Discussion with staff validated that discussion has also taken place to have a teacher who works with students face-to-face (or at least on a hybrid basis) as compared to being taught fully online.

Teaching staff members provide introductory lessons in each of the academic areas of study. Although not necessarily done before each lesson, some teachers refer to and review the Common Core standards and objectives before lessons are taught. Interviews with staff noted that problem-solving skills are emphasized throughout all classes and there is a focus with students on using critical thinking skills. As validated through interviews with staff, there continues to be a need for staff to participate in professional development in order to gain
a deeper understanding of the common core and its implementation. As noted in the self-study, AP tests in English Language Composition, English Literature, World History, European History, U.S. History and Calculus AB reflect that there is a low passing rate on the AP exams. It was also noted by the Visiting Committee that AP passing rate results for Spanish Language and Culture, Japanese Language Culture and Physics were at 100 percent. The Spanish exam had 36 candidates, Japanese and Physics, one each.

Staff members interviewed by the Visiting Committee indicated that differentiated instruction is utilized to meet the needs of visual, audio, and kinesthetic learners. Observations in classrooms validated that there was direct instruction coupled along with some differentiated learning such as mixed ability grouping, grouping designs, modified assignments based on student learning needs, higher level students working with lower level students, additional one on one support provided by teachers, varied/modified learning activities depending upon student abilities, reduced workloads, and peer tutoring. As a part of lesson delivery, some teachers do use technology as evidenced through use of the ELMO, laptops and projectors, websites and document cameras to aid in displaying visual text.

Staff members collaborate with one another through department meetings once every two months, which includes an administrator and teachers. Interviews by the Visiting Committee validated that such things as professional development attended, implementation of the common core, and use of an observation tool to be used for observing a colleague in the same department were topics of discussion. As the school is small and staff members share classrooms, the needs of specific students and approaches to teaching strategies to ensure student success are discussed informally and somewhat formally. Staff members observe one another and provide feedback when needed on a constant basis. In addition to teacher interactions and peer-to-peer observations, parents and students have also participated in teacher observations to provide feedback as it pertains to instruction within the classroom from different perspectives.

As a part of a small school culture, Visiting Committee members validated through interviews that most teachers make themselves available to students in need and student-teacher interaction is effective. According to interviews with students by the Visiting Committee and surveys conducted by staff, most students feel that staff members care about them and want them to succeed. Students are fully aware of the expectations set by the standards and school-wide learner outcomes. As validated through interviews by the Visiting Committee, additional discussions by teachers with students take place within individual classes to help inform students as to why they may need specific skills for success in college and/or life.

Students at the school are involved in learning activities that are challenging in honors, Advanced Placement, and college classes. The school offers a rigorous and challenging curriculum to all students. Partnering with Los Angeles Harbor
College provides a strong academic background for all students at the high school and allows students to earn college credits towards an Associate of Arts (AA) degree.

C2. To what extent do all teachers use a variety of strategies and resources, including technology and experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom that actively engage students, emphasize higher order thinking skills, and help them succeed at high levels?

The staff is current on subject content and teaching methodology. During the 2013-14 school year, the staff has been actively involved in professional development which included presentations pertaining to common core standards, a sample common core unit, implementation of common core standards by department, and the smarter balance test. Professional development activities take place within the District for all principals and included the common core and demonstration lessons in both English and math. Many teachers use multimedia and other technology in the delivery of the curriculum. Teachers use material from the Internet to supplement instruction. Teachers require students to use multimedia in projects, research presentations, and other types of assignments.

Observations and interviews by the Visiting Committee have validated that many teachers use inquiry-based instruction. Teachers serve as facilitators while students take an active role in their learning, asking higher level thinking questions of their peers and using credible resources to answer questions. Students are able to communicate using Costa’s levels of questioning (tied into Bloom’s taxonomy levels of learning). Students facilitate discussions using higher level questioning with methods such as philosophical chairs and Socratic Seminars.

Students learn academic language and then apply it in writing. Students also learn vocabulary and complete a cloze paragraph outline in social studies class. Students read sample essays as a model and use skills of analysis. Students complete graphic organizers (say, mean, matter). Students also annotate articles and reflect on their learning. In Chemistry, students graph trends on the periodic table and note the trends. It is paired with mass, radius, and ionization energy. Students summarize the three different trends they observed. In all classes, students are asked to research, inquire, gather information, synthesize information, and then evaluate, analyze, and/or draw conclusions based on their findings.

Review of student work online to determine the degree to which students are analyzing, comprehending, and conducting effective research does not appear to be effective at the school. Although teachers require students to turn in some work online, most often students are asked to turn in hard copies of their work and discuss their work with a peer for editing and feedback.
Representative samples of student work indicate that students are involved in a series of educational experiences that allow them to develop skills necessary to become critical thinkers and problem solvers. All classes require students to do independent research projects relevant to the topic or unit the teacher is covering.

Observations and interviews by the Visiting Committee have validated that in AP Spanish, students conduct research on topics related to global challenges. Some of the topics students have investigated range from breast cancer, to nanotechnology, to problems of poverty and obesity in Latin American countries. In English 11, students have participated in debates and Socratic Seminars related to such topics as the death penalty and banned books in America. In AVID, students participate in Socratic Seminars and philosophical chairs on a regular basis. Topics discussed are sometimes those that students are most interested in and have ranged from plastic surgery for beautification purposes to Fifth Amendment rights.

Representative student work samples demonstrate that students use technology to assist in achieving the academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes. Students in AP Calculus AB work online and use calculators. Algebra I students use computers and students must use the Internet when completing research-based assignments. Students and parents have access to Jupiter grades. Students are exposed to multi-modal resources such as using Edmodo to post assignments and allowing students to have discussions online, Wiki discussions, and e-mail, PowerPoint presentations, and display of blogs to help complete homework and class work.

Representative samples of student work demonstrate student use of materials and resources beyond the textbook as evidenced by students using dictionary.com, Encarta, and other appropriate and recommended sites by the teacher. Students complete current events using credible online news sites. Students have used programs in calculus and algebra such as NROC (Algebra 1) and APEX (calculus and statistics). Social studies classes use TCI (History Alive) for primary and secondary sources and Science classes use Science live. Students have access to the LAHC library and computer lab. Students participate in field trips to gather information to link information to the real world as evidenced by the following learning opportunities: Holocaust trip, AVID college trips, NHS trip to Sacramento to present a bill, and Youth in Government. Students in Spanish classes are exposed to authentic Spanish language sources as evidenced by such activities as using written, audio, and visual sources from a variety of Spanish-speaking countries.

Students participate in “The Teaching Project,” a service-learning project in grades 9 and 10. They create a standards-based science lesson plan and teach that lesson to elementary school students in grades 3 and 4. The service-learning project is extremely effective as evidenced by some students finding their love for teaching through this project. Students participate in service clubs
such as Key Club, National Honor Society, and the Rotary Club where they are required to do volunteer work within their local communities.

Opportunities to use the Internet and learning how to identify credible sources within online instruction are effective as noted by staff and students. Most students are able to gather information and get different perspectives using the Internet as a source. As noted by the Visiting Committee through both first-hand experience and interviews with staff and students, trying to use the Internet at the school was inconsistent, making it difficult to use for instructional purposes.

Many teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and resources, including technology and experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom that actively engage students, emphasize higher order thinking skills, and help them succeed at high levels.

Actively engaging all students and emphasizing higher order thinking skills is a major emphasis identified by the school to meet critical learner needs. Staff members work hard to provide learning to all students at an optimal level. Students are provided with the tools to be active learners and facilitate their own learning. A heavy emphasis is placed by staff on teaching students to recognize and use Costa’s Levels of Questioning and Bloom’s Taxonomy when writing questions for discussion or AVID tutorials and for preparation of students who take part in Socratic Seminars and Philosophical Chairs.

Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning:

Instruction:

- The partnership between the school and the college that offers students a unique opportunity to gain skills needed for success beyond college as well as earn credits towards an Associate of Arts degree
- Students who are highly motivated to learn and focused on furthering their education by moving on to higher learning institutions
- The opportunity for students to take rigorous college classes starting in 9th grade
- The after school tutoring for students needing additional academic support and the Assignment Workshop where students missing assignments have the opportunity to make up work
- The challenging learning experiences offered to all students
- The use of technology to actively engage students in learning activities
- Emphasis on higher order thinking skills in lessons using outside sources other than textbooks
Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction (if any):

- Identification and confirmation of specific plans for changing the AP Calculus and AP Statistics classes from an online course to a teacher-directed course
- Consideration of a clear plan of professional development focused on differentiating instruction
- Establishment of a timeline of the plan for providing formal ongoing professional development for implementation of the Common Core
- Development of and staff commitment to a plan for formal, ongoing, and systematic conversations about both formative and summative learning data throughout the school year
- Review and development of a plan to provide space and materials for hands-on learning lab activities at the school or the college
- Development of a plan for enhancing Internet access that is viable and available throughout the school on a regular and consistent basis
- Increased efforts to fully develop and enhance the high school-college partnership in order to best meet the learning needs of all students

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- Interviews and/or focus group meetings with students and staff, District staff, college staff, parents, and community members
- Review of student work samples (formative data)
- Classroom visitations and observations as well as individual discussions with teachers and students
- Review of school documents
- Parent information guide
- Student-generated school newsletter (Monarch Messenger)
- Review of schoolwide test score reports
D1. To what extent does the school use a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, analyze and report student performance data to the parents and other shareholders of the community?

The school depends heavily on standardized test scores for schoolwide assessment, and these scores are reported to parents and others annually. The District provides disaggregation, particularly by grade level, ethnicity, and gender. Analysis of the data appears to occur when departments or individual teachers think it helpful. In some cases the data are used to inform instruction, with the goal of raising the scores on the standardized tests.

The school does use some achievement data to strengthen the instructional program, although those data appear limited to standardized test results. Curricular and instructional decisions about AP Calculus and AP Statistics are being driven by assessment of the quality of student work, grades students achieve, and results on Advanced Placement exams. The school has decided, for instance, to change the format of those courses from on-line to face-to-face.

Each teacher develops a syllabus specifying how students are graded. How the school establishes students’ growth and performance levels, beyond standardized testing, or how that information is used to strengthen the achievement of all students is unclear. Advanced Placement classes use the scoring guides provided for scoring AP exams to grade students in “specific areas.”

A “self reflection” is part of the teacher evaluation process, and teachers use that reflection to modify instruction.

Student work documents progress toward higher success on standardized tests, but does not provide significant evidence of achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes. There appears to be no analysis of data concerning the very few students with special needs.

D2. To what extent do teachers employ a variety of strategies to evaluate student learning?

Teachers use a variety of strategies to evaluate student learning including essays and individual and group projects. Each department uses the standards, critical learning needs, and data to create program goals for students.

Several departments share objectives and lesson plans to help students understand the relationships among the disciplines. Teachers guide students in using skills of writing and of visual text interpretation learned in English in their
work in the social studies. Similarly, students learn to transfer the concepts from math classes to their work in chemistry and biology. Assessment, then, becomes a measure not only of what students have learned but also of the uses to which they can put that learning.

Student feedback is collected annually rather than as part of an ongoing process, although teachers report steady and useful student feedback that sometimes leads to changes in instructional approaches.

The major role played by assessment data appears strongly linked to success on standardized tests. The school’s success on such tests attests to some success in that area.

D3 / 4. To what extent does the school, with the support of the district and community, have an assessment and monitoring system to determine student progress toward achievement of the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

To what extent does the assessment of student achievement in relation to the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes drive the school’s program, its regular evaluation and improvement, and the allocation and usage of resources?

Although teachers use a range of measures to monitor and assess student progress, the community appears to attend chiefly to the scores on standardized tests.

The systematic assessment of student achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes is in its infancy.

Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability

☐ The wide distribution of elaborately disaggregated scores from standardized tests including California Standards Tests, the California High School Exit Exam, SAT, ACT, and Advanced Placement exams

☐ The use of outside measures such as scoring guides from Advanced Placement national scoring sessions to assess progress in student achievement

☐ The distribution to teachers of the anonymously completed student end-of-semester assessments of course content and teaching effectiveness

☐ The effective system for monitoring students’ progress toward meeting the academic standards and graduation requirements of both the high school and the college
Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability

- The use of data to explicitly drive curricular decisions
- The systematic gathering and reporting of formative assessment data, such as the district’s periodic assessments, and the use of those data to guide choices of instructional strategies and appropriate shifts among those strategies

Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- The school’s WASC self-study
- The Jupiter grades system
- CST, CAHSE, SAT, ACT, and AP scores
- District “periodic assessments”
- Single Plan for Student Achievement
- Interviews with administration, faculty, students, and parents about assessments, availability and use of data, and accountability.
- Teaching staff grading criteria
- Classroom observations
CHAPTER IV: CATEGORY E: SCHOOL CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

E1. The school leadership employs a wide range of strategies to encourage parental and community involvement, especially with the teaching/learning process.

The school has strategies and processes for the involvement of parents and the community. The school uses translators to involve Spanish-speaking parents. Parents also receive messages to attend Back-to-School-Night and Open House.

After the initial parent meeting, it was evident that the parents are involved in the teaching and learning of the students. However, since there were four parents at the parent focus group meeting, it is not clear how many parents have similar experience in the learning of the students. There was mention of the use of technology to inform parents of upcoming events at the school. Parents serve as active partners of the school by volunteering their time, and heading service groups within the school. There was evidence of a PTSA activity calendar for the year. It is evident that since students are not attending their neighborhood school parent meetings may pose problems. The school holds open house for incoming 9th grade students to explain what to expect while at the school. Interpreters are provided for non-English speaking parents as well as having documents sent home to reflect the home language of families.

The community services and resources that students actively participate in are:

- Elevate Your GAME (Grades, Attendance, Maturity, and Empowerment) is a peer mentoring program that meets with students on a weekly basis to talk about a number of issues ranging from struggles in classes to how to deal with their peer.
- The students participate in the “Teaching Project.” This involves choosing a science content and teaching students at the elementary level.
- Membership in the National Honor Society
- Rotary Club membership and service in the community
- Key Club
- Volunteering at the Kaiser Hospital and UCLA medical center
- ASPEN project and working towards social justice, raising funds and services for the less fortunate
• PTSA and school groups working toward finding scholarships for students

This is an open campus and parents are welcome anytime into the classrooms and to speak with their children’s teachers. Parents have an active PTSA with an active yearly calendar. Parents are informed when students earn grades of D or F and are given the opportunity to enroll their children for Saturday School, Assignment Workshops and individual assistance. Parents are contacted by counselor or the Dean to discuss options for assisting students to improve performance. There are no formally arranged parent/school group meetings due to limited space.

E2. To what extent is the school a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning?

The school has a small campus with a custodian who keeps the surroundings clean. There are a total of nine classrooms. Students are respected by the staff and are respectful of one another. There is clear understanding by the students of the code of conduct expected. In interviews students repeatedly echoed the value they placed on the nurturing community of the school and the sentiment that there is a nurturing condition between the staff and students. All members of the school community take an active role in making the school a safe, clean, and orderly campus. The restrooms and classrooms were clean, although students offered that the restrooms look unusually clean during the visit. Students were observed taking pride in their school by picking up after themselves. Some students, though, reported that they were not clear on what they were expected to do in case of a sudden emergency.

The staff have high expectation for the students. Students also have high expectations for themselves. Students receive the support and guidance needed to meet the high expectation of their classes at the college while balancing the K-12 academic rigor. The college dean who serves as liaison to the high school reported that approximately 48% of the high school students enrolled at college graduate with an associate degree in two years while the traditional college students take more than three years to complete their associate degrees.

While the school campus is generally clean, safe, and orderly, there was a lack of consistency in the placement of evacuation plans by the classroom doors, and fire extinguishers in each of the classrooms. The school has earthquake supplies stored in an outside pod for school use. The custodian stores all cleaning chemicals in a locked room. There was no evidence of apparent mold. There was water damage in the principal’s office due to rain. The classrooms missing posted emergency plans and/or fire extinguishers, pose serious unsafe conditions for the students and adults in the event of an emergency. The storage of the earthquake supplies without ready access keys also raises questions of the safety of students in the event of an emergency.
E3. To what extent do all students receive appropriate support along with an individualized learning plan to help ensure academic success?

Students work closely with the teachers to receive optimum instructional services. The counselor guides them to select coursework at the college level and to monitor their progress. All students have individualized learning plans tailored to their academic needs. Students have the opportunity to be placed in service organizations such as UCLA Medical Center, Kaiser Hospital, and other agencies for internship. They receive tutoring as needed. Students are encouraged to attend Saturday School when necessary. During student interview, they stated they were comfortable with their teachers and the rigor of the lessons.

The academic standards are high for all students, but the committee could not establish links between those standards and the school’s schoolwide learner outcomes.

Areas of strength for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth (if any):

- Rigorous and challenging academic program for all students
- Open and honest communication between students and staff
- Clubs and community service participation available to students
- Parent involvement with PTSA and SSC
- Increased sports offerings to encourage more student participation
- Increased college/university enrollment upon graduation
- Social welfare service to help the less fortunate

Key issues for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth (if any):

- Regularly scheduled fire, earthquake, and active shooter drills to create awareness
- Establishment of easy access to multiple exits from the school in the event of emergency
- Consistency in a cohesive relationship between the college and the high school
- Rigorous inclusion of parents in the school’s programs
- Development of staff and faculty meetings with an agenda for each meeting along with sign-ins
- Running water to permit “mini-labs” and other classroom activities
- Increased parent participation
Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- Student interviews
- Review of self-study and other school documents and surveys
- Teacher interviews
- Parent interviews
- Staff interviews
- Observation of classrooms and programs
- Interview of outside service providers.
Schoolwide Findings

Schoolwide Strengths

- The tenacity and dedication of a caring and nurturing staff
- The partnership with the college that allows students uncommon educational opportunities
- The rigor and challenge in the curriculum
- The range of clubs and community service participation available to students, including the Teaching Project and community service projects
- The availability of AVID strategies at every grade level and the reinforcement of those strategies

Schoolwide Areas for Growth

- The need for a clearly defined ongoing program of assessment to measure student achievement of the Schoolwide Learner Outcomes
- Consideration of a clear plan of professional development focused on differentiating instruction
- Establishment of a systematic plan for providing formal ongoing professional development
- Development of and staff commitment to a plan for formal, ongoing, and systematic conversations about both formative and summative learning data throughout the school year
- Development of a plan for enhancing Internet access that is viable and available throughout the school on a regular and consistent basis
Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

The Schoolwide Action Plan

The current draft of the action plan addresses two goals:

- student achievement in problem solving, higher order thinking skills, and oral and written language and strengthen student access to academic success at the university and professional levels
- Enhancing students’ preparation and readiness for 4-year universities while simultaneously lowering the percentage of D’s and F’s in a-g core courses by 3 percent

School Improvement Issues

The ambitious plan includes sub-actions, some of which might stand as larger goals themselves, such as increasing strategies for differentiation, and targeting critical academic needs of students more accurately.

The staff is now studying the action plan in light of its own self-study report and the schoolwide areas for growth identified by the Visiting Committee and has been encouraged to see it as a road map teachers will want to keep close at hand to guide them through the next few years. The Committee has further urged the school to see the action plan as a changeable document, particularly as the implementation of the Common Core State Standards wield their influence on curriculum and assessment and require shifts in which issues must be attended to first.

The school has expressed clearly its interest in a tighter alignment of the action plan with the schoolwide learner outcomes, and the Visiting Committee concurs that such alignment would make an admirable priority.

This small school has some strong support from the District’s area administration and a reopened door to greatly increased collegiality with the college. The Visiting Committee is convinced that Harbor Teacher Prep Academy has the resources, the dedication, and the talent to move ahead with the development of a helpful and effective plan of action. The staff is ready to identify, implement, and assess ways to continue to enhance student learning as it builds on its solid record of successes and its uncommon partnership with the college whose campus it shares.