

WASC Accreditation History

WHS had an initial WASC visit by a three-person team in the spring of 2006, the first year the school opened. The initial visiting team identified a list of thirteen items as Critical Areas for Follow up. WHS began the full WASC Self Study process in January of 2008. Members of the Leadership team started attending WASC trainings in the fall of 2007.

The initial WASC Visiting Committee made the following suggestions as Critical Areas for Follow up:

- 1. The school community continues to care, feed, and nurture each other as a staff as WHS grows and develops in the future.**

WHS has two minimum days built into the monthly schedule that allows for staff development and intra departmental collaboration and planning. There are also three staff development days built into the yearly schedule that allow for the whole staff to work together. Departments meet once or twice a month to go over department business and student academic support.

- 2. The administration expand the number of governance processes (including focus groups during the WASC Focus on Learning Self Study) at WHS to include staff, parents, community, and students in the site decision making processes that will expand communications, and develop a broader spectrum of systematic opportunities to review and revise all school processes.**

The WASC Focus groups were formed in January 2008. Advisory panels have been created for ROP, the Career Technical Certificate and for English Language Learners. A School Site Council has been in place since the site opened. WHS has expanded communications with all stakeholders by publishing a variety of newsletters and e-blasts. The Counseling department has a monthly newsletter sent by grade level counselors while the whole school sends out a quarterly newsletter. The school has also invested in an electronic calling device called Teleparent that allows both teachers and staff to communicate with parents. Parents have become involved with WHS by joining the School Site Council, the booster club, a variety of parent support groups for theater, band, culinary, etc. as well as the Pit Crew (Group of parents that supports teachers by providing a quarterly breakfast or lunch). The parent volunteer base has also expanded by publishing a survey of site needs and parent volunteer opportunities. There is also a core of AVID tutors who are parents and grandparents who regularly provide student tutorial opportunities. The principal's secretary coordinates the volunteer list and links volunteers to areas of the campus requesting volunteer support.

- 3. The school leadership formalizes the Advisory program to meet the school and student needs.**

The advisory system has continually been revised since WHS opened in 2005. There is at least one grade level representative that sits on the Advisory board. Advisory is usually held twice a month. During the first semester, advisory is held more often to support new students and to help build the school culture. Currently almost every teacher has a single grade level advisory class for which they are responsible. The advisory board puts together a binder of grade level specific advisory lessons. These lessons range from study skills, goal setting, to creating school norms. Based on score data and teacher input, the Advisory committee also found students needed more time to make up assignments and tests. Because of these realities the committee created what is called a corrective advisory period. Usually once a month, students can travel from teacher to teacher during an extended advisory period in order to get help and make up missing assignments.

4. The school leadership and staff continue to identify and implement instructional strategies, curriculum and supports in order to address the staff's concern regarding the number of NC's grades. Constantly re-evaluate instructional practices after carefully analyzing data collected from multiple avenues to ensure the academic needs of all students are being met.

The site has consistently studied the elements of PLCs, especially regarding intervention strategies with students. From these discussions, came the concept of needing additional during school hours tutoring. Staff was challenged to "think outside the box" and present ideas about additional student support. Two teachers initiated the idea of establishing a daily intervention period that offered students the incentive of a longer lunch if they were passing all of their courses. WHS has been using the "Intervention Period" for almost two years now. All students are given a planner at the beginning of the school year. Students get a daily stamp in their planner from their teachers if they are currently passing the course and have shown that they have mastered course specific essential skills. Teachers check student planners daily before lunch to determine who gets the longer lunch period and who has to stay in class for a twenty minute remediation period.

WHS has also been using an automated calling system, Teleparent, for almost three years. The system allows teachers to send home daily both positive and corrective feedback to parents on a daily basis.

WHS has created a response to intervention (RTI) plan that outlines specific interventions and steps that teachers take schoolwide when students are struggling in a course. Each department has also established their own plan that outlines their department's specific responses to intervention.

All courses on campus have worked to make sure their courses are aligned to the State standards. All departments that have California State standard Tests annually go back to the State testing blueprints to help develop pacing guides for each course that accurately reflect the State Standards Tests. Test results have also been disaggregated by each department and used to redesign curriculum, instruction, and assessments. For example, the Math department has worked on realigning all courses especially Algebra 1 and its corresponding shadow math course. This dual realignment allows selected students to take both Algebra 1 and a Shadow Math class, greatly reducing the number of students failing Algebra 1 the first time taken. Additionally, the English department has revised Essential Skills Assignments and Assessments to include more standards based questions on these measures of learning as well as throughout their curriculum; the social science department has used disaggregated test scores to redesign identified problem units; and the science department has worked to make sure all science courses closely align with the State standards. This analysis and realignment process can be found in all courses across disciplines at Whitney HS.

In support of this site focus on studying data and aligning instruction and tests according to the date, teachers created seating charts for their classes that identified each student's level of proficiency on the prior years State standardized tests. Students were color coded on a seating chart so that teachers could easily use the testing data to drive instruction in a variety of ways such as creating mixed ability groups, keeping focused on formative assessments, differentiating instruction and generally being more aware of student's ability levels.

Each department is asked to do an analysis of their grades each semester. They look at the number of NC's (NC = F) course by course to see if there are specific trends or differences between/among teachers. This practice serves as a way to calibrate similar courses, to discuss common assessments, to ensure equitable instruction etc.

A number of sports offer "study tables" after school prior to practice. Students are able to

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work collaborative with other students and emphasis is placed on being successful both in the classroom and outside of the classroom.

Several departments have instituted specific afterschool tutorial conducted by department teachers who support their own and other teachers' students. There are also "Open Studio" times for lab based classes. Likewise, the Career Center has specific afternoons where numerous student tutors are available for peer tutorial.

5. The school community of staff, parents, community members, and students addresses the concern regarding student respect, apathy and lack of engagement with WHS to ensure that WHS develops in a manner that creates a sense of pride, tradition and commitment within its students and graduates.

The idea for an advisory period came from the inaugural staff as a way to help create a positive school culture on campus. Advisory specifically addresses issues such as respect and school spirit. It also addresses clean campus needs and strives to establish a culture of pride campus wide. Many of the activities in advisory relate to school events and clubs and seek to get students more involved with campus activities.

The school has developed a tradition called "Fight Song Fridays" where everyone gathers in the quad during the end of the lunch for every home game football game to sing the fight song together. Every Friday is also a Wildcat day where everyone is encouraged to wear school colors. There are two weeks per year devoted to a more concentrated spirit week theme. Dress up days and grade level color days are part of those weeks. ASB runs the competitions and has daily competitions among classes during lunch activities. ASB awards spirit points to each grade level based on their participation in rallies and other school related activities. This has created a positive class rivalry. Most teachers participate in these spirit events; many enjoy taking part in the competitions with the students.

The ASB also sponsors tailgate parties prior to football games to try and get more students involved in the football games; they also sponsor a number of rooter buses for away football games along with a staff rooter section at football games. Additionally ASB sponsors an Academic Breakfast for achieving and improving students. This year over \$3000 worth of "give aways" donated by local businesses was added to the breakfast activities. ASB also sponsors lunch time music and rallies to generate school spirit. The well attended and spirit filled rallies held during the day and at night generate super spirit. Spirit Week for homecoming has grown into a community event with the establishment of the Night Rally and Powder Puff football. Many families along with students attend these events.

Local community businesses such as Chic Filet have donated coupons to the school that teachers can use as rewards. State Farm and the CHP donate money and time to support the bi-annual Every Fifteen Minutes event. Numerous other local businesses have stepped up and donated to multiple fundraisers and auctions. Booster Club has an annual Craft Faire along with other events which raise funds and awareness about Whitney.

The staff started a scholarship program for seniors with the first graduating class of 2008. They organize and participate in a basketball fund raiser. Both the police and firemen have participated in this event. The event generates community support and funding for the faculty sponsored scholarships.

Last year the staff had a Friendly Friday potluck in the staff lounge once a week.

The school has morning announcements and video announcements featuring student

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achievements on campus and informing students about upcoming events and club meetings.

Sports teams on campus have dress expectations for all athletes that during their sports season. They are asked to either wear their jersey or wear business attire to show respect on game days. This clothing example shows off team pride and school pride for not only athletics but all the campus.

Parents have formed a Sober Grad committee and work with the school to promote this event.

6. The school leadership develops a multi-year, formal professional development plan that addresses the unique needs of WHS and is tied to the standards, ESLRs, school wide vision and all areas of student learning and the school environment. Assessment results and other data collected should be used to determine the areas of priority for professional development.

The staff development committee meets in the Spring to set an agenda for the following school year. The agenda is tied to the School Site Plan. Department chairs and the WASC leadership have revise the staff development agenda throughout the year when necessary.

The School Site Plan (SPSA) includes SMART goals from every department. A narrative responding to implementation and success/failure of goals is included as a reflection and documentation of progress annually.

All staff request to attend conferences are approved or denied by checking the requests validity against the site and departments' staff development goals. This process has been further refined so that all requests now have to show how they will address one of the critical academic needs and the school ESLRs.

The multiple year focus has been on interventions, A/G increases and development of all aspects of a PLC. These common themes are in our School Site Plan, department plans and heavily features in the Action Plan for this WASC report.

7. The administration and staff continue to enhance parent and community communications toward expanding their on-going involvement at WHS as valued partners in the site's daily and yearly operations.

Parents were given numerous opportunities to participate in the WASC self study process. Parents were sent a survey at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year. Parents that were not able to be part of a Focus Group for the WASC Self Study process were invited to an evening Parent Focus Group. Two evening parent focus group meetings were run by an outside facilitator during the fall 2008.

Parents have continually been involved in the School Site Council. The Site Council meetings are open to parents and each department makes an annual presentation to the Council outlining their course sequencing, grading policies and other departmental information.

Last summer WHS also sent out a questionnaire to parents and guardians that asked for volunteers and guest speakers. A list of volunteers was compiled. Currently there are parents who volunteer on a weekly basis to help out making copies for teachers as well as in numerous other departments.

The Teleparent calling system is used to relay timely information to parents and to keep them up to date with their student's academic progress.

WHS also publishes a quarterly newsletter called *Wildcat World*. The newsletter includes

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important information about upcoming events, deadlines and opportunities for becoming more involved with the school.

There is a freshman “Showcase” night every March before we enroll new students for the following year. This academic/elective/activities/athletics “fair” model for students and parents gives families the opportunity to move about the small gym and talk with teachers, coaches and activities sponsors about WHS programs and opportunities for everyone to be involved with Whitney. The fair model of visiting departments/ club tables and sports is followed by a 45 minute presentation by counselors and administrators on what to expect for the next year as well as important dates for the future. Parents are allowed to stay after the meeting and counselors and administrators take individual questions about high school from the parents.

There are also parent nights for every grade level run by counselors throughout the years. There is a FASA night, military night and college night for students and parents. Counselors also sponsor a week of evenings just for getting the college applications completed correctly. Numerous sports as well as Honors/AP teachers sponsor their own information nights for interested families.

The Booster Club started an annual Craft Faire now in its third year. This event brings people from Rocklin and the surrounding communities to the WHS campus. School clubs and groups participate with the craft faire professionals. Funds raised are used for Senior scholarships.

8. The staff and administration continue to evaluate the time and/or the use of time available to staff to investigate the student learning data collected towards realigning instruction and improving the student learning environment.

Each year time has been devoted to helping teachers learn how to use Datawise (the district’s database for storing student test records). Teachers have used Datawise to identify the proficiency levels of their students. Individual departments and collaborative course teams have used testing data from Datawise to help them identify units and particular standards with which students are struggling. The findings are used to help teachers modify their curriculum, instruction, and assessments. This is a software resource that will be more useful as staff become more familiar with its function. As the site has become more proficient in the elements of PLC development, there is a clear need for more time to evaluate student mastery of the ESA assignments/assessments within each department. This is another avenue the site hopes can be served by inputting data into the Datawise system. Currently, dialogue about student work is a daily occurrence, but totally the scores with the use of a software management system would be helpful.

9. Further refine and develop the staff goals you set during our visioning time.

Since the school has opened, the staff has continued to make additions to the list of “we will” statements that originated when the school was first opened in 2005. This original document is in the Teacher Handbook which is presented to new staff and reviewed by the returning staff every year. Currently, we are working on distilling this document even further by creating group norms reflective of the PLC design. While the We Will statements clearly identify many behaviors the site will take to ensure we are a “Service Model” high school, there is a need to distill the volume of statements to a shorter more precise set of site norms for all behaviors. Again, this is a refinement being made because of the better understanding of how a PLC model school functions.

Each January teachers have been given a survey and results have been compiled and shared. The teachers also took a teacher survey last fall that was developed from the WASC Focus groups. The results were shared with the staff.

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Each new teacher is assigned a veteran WHS teacher called a Cub Coach. The job of the Cub Coach is to help new teachers settle in, learn the grading software, understand school communication channels, etc.

The administration and staff have created a Teacher Handbook that is continually revised and added to each year. The handbook includes important information about everything from safety procedures to who can help get a purchase order processed.

10. Formalize a plan for additional teacher training on Data Wise so you can complete the benchmark tests of student achievement and look more carefully at disaggregated data.

Two teachers have been trained as trainers for Datawise. They have attended District conferences for Datawise and other Smart classroom tools. Several departments have entered tests in Datawise. The site goal is to get all unit and final exams in Datawise. New “rollouts” of Datawise as well as the focus this year on the Self Study have placed constraints on completing this goal. Currently, the site and district “regrouped” and decided to target one department for Datawise. The plan is that by fully implementing the system with one department and thereby, work out the “bugs” for site use, full implementation will follow.

11. Define your professional committees and develop a process for cycling teachers through the committees.

The following committees have been developed on campus: Problem Solving, Staff Development, Senior Graduation, Senior Scholarship, Advanced Placement, Distinguished Scholar, Advisory, and Intervention. Department chairs solicit volunteers and positions have been rotated as interest has changed. Two teachers are also members of the District wide GATE committee for gifted and talented education.

12. Continue with backward mapping in order that necessary improvements are made within the educational setting to ensure that all students are effective learners.

Throughout the year, specific flex days (minimum days), department meetings, and teacher pull out days have been used to map and align curriculum to State and National standards and to create ESA's (essential skill assignments) and other common assessments.

Staff development time has been used to make teachers aware of the CST blueprints available online. Departments have downloaded the blueprints and used them to create their pacing guides and assessments. More on this topic has been presented in section in Chapter 3.

13. Continue to employ staff, at Whitney High School, who match the school's philosophy.

Growing from an inaugural staff of 30 to the current 65, Whitney has held a top priority on hiring teachers that fit with the site goal of improving educational opportunities for all the students. Over the past four years, all applications for employment have registered on Ed-Join. Department members and administrators screen applications online and agree on the candidates chosen for a face-to-face interview. Three department members and at least one administrator sit on the interview panel. Job applicants are asked teaching questions regarding what they know about PLC's (professional learning communities), State standards, student support and other target areas in an attempt to gauge the compatibility and focus of prospective staff members. Annually, site administrators attend recruitment fairs sponsored by Placer County Office of Education and University of Davis.

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New teachers go through a two day teacher induction program using the Teacher's Handbook as a guide. These two days are led by administrators and site staff members who model and exemplify the school's philosophies.

Evaluation goals are established with all the staff prior to evaluation visits. The site goals taken from the evaluation document which is aligned to the California standards for teaching, are centered around specific site goals: Intervention, data, and instructional strategies. Teachers are asked to choose an agreed upon site goal and another personal goal for their annual focus.

Cub Coaches and BTSA mentors work with new staff to ensure their smooth transition to WHS and the community. Staff who do not exhibit the student and staff support, content knowledge, communication skills, commitment to doing "whatever it takes" and/or focus on learning for everyone indicative of WHS are not retained.