

Chapter 4

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 school-wide learning results?

At Santa Rosa High School, all students are enrolled in core classes that adhere to a standards based curriculum. Content standards are available and are used by instructors in all classes with the exceptions of *Agriculture, Business* and *Life Skills*, though these instructors have access to the California Frameworks and standards (hardcopies or online) and use them as guidelines in their courses. Within the alignment of this framework (and standards), teachers develop curriculum strategies and methodologies, modifying them regularly through Formative Assessments. Using this disciplined approach, the SRHS staff has developed Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLRs) reflected in all student work. Samples of student work are available from each teacher.

The staff of SRHS has worked hard to develop course offerings that interface between disciplines. Examples of these integrated courses are the ArtQuest English program, Industrial Arts and core classes (particularly Math and Science), and Fine Arts, English, and Social Science. Science classes have mathematics prerequisites. All courses offered at SRHS are posted on a master schedule board in the Vice Principal's office. Yearly, all students receive a student handbook that lists and describes the courses available and includes graduation requirements.

SRHS offers many different Advanced Placement courses:

- Art (Studio)
- Biology
- Calculus
- Chemistry
- Economics
- English Language and Composition
- English Literature and Composition
- French
- Government
- U.S. History
- Physics
- Spanish
- Statistics

Pass rates at SRHS usually exceed the district average and are often above 80%. In 2005-06, 86% of tested students scored a three or above. SRHS also offers accelerated honors courses in English, Math, History, Science and Modern Languages.

SRHS does not incorporate a common planning time into the regular schedule however; departments communicate and coordinate regularly through a series of regularly scheduled meetings. The ArtQuest program "purchases" release days from the district for common planning time while other disciplines use monthly department meetings, buy-back days, release time and conferences. Articulation with feeder schools includes communications through district steering committee meetings, pertinent demographic data and test scores provided to all schools through both the Online Assessment Retrieval System (OARS) and Management

Information and Student Testing Service (MISTS). Recruitment and informational visits by individual departments such as ArtQuest, Agriculture and Counseling occur at feeder schools during Spring semester.

Opportunities for students at varied academic levels include our differentiated class offerings and programs: AVID, ELL, Upward Bound, GATE and a large Deaf and Hard of Hearing program (DHH). Students also have available a number of out-reach programs: SSU Tutoring, Migrant Education Outreach, EOPS, and the *Puente* Program in conjunction with SRJC. Additionally, SRHS is home to the only CISCO Certificate Program in Sonoma County. Staff at SRHS has discussed ways to conduct follow-up studies of graduates; currently no instrument to implement this exists at this time. Several departments offer extraordinary enrichment programs for all participating students; Instrumental Music traveled to China in 2005, as did Vocal Music to Austria, ArtQuest Photography and Visual Fine Arts to Italy and England. ArtQuest Theatre Arts recently returned from New York (2005-06).

Each teacher provides a class syllabus to students containing course requirements and expectations, procedures and policies for homework, grading, class participation and citizenship. Administrators review and assess course outlines during the teacher evaluation process.

Beginning with the 2006 – 2007 school year, all departments will distribute department-specific ESLRs to each student. Several departments will also distribute subject-specific, grade appropriate California Standards to each student. This provides students with additional resources to access and understand the curriculum.

Strengths

- A broad variety of courses available to students: ArtQuest, AP courses, Auto Shop, Welding, Agriculture, CISCO Academy and ROP classes
- A variety of levels for core courses: survey/regular, college preparatory/academic and honors/AP
- Strong CAHSEE support for students
- Instruction addressing a variety of learning styles incorporating multiple-modal techniques and technology
- Site administration and departmental adaptability to address changing student needs and interests, i.e. restoration of journalism class, and addition of the Language!™ program for EL, RSP and struggling readers
- Currently adopting new standards-aligned texts in Social Studies
- Students have access to challenging curriculum
- Sheltered and ELD content courses for ELL Students
- AVID program: the “college prep” track/pathway for underperforming and/or historically under-served 1st generation college students
- Full inclusion programs for DHH and Special Education students
- Community internships for interested and qualified students

Supporting Evidence

- Copies of the State Standards for every subject area (available in teachers' classroom(s))
- Teacher Standards Congruence Survey (and results)
- Standardized test scores

- Master schedule
- Lesson plans, classroom observations, student work
- Student Handbook
- CAHSEE tutoring after school
- Sonoma State University “After School” tutoring in all academic subjects
- ESLRs
- Variety of Honors and AP course offerings
- Staff development

Key Issues

- Low rate of re-designation of ELL students to “proficient” levels
- Among under-performing groups, to foster a climate and attitude of academic possibility and success
- Focus on assessment as a developmental tool, rather than as an end result
- Lack of new textbooks in some subject areas that align to standards (e.g. Earth Science)
- Lack of time for realignment of social science and science curricula toward STAR and away from school-based exams (SBEs)
- Lack of professional development to address issues of on-going changes in student needs
- No bi-lingual aides in ELL and sheltered classes
- No time for teachers to collaborate in curriculum development
- Few resources for CAHSEE Preparation i.e., better software, earlier intervention
- AP teachers need more prep time – at least in the first year - and more classroom resources.

B2: To what extent do all students have 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 have access to the school’s entire program through yearly scheduling with school counselors. Student levels are determined through student/parent desires, teacher recommendations, and counselor assessment of prior success. Students, with parental permission, are able to access classes both above and below recommended levels. This follows district policy 6152.3 regarding a student’s right to self-selection of course level. Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 plans work with teachers, parents, counselors and administrators to determine appropriate placement.

Each student’s personal learning plan consists of a form with columns for each year. The sheet, completed on an annual basis, is used by students only when they meet with their counselor to schedule classes. Course Catalog and Pathway descriptions, used to develop personal learning plans, are not included in this form.

Students have the ability to speak with counselors on both drop-in and appointment bases. However, with a 500:1 counselor/student ratio, meaningful contact is often hurried and reactive, rather than proactive. At times, parents are not directly contacted and invited to discuss student-learning plans. Counselors meet with students and parents who request to see them.

Students, for the most part, are given the information and need to determine what course path they wish to pursue. Students select their courses to fit their interests and goals.

SRHS counselors and students meet in large groups to go over graduation requirements and college prerequisites. Informational sheets are handed out and students are instructed to share this information with parents/guardians.

The career/college centers were eliminated in 2003, for budgetary reasons, by the district office; thus, although students receive counseling regarding course and program selection as it relates to their future goals, there are no district or site resources available to develop these goals. Several departments: ArtQuest, Agriculture, Industrial Arts, Fine Arts, and Cisco Academy, as well as several classes, Life Skills, and Special Day classes, host career events and college/career speakers as well as visit local post-secondary regional education/career sites.

Personal issues, which may interfere with, or limit student academic success, are often dealt with through Peer Counseling, a program created and overseen by trained mental health professionals and members of the Counseling Department. This program may be accessed by student request as well as by teacher/counselor recommendation.

Strengths

- Counselors meet with students to schedule their programs in accordance with their Individualized Learning Plans, Pathway and goals, per district policies
- Counselors are consistently available for students and staff beyond normal work hours
- On-site tutoring
- AVID
- Departments and classes which provide career and post-secondary counseling
- Peer counseling

Supporting Evidence

- ESLRs
- Student handbook
- CAHSEE tutoring
- Course Catalog
- District Pathway descriptions
- Individual Learning Plans for students
- District required courses

Key Issues

- Students do not retain a copy of the individual learning plan
- No career interest inventories or access to career development information and guidance beyond individual specialty offerings
- 500:1 student/counselor ratio
- Course Catalog and Pathway Description have been either outdated and/or inaccurate as provided by site and district administration
- District- provided course and student registration software is outdated and cumbersome, requiring unnecessary multiple inputting.
- Lack of professional development to teach improved methods of differentiated instruction for all students as a reflection of increased academic diversity at every level.

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

Upon completion of the high school program, almost all students have met the requirements for graduation. Students are informed of these requirements through the Student Handbook, and by their counselors as they register for classes. The staff monitors the progress of students towards these requirements in a variety of ways.

The counseling department enrolls and advises students on the standards based courses they should take. Students have the option of taking college-preparatory classes, career-vocational programs, or general education programs, which allows them to select from available electives, in addition to classes required for graduation. However, flexibility to accommodate changes in student interests and areas of career exploration is sometimes limited by the district office's Pathways program which students are required to use to choose classes. Some overcrowding occurs in several classes, and to correct this imbalance, we offer the option to attend classes at Santa Rosa Junior College, as well as the option of a level change.

Staff and faculty have access to many resources to review student progress towards graduation. Among these resources are OARS and MISTS reports from the board that are disseminated through departmental and faculty meetings, grade reports that can be accessed through the district's internal website (WebTools), and lastly, teachers' own assessments of their current students' progress. This information informs educational practices designed to support students in meeting all the requirements for graduation. These practices include offering after-school CAHSEE tutoring, tutors from Sonoma State University, facilitating peer-to-peer tutoring, as well as the personal time that teachers devote to their students before, during and after school. The AVID class is also one of the school's efforts to ensure the academic success for all students.

In order to move students toward the goal of graduation it is also necessary to give them opportunities to see beyond graduation into the world in which a diploma is required. The school conscientiously collaborates with post-secondary institutions to encourage students of varying backgrounds to gain academic success in order to pursue higher education and professional career opportunities. Strong partnerships with the Junior College and Sonoma State University already exist, where students will visit each campus for tours, conferences, and special colloquiums through organizations like the Math Club, AVID, and ArtQuest. The school relies on informal reporting from parents, past students, and college records to learn about post-graduate student success. Significant growth must occur in this area.

Strengths

- Choice of three different programs: College-preparatory classes, career-vocational programs, and general education programs
- Wide array of elective classes
- Staff and faculty have access to OARS, reports from the Santa Rosa City Schools Board, grade reports accessible through the district's internal website (WebTools)
- Assessments used to design individualized programs for students
- Strong partnership with SRJC and Sonoma State University
- Students offered the option to attend classes at SRJC

- Faculty-sponsored peer tutoring program
- Teachers willing to devote their own time to the academic success of their students

Supporting Evidence

- Counseling department advises students on standards based courses
- Staff and faculty use resources to monitor student progress
- Students are offered after-school CAHSEE tutoring
- AVID class offered to ensure academic success
- Collaboration with post-secondary institutions inspires students to see beyond graduation

Key Issues

- At-risk students need more support in order to prevent an increase in dropout rates. For example, AVID alone is insufficient to help students achieve graduation
- Inflexible master schedule limits student access to AP and Honors classes
- Overcrowding in some classes
- Lack of instrument for tracking post-graduate student success
- Insufficient tracking of non-graduating students
- More support for ELL students to pass the CAHSEE
- Enormous counselor to student ratio
- Loss of academically successful students from AP and Honors classes to the nearby junior college through co-enrollment