



**SOUTH EL MONTE HIGH SCHOOL
ACS WASC/CDE MID-CYCLE VISIT
SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT**

**1001 N. Durfee Avenue
South El Monte, CA 91733**

El Monte Union High School District

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**Accrediting Commission for Schools
Western Association of Schools & Colleges**

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I: Student/Community Profile Data

South El Monte High School (SEMHS), now in its 27th year, is the newest and smallest of the five comprehensive high schools in the El Monte Union High School District (EMUHSD). The school draws students primarily from South El Monte, a city of 20,000 residents with a median household income of \$44,000. The City of South El Monte is located approximately ten miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles, near the intersection of the San Gabriel (605) and Pomona (60) Freeways at the southeast corner of the San Gabriel Valley. The school currently serves 1,232 students, 96 percent Hispanic, of whom 91.7 percent are considered socio-economically disadvantaged. Spanish is the primary language for 72.8 percent of the enrolled students, with 18.34 percent having limited or no English language proficiency. Students with disabilities comprise 14.37 percent of the overall student population. In spite of many challenges, students graduate from South El Monte High School at a rate above 95 percent, higher than district and state averages. Our parents, 41 percent of whom did not graduate from high school, participate as stakeholders active in the school community, primarily through the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) and English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC).

We started the 2019-20 academic year with a new principal, Dr. Jorge Morales, who replaces Dr. Amy Avina, whose stated goal for her five years at South El Monte High School was to build the leadership capacity of the school. Dr. Morales has shown himself to be a capable and inspiring leader with a strong connection to the community and its students. Other administrative positions were filled from within the South El Monte High School community. Olga Lopez, our former Assistant Principal for Student Services (APSS), was promoted to Assistant Principal of Instruction (API), and Joe Vu moved up from Assistant Principal for Student Activities (APSA) to APSS. The newest member of the South El Monte High School administrative team, Cesar Castellanos, distinguished himself as the school's Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Coordinator and in his work during the rollout of the Early College Academy (ECA) before being named as APSA. All four administrators have been at the school for numerous years in various capacities, which has made for a smooth transition overall.

While most of the school's comprehensive academic programs and collaborative structures have maintained relative consistency over the past three years, the school has experienced changes, large and small, that have impacted the school's efforts on behalf of increased student academic success in English and Math, post-secondary preparation, and the strengthening of programs to help our English Language Learners and Special Education students. Beginning in March of 2017, South El Monte High School was able to add a full-time College and Career Coordinator to our faculty. At the outset of the 2017-18 school year, the district established at each site the support position of English Learner Teacher on Special Assignment (EL TOSA). In November, 2017 all staff members were trained in Capturing Kids Hearts, a practical and effective set of practices for establishing and maintaining positive teacher-student relationships and proactive discipline in the classroom. The following year, in Fall 2018, South El Monte High School welcomed the inaugural class (Class of 2022) of the new Early College Academy, a dual-enrollment partnership with Rio Hondo Community College. At the start of the 2019-2020 school year, the El Monte Union High School District officially launched both the Access for All

1:1 Initiative and the Online and Personalized Learning (OPL) Department to support online learning across the district. The creation of this department resulted in the transfer of three veteran South El Monte High School faculty members, including our Instructional Coach. In January 2020, the Instructional Coach position was filled by the English Department Chair and Content Specialist.

Department chairs and other faculty members in charge of or representing specific areas or programs (including EMUEA and CSEA Site Directors) meet twice each month with site administration as the Site Leadership Team (SLT). Inclusion of union representatives in this body was agreed to in Fall 2019 as the result of a grievance and a subsequent desire to consolidate stakeholder input to a single decision-making group. As a result, all faculty and staff are guaranteed a representative voice on a regular and formal basis. The agenda for these meetings, which references specific Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up, is sent out in advance, and all members of the SLT are asked to contribute to it as needs and/or concerns arise. This open agenda and built-in focus on Critical Areas helps the SLT to consider varied school issues through an ever-present lens of student achievement.

The faculty and staff meet together once each month during Monday late-start collaborative time, with the agenda set by administration with stakeholder input. The rest of these weekly Monday late-starts are used primarily for department meetings, with some flexibility for interdepartmental collaboration. It is generally understood that each department is responsible for addressing the Identified Critical Learner Needs and for developing and analyzing action steps that relate to their specific area. In core departments this has resulted in time spent analyzing available data from state CAASPP and CAST tests, along with district and site benchmark assessments. Department meetings also provide an opportunity for Department Chairs to share news from SLT and District Content Specialist meetings and to solicit feedback on school-wide issues, academic and otherwise.

All stakeholders remain committed to the school’s Vision, Mission, and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, the creation of which was a significant and meaningful result of the 2016 WASC Self-Study process:

Vision

“Every student a success story”

Mission

“A community where everyone thinks independently, works collaboratively, and lives responsibly”

Expected Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

South El Monte High School Students:

EMPOWERED To Think Independently Using Reason, Research, & Imagination

ADAPTABLE To Changing Technologies

GRACIOUS In Victory

LITERATE In Communicating Clearly & Effectively

ETHICAL Citizens In Our Global Community

SMART, Resilient & Ready

It is worth noting that the school's vision statement has become the lens through which all of our agenda-driven collaborative meetings are viewed. Included at the top of each agenda, our vision statement serves as an ongoing reminder of our primary purpose. The consistent use of the EXCEL model ("Engage, eXplore, Communicate, Empower, Launch") for all meeting agendas has been one positive result of our 2017 Capturing Kids Hearts professional development and ongoing partnership. Other benefits are various techniques being used by teachers to build and maintain positive relationships with students: shaking hands at the classroom door, starting class by sharing "good things", collaborative creation of class social contracts, and a four-question protocol to redirect off-task behaviours. Taken as a whole, Capturing Kids Hearts has helped to create a foundation for Progressive Discipline and address the school's most recent Action Plan Goal (#5), added in April 2019, of promoting a healthy social-emotional climate for students.

The ongoing need for this focus on engagement and relationships was supported by the results of the 2019 Youth Truth Survey, in which all schools in the district took part. The survey data revealed significant and steady drops from grade 9 to 12 in students' positive feelings about their overall experience at SEMHS. Also clear from the Youth Truth data is that male students have a more positive experience at SEMHS than female students, in all categories. Only 27% of surveyed students agreed with the statement, "Teachers make an effort to understand my life", while 36% felt that their teachers cared if they were really learning. When 40% of students feel like they are a part of their school community, there is clearly room, and need, for improvement. In the Youth Truth categories of Engagement, Academic Rigor, Relationships, and Culture, SEMHS measured below the district as a whole and well below the national median.

According to Youth Truth Survey data, the single category where South El Monte High School is leading the district is in College and Career Readiness. This is supported by other data as well. Measurable increases in the number of students who are prepared for college (A-G Completion), who apply to college, and who actually attend college show that South El Monte High School can take some pride in our collective efforts to make our vision of "every student a success story" a reality when it comes to creating a college-going culture. The California Dashboard College/Career indicator shows green for all students in 2019 at 54.7% prepared, up 5.5% from 2018 levels, the first year they were reported. It is worth noting that English Learner percentages for college/career preparedness increased 11.3% in the same year. These increases reflect the efforts of an entire school to keep student's sights set on life after high school while mastering the skills and qualities to ensure positive results along the way. This growth is also attributable to the school's revamped College and Career Center, the restructuring of which began with the district's decision in early 2017 to staff a full-time College and Career Coordinator position at

each school site. Previously, the College and Career Coordinator had been a single person servicing all sites in the district. It was then expanded to two people, then three. The timing of the establishment of this full-time position at South El Monte High School was ideal, in that it supported a single faculty member, assisted by site and additional staff, to work exclusively on this particular critical learner need.

SEMHS has a current (2019-20) mid-year ADA rate of 96.9 %, slightly higher than the average for the preceding three school years. In 2017-18, the suspension rate fell to 2% from the previous year's 4.5%. In 2018-19, it rose slightly to 2.7 %. The A-G completion rate, after many years below 50% (47% in 2017-18), jumped to 54% in 2019. The graduation rate, when CBI students (who earn a Certificate of Completion) are not included, reached 100% in 2019, another all-time high. The official state graduation rate, which includes CBI students, was 92.3%, a rate that has held steady for years, primarily due to our CBI program. D/F rates in Math and Science, while still higher than other core subjects, have decreased over the last two years and are currently 33%, down from a 2017 high of 42% in Math and 36% in Science. In English, after 3 years at 20%, the D/F rate rose to 25% in 2018-19.

South El Monte High School's SBAC scores declined significantly in 2019 after remarkable gains in 2016, capping three-year overall drops in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards of -10.21% in English and -4.77% in Math. Despite these declines, primarily in Reading, SEMHS English scores remain slightly above the district average, while Math scores lag behind the district average by -11%. One significant area of growth for both SEMHS and EMUHSD is in the performance of students with disabilities, who have improved significantly in English over the last three years, with more modest gains in Math. SEMHS students performed above the district average scale score of 596 on the inaugural-year 2018-19 California Science Test (CAST), with the second-highest average scale score (599) and the highest number (6) in the district of students exceeding standards. In 2019, the mean total score for the sophomores taking the PSAT declined 10 points to 808 (from 818 in 2018), largely due to an 18 point dip in the English Reading and Writing mean score.

English Language Learner data shows redesignation rates holding between 11 and 12 percent over the past three years, with 2019 the lowest of those years at 11%. In the same year, the district rate was up one point to 12%, with the state at 13.8%. California Dashboard data for English Learners shows steady growth at SEMHS in the percentage of students making progress toward proficiency from 2015 (58.8%) to 2017 (84.3%). After a gap in the available dashboard data for 2018, the percentage of students making progress fell steeply to 31% in 2019, which the state terms "very low." Considered alongside CAASPP data for English Learners showing improvement between 2018 and 2019 reports, this data asks more questions than it answers.

In the current 2019-20 school year, South El Monte High School has 57 students enrolled in the district's Online and Personalized Learning (OPL) program, which offers credit recovery for all students and original credit for students with 504 plans who require alternative settings.

South El Monte High School currently offers 13 Advanced Placement Courses. The percentage of students school-wide with scores of 3 or above increased from 33.9% in 2016 to 53.4% in 2018, then dropped in 2019 to 46.8%. Only two AP courses show mean scores above 3: Studio Art: 2-D Design Portfolio and Spanish Language and Culture. This year's introduction of MyAP as an additional resource for instruction will likely initiate increased collaboration between AP teachers, as will participation in AP Summer Institute.

Students at South El Monte High School continue to participate in a wide variety of CIF-approved athletic teams. A notable recent success was our 2019 Girls Soccer Team, which won Mission Valley League, CIF, and State Champion titles. Athletic success at this level inspires tremendous school spirit and a sense of pride in the entire school community. During the 2018-2019 school year, SEMHS had 567 students participate in athletics, 212 of whom earned the title of Scholar Athlete.

Overall, identified student learner needs remain largely the same over time. Significant increases in the 2015-16 CAASPP scores (ELA +24%, Math +13%) were not sustained. On the most recent (2019) CAASPP ELA test, only one subgroup, English Learners, met or exceeded modest growth goals, gaining 3 percentage points. After relatively small gains to meet 3 out of 4 2018 CAASPP growth targets, Math scores dropped sharply for 2019. With numerous instructional and schoolwide changes along with similarly erratic data by most other measurements, the school has been unable to determine the cause of fluctuations in CAASPP scores.

More specifically, the school has been challenged this year to meet the needs of its "newcomers", recent arrivals with no prior exposure to the English language. Here, the significant efforts of ELD teachers, bolstered by collaborative support from core and elective teachers and other staff members, have created a welcoming and supportive learning atmosphere for these newest members of the school community. The challenges presented by these students provide a unique opportunity for the school as a whole to engage with our overriding vision as we help our "newcomers" to define and pursue their personal success stories.

II: Significant Changes and Developments

Access for All 1:1 Initiative

Starting with the 2019-20 school year, all El Monte Union High School District students were given a Chromebook for use at school and home, with the goal of providing them the tools for successful navigation of an "ever-expanding digital learning environment." In addition, students have the opportunity to receive free mobile internet access at home through the One Million Foundation.

In the short time since its introduction, the Access for All 1:1 Initiative has shown signs of promise. Classroom use of technology has increased, though there is no data to suggest how or to what extent. Teachers and departments are engaging with the possibilities of this increase in access and the resulting expectation that students will arrive to class with their personal device ready. CBI teachers have noted significant improvement in their students' independent use of technology. Many faculty have noted the increase in communication with students via email and other online systems such as School Loop and Google Classroom. Teachers also report that applications like ALEKS, Kahoot, Quizizz, Remind, Illuminate, Padlet and KUTA have been helpful in providing more effective instruction. Because of the extensive use of Chromebook class sets in the years leading up to this initiative, teachers for the most part already have some sound practices in place, particularly in the area of first-time in-class instruction. A new team, the Instructional Coaching Team, consisting of the Instructional Coach, EL TOSA, the librarian, and the TTL, has been created to focus on instructional practices, with an emphasis on the use of technology and how it can enhance instruction. Alludo, an online professional development website which contains modules on specific technology that can potentially enhance instruction, is available for access by all teachers.

As the Access for All 1:1 Initiative goes forward, teachers hope that its academic potential will be explored, its effectiveness monitored, and that new ideas, such as typing classes and specific technology goals, will be explored in order to make the most of this significant investment. With more specific goals beyond general academic improvement, gauging the Access for All 1:1 Initiative's actual impact may lead to more significant impacts.

Career Technical Education

South El Monte High School currently offers established CTE pathways in Healthcare Administrative Services, Professional Theatre, Machining and Forming Technologies, and Financial Services. All three levels: introductory, intermediate, and advanced, are available in each pathway. Work is in progress to finalize the sequencing and approval of an additional CTE pathway: Computer Science, Software and System Development. These will combine to partially fill a gap created by the elimination of the former PLTW Engineering program, which did not align with CTE requirements and experienced significant drops in enrollment, especially after the transfer of its lead teacher to another site in the district. Significant effort has gone into development of these CTE pathways, which continue to be refined as CTE standards and funding are finalized. Student interest is high, with a total of 349 students enrolled across the five

introductory courses for 2019-20.

Our CTE pathways have increased the number of students taking final capstone requirements and receiving certification for a completed pathway. In order to give our graduating seniors industry experience, selected students are given an opportunity to participate in a 25-hour internship at one of our industry partners in the community.

The Public Safety Academy is on hold after the retirement of its long-time director and guiding force. The students already enrolled in the program have continued their coursework at Rio Hondo College. The transition of the program to either CTE or ECA or some combination of the two is still in development.

CTE teachers are constantly looking to increase choice for our students by adding additional pathways. However, due to declining enrollment at the school, there is a continued struggle to offer more pathways and to retain students, many of whom have very tight schedules, as pathway completers. There are additional concerns that with the continued expansion of programs such as ECA and AVID, students are unable to explore, participate in, and, in many cases, complete the entire sequence of the varied South El Monte CTE programs. Despite these concerns, student interest in CTE courses is growing as more pathways emerge and professional certifications for various trades are introduced to capstone courses.

Capturing Kids Hearts

During a mandatory two-day introductory professional development by the Flippen Group just before Thanksgiving 2017, the entire faculty and staff at South El Monte High School were introduced to the Capturing Kids Hearts protocols designed to help improve the social-emotional climate of the school, with a focus on classroom culture. Many teachers implemented one or more of the strategies they learned, from handshake greetings at the classroom door to social contracts developed in collaboration between the teacher and all students. Faculty meetings utilize the Capturing Kids Hearts EXCEL model for meeting agendas; some teachers have adopted the EXCEL structure for the agendas they post in class. One significant change to result from the Capturing Kids Hearts training is the sharing of good news as a regular practice throughout the day. Additionally, many teachers have adopted the “Launch” element of the EXCEL model, an end-of-class send-off intended to leave students feeling positively as they exit the classroom and continue with their day. Several teachers also implement the “put up,” in which a student who says something negative about another student must give that student two compliments or affirmations.

The implementation of handshake greetings at the door schoolwide has affected the campus climate by bringing teachers out of their classrooms, allowing every student a brief moment of one-on-one interaction before class, and giving teachers a chance to check in with students as they enter the classroom. One teacher shared that after implementing good news as an element of her agenda, she was able to find out more background information about her students that she could utilize in her lesson planning. Students share that they feel more welcomed in their classrooms and feel more like individuals in the eyes of their teachers. While the lack of

pre-CKH Youth Truth Survey data makes it difficult to draw clear conclusions, Capturing Kids Hearts seems to many to have promoted a tonal shift in the school. The Flippen Group, parent company of Capturing Kids Hearts, aims for campus-wide adoption of its protocols for optimal effectiveness. South El Monte High School has not reached that goal, but with all teachers trained in the protocols and thus sharing a common language of strategies, it is likely their impact will continue.

College and Career Coordinator Position

As the need for expanded College and Career Center support became apparent, the district hired a College and Career Coordinator at each comprehensive high school site. The district has established and supported a strong collaborative culture between all College and Career Coordinators and their support staff. Working from a yearly calendar that references the counselor's calendar and includes events for each grade level, including Let's Go to College Day (held in October on the same day as the PSAT), EMUHSD College Fair (rotates yearly for each high school), and Cash for College events in the Fall, the College and Career Center supports the school's efforts to create a college-going culture while supporting all student options for life after high school. Sophomores attend a college field trip each year, juniors and their parents are provided with transcript evaluation at TES workshops, and efforts are underway to provide additional services to students nearing completion of CTE pathways. Currently we are making sure that students who take the PSAT create an account on Collegeboard and link their scores to KHAN Academy so they can get individualized tutoring in order to strengthen their SAT scores and overall academic skills.

The College and Career Coordinator uses a variety of available reports to help guide students based on their individual goals and needs. For example, the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) report helps to identify which students have completed financial aid during their senior year. In addition, the College and Career Coordinator creates internal reports to help special education students who have applied to community colleges meet with DSPS counselors to ensure a smooth transition and assist EL students in defining post-secondary goals, including adult school or community college. The College Career Coordinator has built a strong network between the local community colleges, adult schools, and four-year universities to give purposeful information to students and parents to assist them in making realistic decisions and setting attainable goals. Because of a district emphasis on, and communication of, measurable outcomes in this area, there is ample evidence of the success of this expanded program.

CSU Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) Expansion

In 2019-20 all seniors will be enrolled in either Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition or the CSU Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) for their English requirement. In addition, all juniors not enrolled in AP English Language and Composition are exposed to the ERWC 11th grade curriculum, which is planned for official adoption for junior English in 2020-21. The ERWC's focus on the relationship between rhetorical reading and writing and critical thinking, designed to prepare students for the academic demands of college coursework, has proven effective for seniors over many years, and it is expected that juniors will

benefit in similar ways going forward. All teachers in the English department have been trained in the ERWC, and collaboration between junior and senior ERWC teachers has been made possible by a common planning period, during which they meet at least once a week. ERWC 11th grade is using a wide variety of strategies to help students prepare for the CAASPP, as well as for entry into, and success throughout, college and professional life.

Early College Academy (ECA)

The Early College Academy, a dual-enrollment partnership with Rio Hondo College that started in 2018, has had a significant impact on our high school. The ECA is a program that allows students to have a typical high school experience (clubs, dances, and sports) while earning college units. In the Spring of 2020 we will be adding our third cohort to the academic program. We have seen a growing interest from students and parents in the ECA. All of our ECA students have taken a Counseling 101 class which focuses on developing skills essential for college success. These skills have transferred over to the high school setting. Due to the yearly growth of the ECA, South El Monte High School has added new sections of AVID, a class required for all ECA students. According to one teacher familiar with the ECA, “students are happy to have an AVID class that guides them and gives them additional academic and personal support.” It is expected that members of the inaugural ECA class of 2022 will have completed 24-40 units, equivalent to one year of college, upon graduation from SEMHS. This has been a big change for the school as a whole, with myriad impacts suggesting a clear need for increased professional dialogue between all stakeholders going forward.

English Language Learners/ EL TOSA

In the last three years, SEMHS has seen significant changes with regard to our EL population, both in staffing and curriculum. Along with all of the comprehensive high schools in the district, SEMHS has added the position of English Language TOSA, who oversees everything related to the testing, placement and transitioning of our ELs and LTELs. Formerly, the language assessment given to students was the CELDT; however, as of the 2017-18 school year, we have adopted the ELPAC, which is aligned to the Common Core. For several years the EL 1 and 2 population was such that it made more sense to place those students at other high schools, allowing the district to concentrate the resources. However, in the 2019-20 school year South El Monte High School once again welcomed these classes. Needless to say, this created certain challenges for our staff. To meet these challenges, teachers of our EL “newcomers” have requested training and collaboration time. Four teachers and the EL TOSA attended a LACOE training in October of 2019; at that time the teachers present asked for regular meetings to discuss cross-curricular strategies to maximize the benefit to the ELD students.

Our first EL Cohort meeting will take place on 2/6/20. The school was able to hire a 29.5 hour-per-week bilingual aide who divides their time between the ELD 1 and ELD 2 classes, as well as general education classes with a high concentration of “newcomers.” Of course, not all English Learners are newcomers; we have also strengthened the programs for our LTELs by offering Academic Language Development classes (ALD 2 and 3). Training has also been offered to the teachers of these courses in the form of “English 3D” observations and monthly support meetings with corporate facilitators. English 3D is a comprehensive program for

addressing English Learners put out by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. ALD teachers will also be participating in the EL Cohort meeting.

Moving forward, we hope to develop the program by providing more extensive and varied training for teachers, including more about the implementation of Edge and English 3D, and allow regular, timely collaboration among content area teachers. Furthermore, we hope to refine the testing and placement of students into the ELD and ALD classes.

Instructional Coaching Team

The new Instructional Coaching Team, comprised of the school's Instructional Coach, English Learner Teacher On Special Assignment (TOSA), Teacher Technology Leader (TTL), and the teacher librarian, has been established to help teachers in all content areas develop and implement effective first-time instruction that incorporates rigorous, high level critical thinking skills. Members of the ICT will create professional development opportunities for staff and be available to collaborate on lesson planning, co-teaching, and analyzing data with teachers. Also, the team will address the need to hone the use of formative and summative assessment data to adjust instruction to better meet the needs of students. As it begins its work, the team has mapped out a strategy to address major WASC recommendations and SPSA goals, and, through its work with teachers, to help the school to maintain a focus on measurable progress toward its identified action goals. It is hoped that this team will support an increased focus on the school's need for greater specificity in addressing and operationalizing WASC goals.

Lesson Study

In order to address the 2016 WASC Visiting Committee suggestion that the school "improve first-time instruction with a particular focus on math and science by implementing strategies to fully utilize instructional time and increase instructional rigor," SEMHS math and science departments, aided by the district Science TOSA, have committed to Lesson Study. Lesson Study is a research-based structured process in which teachers collaborate to formulate solutions to challenges they encounter in relation to classroom teaching and learning. Within this structure the team brings a research topic, standard, or skill that is of interest to them, usually one that is important in the discipline or course, one that poses problems for students, or one that is new to the curriculum. This process emphasizes the complexity of teaching and learning by bringing to life standards, framework, initiatives, and best practices in the classroom. Lesson Study is classroom research where teachers build and refine ideas about best practice through careful collaborative study of actual instruction and thus student learning.

A small team of teachers, coaches, and TOSA's work together to research the topic in question, plan and design a lesson, teach, review student work and lesson structure, revise, teach again, and reflect. The outcome of lesson study is two tangible products: (a) a detailed, usable lesson plan, and (b) an in-depth study of the lesson that investigates teaching and learning interactions, explains how students responded to instruction, and suggests how instruction might be further modified based on the evidence collected to improve student learning. This process is an ongoing cycle of professional development to improve instructional practices and student

learning in all content areas. So far, Lesson Study has been piloted in the Math and Science departments. At this point, Lesson Study has impacted the math and science departments by initiating a positive collaboration centered on effective classroom instructional practices and their ongoing refinement.

Link Crew

The purpose of Link Crew is to integrate and welcome our incoming 8th grade “baby eagles” into our South El Monte High School “nest” to academically and socially nurture and develop them for life, college and career readiness. Two administrators and one teacher completed the Link Crew Training in March of 2019. This year, they have trained the current junior and senior Link Crew leaders as academic and social mentors to help guide our current freshmen. The Link Crew advisor has held several monthly Link Crew leader meetings to obtain feedback and monitor the progress and effectiveness of the Link Crew program for the 2019 -2020 school year. This feedback indicates that our freshmen have successfully integrated into the school’s academic and social culture. The Link Crew program plans to expand in the coming year, with a new goal of decreasing D/F grades among freshmen, thus increasing their likelihood of A-G completion and college acceptance. Though new to the school, Link Crew is expected to build on the already apparent momentum it has generated in creating supportive relationships between committed juniors and seniors and the freshmen with whom they are linked. The early impact was recently evident during 8th grade visit days, when Link Crew turned out in large numbers to welcome next year’s 9th graders.

MyAP

There are 10 teachers teaching Advanced Placement courses. All are using the MyAp platform to some extent and find it extremely useful. A recent AP teacher meeting initiated collaborative discussions about how to best use this new tool from the College Board. It was agreed that a workshop focusing on the effective use of MyAP is needed to help increase scores on AP tests, especially in a climate of open enrollment for AP classes. To further address this goal and ensure quality professional development and multi-dimensional articulation, AP teachers have requested collaboration time as well as the increased involvement of the school’s Instructional Coach and its AP Coordinator to more effectively leverage this new online tool in the service of improved AP exam scores. It is likely that, with timely integration into classroom practices, MyAP will have a positive impact on AP scores.

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)/ California Science Test (CAST)

In Science, the formal NGSS Training phase has transitioned to an NGSS Implementation phase during which teachers both individually and collaboratively develop and practice NGSS standards-based instruction. The process of redesigning traditional lessons (NGSS Disciplinary Core Ideas) to pivot around natural phenomena which touch themes common to all sciences (NGSS Crosscutting Concepts), where students are actively engaged in the practice of doing science (NGSS Science and Engineering Practices), is underway. Without explicit NGSS teacher instruction guides or textbooks, NGSS implementation relies to some degree on the

universal teacher variables of interpretation, motivation, creativity, and enthusiasm. Notwithstanding, SEMHS science teachers work to redesign and invent lessons in their subject areas in multiple ways; they use professional development days to give themselves time to plan lessons, they practice good intra-departmental communication to share the level of success of lessons, some attended NGSS Rollout #6 Conference, and others are scheduled for AP Summer Institute 2020.

In 2019-2020 science teachers chose to pilot a Science Lesson Study protocol in order to strengthen collaboration, focus on creating effective NGSS instructional units, and assess the effectiveness of a lesson from a student perspective. All science department members will have participated by the end of this year and plan to continue the practice in the coming years.

In Spring 2018-2019 the first California Science Test (CAST) was administered across the state and SEMHS tested its graduating class. Results of the CAST, released 9 months later, revealed SEMHS seniors scores of: 6 % Exceeded Standard, 16% Met Standard, 64% Nearly Met Standard and 14% Standard Not Met. Considering first year baseline scores, EMUHSD science content specialists set a goal to raise the number of students Meeting Standard by a minimum of 5%, primarily through a better understanding of the CAST format and intentional practice of that format.

In 2019-2020 EMUHSD purchased CAST practice resources through the Illuminate testing platform which teachers use to prepare for CAST 2020. Science teachers petitioned EMUHSD to test in the 11th grade when students “peak” and have better recall and higher motivation, underscored by the significantly higher CAST results for juniors state-wide. EMUHSD science content specialists prepare and administer a minimum of four formative assessment cycles, similar to CAST, which focus on NGSS Science and Engineering Practices (SEPs) and yield data about teacher effectiveness in teaching specific SEPs. Science Course Leads follow through with a calendar that requires a week to analyze teacher/student level of success, a week to create interventions and 4 weeks to implement interventions for students who demonstrate low proficiency. Together, the site- and district-based initiatives are steps taken to address the ongoing need to implement NGSS aligned instruction, to assess how effective that instruction is, and to strengthen student science skills in ways that are measurable on the CAST.

Personalized Professional Development

In August, 2018, South El Monte High School introduced Personalized Professional Development. Using negotiated professional development time at the start of the school year, the Instructional Coach and EL TOSA created a rotation schedule of teacher-led sessions resembling the break-out sessions at professional conferences. Teachers select which sessions they will attend from options covering a variety of areas for school improvement, from instructional technology to student well-being. In the second year of implementation, session options were expanded to include department time focused on instructional best-practices. Time was also set aside for the completion of various online modules related to professional conduct and legal issues mandated by the district. Moving forward, the newly-created Instructional Coaching Team is working to further refine Personalized Professional Development for the two days in August to

be supported at points throughout the year, with the goal of improving the structure and follow-through of continued schoolwide collaboration. The impact of this attention to site-based professional development and teacher choice has been increased faculty buy-in and improved dialogue around effective classroom instruction and other schoolwide needs.

Progressive Discipline/ Alternative Means of Correction

Overall, the recent move to Progressive Discipline/Alternative Means of Correction was intended to improve communication and relationships between all stakeholders: teachers, students, parents, and counselors. Teachers are now expected to address classroom management behaviors through a sequence of communication which culminates, if needed, with the holding of a teacher and parent conference. This process, the progression of which is supported by the Capturing Kids Hearts strategies, allows for students to remain in class and not lose instructional time.

Though severe behaviors continue to be referable on the first offense, most classroom management behaviors require a minimum of three teacher interventions before the student is referred to the guidance office. Students on referral are required to reflect on their behavior and then create a plan to fix the problem and repair their relationship with their teacher before returning to class. The expected teacher, counselor, and Administrative discipline progression is not coming across clearly to all staff. Continued dialogue is needed to clarify this situation and improve the relationship between the teachers and the office.

One result has been to redefine the role of the counselor, from the disciplinarian to a resource on campus. Students are feeling more comfortable seeking help from their counselors. Student self-referral to therapy has increased and the number of suspensions has dropped. The amount of instructional time for students has increased due to these alternative means of correction, though teachers are concerned by the time taken away from class in addressing individual issues with students in the moment.

There is still significant work to be done regarding these relatively new and abrupt changes in discipline policy. The district promises a new district-wide system to be rolled out next school year to address the reporting and tracking of tardies and single-period trancies and resulting consequences, which will make things easier for teachers. Also, compliance with Senate Bill 328, which requires high schools to start at 8:30 am or later, will hopefully have a positive impact in this area.

Sharktank

Started in Spring 2019, Sharktank was designed to give students the opportunity to preview the variety of electives offered at the school. Elective teachers were challenged to create a compelling five-minute pitch to entice students into signing up for their class or program. Students are invited by grade-level to the Sharktank assembly, where teachers promote their program by showing a video, demonstrating student performances, or simply describing their subject and class features. Because these presentations take place just prior to registration

meetings with counselors and the subsequent building of the master schedule of classes for the upcoming year, the impact has been that students are able to make informed choices about their schedules, and that those choices drive how many sections of elective classes are offered. In this way, students have direct input into the classes offered to them. This approach to master scheduling has also resulted in fewer student schedule changes during the opening weeks of each semester.

Wellness Center

The SEMHS Wellness Center was designed with the intent to be an open door facility for walk-ins and student referrals. Perhaps due to a large number of initial referrals, it appears that walk-in services have been limited. Phone calls to the Wellness Center room often go to voicemail, and there is little evidence of follow-up. The service provider, D'Veal, currently has a list of 81 students on their caseload. Of these, 24 cases remain open, while the rest are either awaiting parent response or are in the process of closing due to parents declining services. It remains to be seen what kind of impact this district-initiated program will have going forward.

III: Engagement of Stakeholders in Ongoing School Improvement

South El Monte High School monitors student achievement throughout the school year. This review of data has taken place in specialized committees--the School Site Council (SSC), the Site Leadership Team (SLT)--and also in departments and smaller grade-level or course-specific planning groups within departments. In these settings, data from district and state assessments informs teachers about student progress and has allowed teachers to focus on areas of critical need.

Department chairs provide a major conduit through which communication occurs between district or site administration and staff. Department chairs participate in the SLT and also meet weekly as content specialists with sister schools in our district in order to create district-wide assessments and develop instructional strategies and programs. Working within the parameters set by state standards, district assessments, specialized programs, and student data, teachers meet weekly during Monday late start professional development time in order to monitor and implement areas of the Schoolwide Action Plan under their purview.

In preparing this progress report, the school has relied heavily on data and insight derived from the above structure. Over the last three years, teachers have regularly contributed their feedback on programs and goals either through their sharing with department chairs, through information shared in online platforms such as Google Docs, or through monthly staff-wide meetings. Also, key stakeholders in charge of implementing new programs have submitted extensive information on program success to the WASC writing committee.

The Schoolwide Action Plan has been the major document that informs the work of the SSC. During the past several years, the SSC has discussed overall goals, made minor changes and additions to the overall goals, and also invited school personnel to share information regarding various programs. At the same time, however, the WASC process this year has uncovered a huge stumbling block in the monitoring process. Whereas the major goals of the Schoolwide Action Plan are generally known by the school community and are referenced in SSC meetings, a deeper correlation between the Schoolwide Action Plan, the school's SPSA, and other goals and recommendations for the school has become muddled, and the school has not systematically broken down larger goals into more specific, actionable items that might then be monitored more effectively throughout the year. In other words, WASC leaders are discovering that the school needs to make the school's various action plans more actionable.

This is particularly true with regards to the SPSA, which, because of the traditional approval schedule followed by all of the schools in the district, has not been in place by the beginning of the plan year and has therefore failed to be a central monitoring tool throughout the year. The schools in our district have traditionally obtained approval for the current year's SPSA in May of that plan's year. For example, the 2018-2019 SPSA was officially approved by our Board of Education in May 2019, and this year's 2019-2020 SPSA has not yet been approved. This has

significant ramifications. It means that our plan for the year is still being written and revised while the year is in progress. For a large part of the school year, South El Monte High School must rely on last year's plan or on an unofficial, unapproved working document. Although this late approval has been the school's and district's practice for many years, current leadership strongly believes that the school needs to fast-forward the approval cycle. In order to do so, the school will need to approve plans for two years by May of this year. If this happens according to plan, the school will have a 2020-2021 plan ready to go before the 2020-2021 school year begins.

Late approval of the SPSA has created further problems. With a change in administration and the departure of the previous principal, last year's official 2018-2019 SPSA has been misplaced and lost. This document was Board-approved in May of 2019. However, for a large part of the current 2019-2020 year, WASC leaders only had access to a 2-page executive summary of the SPSA attached to the May 2019 Board minutes, and no other school personnel could uncover the full 2018-2019 SPSA. Given that our 2019-2020 SPSA is still being written as of the date of this report, access to the older SPSA was important so that the school could have specific plan details to monitor. More recently, on February 6, a more fleshed-out version of the 2018-2019 SPSA was located, but it lacks budget numbers and other specific information.

Indeed, an analysis of last year's SSC minutes reveals no point at which a 2018-2019 SPSA was approved by the SSC. At the SSC's January 28, 2019 meeting, the SSC recommended that a subcommittee update the 2017-2018 SPSA using the new CDE template. Minute notes also referenced a budget document with the preliminary 2018-2019 allocations given to each school, but with no further detail about how that allocation would be used by each school. February and March SSC meetings were never held for lack of quorum. At the April 8, 2019 SSC meeting, no mention was made of updating the SPSA to the current year. Instead, participants at that meeting discussed adding a fifth goal to a future 2019-2020 SPSA. It may be possible that the previous principal of the school submitted a 2018-2019 SPSA to the Board without having had it approved by the SSC. However, even if the SSC did approve the 2018-2019 SPSA before it submitted it to the Board, the plan would still be approved after the fact, and not very useful for monitoring that year's actions.

Creating a SPSA before the plan year begins will give the plan some teeth, and will help to motivate the writers of the plan to think more deeply about its contents. An after-the-fact plan discourages deep or critical thinking, because the plan is no longer really that helpful for what the school needs to do next. A look at the school's SPSAs over time has shown a reliance on cut and paste techniques, to the extent that language in the 2018-2019 SPSA reads "With the cancellation of API and STAR measures, the Site Council, Site Leadership Team, and ELAC groups all focused on a-g completion rates, graduation rates, CAASPP results, and redesignation rates," even though the API and STAR measures were discontinued in 2013. The 2018-2019 SPSA also states that "South El Monte High School boasted the greatest gains on the CAASPP exam in English in the San Gabriel Valley," but those gains occurred in the 2015-2016 year. Without deeper reflection during SPSA creation, the school has neglected to incorporate relevant

goals and recommendations from WASC into the SPSA plan. For example, a recommendation to achieve more uniformity in the posting of standards and objectives at the beginning of lessons did not become instantiated in the SPSA, where they could have served to support the primary goal of increasing the effectiveness of first-time instruction.

This year, school leadership discovered the extent of these problems only very recently. South El Monte's SSC held their first meeting of the year on Wednesday, February 19. Because of this, leaders at the school were unaware that the 2018-2019 SPSA was missing. Also, no work has yet been done by an SSC to update the SPSA to the current 2019-2020 year, or to monitor a current plan. Indeed, as of this writing, the 2019-2020 SPSA is only in its preliminary stage of completion. Fortunately, administrators and school personnel are now aware of these issues. As the SSC begins its work, it will craft and approve a 2019-2020 SPSA as quickly as possible, and then begin developing a 2020-2021 SPSA for approval by the end of the year. At the February 19, 2020 SSC meeting, it was agreed that this would be the plan for the remainder of the year's meetings.

In light of these findings, WASC leadership recommends two goals. As mentioned previously, the school needs a Board-approved SPSA before the plan year begins. The district understands the importance of this, and will work with all schools in the district to catch up on plan approval. Second, the school needs to make the SPSA available to stakeholders in a more effective way. An approved SPSA for the current school year should be available through the school's website so that anybody can access it at any time. Furthermore, it is imperative that an approved SPSA contain accurate and up-to-date data, clearly cited, which can be updated as soon as new data becomes available

With these basic procedures in place, the school will be able to monitor the SPSA and other important items, such as WASC recommendations, much more effectively. Unsurprisingly, given the chaotic nature of SPSA approval and monitoring in past years, school leadership has discovered that ongoing monitoring of school programs has been haphazard and that several issues raised by the previous WASC report have not been adequately addressed. Starting with the 2019-2020 school year, the SLT has discussed strengthening the monitoring process for the SPSA and has committed itself, and the school, to a more effective procedure for foregrounding the SPSA and WASC recommendations. Although action plan goals inform the agenda at SLT meetings and drive the work of departments, the SLT has recognized that monitoring of school programs overall has fallen short.

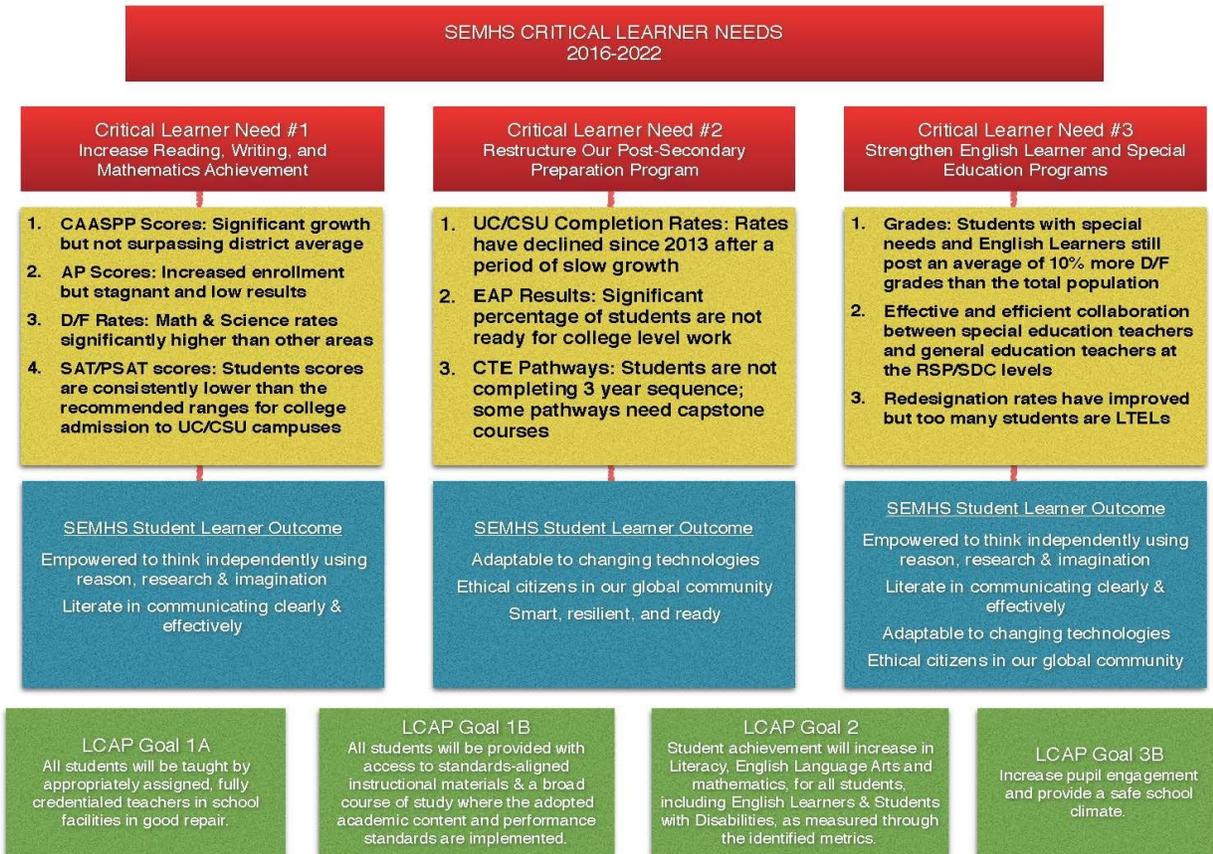
The school has committed itself to developing a more rigorous method for collecting pertinent data and following up on specific goals. Administration is planning to bring these issues to the full teaching staff and lead a process wherein teachers engage fully with identified critical areas of need and work to create specific, actionable goals. Relevant committees will be more thoroughly involved with monitoring schoolwide programs and communicating successes and areas of improvement to the larger school community. At the first School Site Council meeting

of the 2019-20 school year, held on February 19, 2020, the writers of this report were welcomed as guests and participated in a discussion that highlighted this need to create a timely, accurate SPSA. Overall, this will dovetail with the upcoming WASC mid-cycle visit to initiate a comprehensive overhaul of the planning process as well as the scope and focus of the plans themselves.

IV: Progress on the Implementation of the Schoolwide Action Plan/SPSA

Analyzing progress on the implementation of the SPSA is difficult, given that we do not have an approved SPSA for the current 2019-2020 year. In this section, WASC leaders have looked back to the incomplete 2018-2019 SPSA for guidance.

It should be noted that the main SPSA goals have been referenced in staff and leadership meetings, and that the general language is familiar to the school staff. However, the school staff has not had a chance to reflect on more specific actionable items from a plan in any formal or consistent way, given the dynamics detailed in Part III. The single-page graphic, created during the last WASC visit to help all stakeholders understand the relationship between the critical areas of need, school learner outcomes, school priorities, and district LCAP goals, has become, in some ways, a stand-in for a larger, more detailed plan.



This section will explain the Goals and Goal Objectives set forth in the 2018-2019 SPSA, and summarize the progress made on each of these items since that plan was adopted.

Goal #1: Provide effective first-time instruction to increase reading, writing and mathematics achievement

Goal Objective: The objective for this goal is to increase the percentage of juniors performing at "Standard Met" and "Standard Exceeded" in both ELA and Mathematics by 3% each year. This goal was met from 2016-2017. The new goal set by Site Council for 2019 is a 4% gain in ELA and a 7% gain in Mathematics.(14)

South El Monte High School did not meet any of the Goal Objectives above in 2019. With the exception of the percentage of English Learners meeting or exceeding standards in ELA, which increased from 8% to 11%, percentages declined for all subgroups in ELA and Math.

Goal #2: Refine and Enhance the College and Career Environment for Post-Secondary Success

Goal Objective: The objective of this goal is to annually increase the number of students completing their a-g requirements, with a C or better, school-wide and in all subgroups upon graduation by 2% for 2018-2019. (20)

According to the 2018-19 SPSA, from which the above Goal Objectives were taken, the a-g completion rate for 2017-18 was 52%, and the goal was an increase of 2 percentage points.(20) However, CA Dashboard lists the a-g completion rate for 2017-18 as 49.2%. School and district reports shared with the writers of this report have the a-g completion rate for 2017-18 at either 47%, 42.9%, or 49.2% depending on the document. This is just one example of the factors that hinder any sincere attempt at data analysis. The CA Dashboard a-g completion rate for 2018-19 is 54.7%. The same rate from the three internal sources is 54%, 54.7%, and 60%. While these numbers indicate recent success in that growth targets were exceeded for 2018-19, they also illustrate the need for greater clarity.

Goal #3: Strengthen English Learner and Special Education Programs

Goal Objective: The first objective of this goal is increase the number of reclassified English learners by 10 on an annual basis. The second objective is to increase the number of Special Education students meeting or exceeding the standards on state testing. (22)

In 2017-2018, the number of English Learners reclassified was 29, up 1 from the previous year. (22) In 2018-19, SEMHS reclassified 24 students, which falls well short of our stated Goal Objective, which targets an increase of 10 students each year.

According to SBAC scores, Special Education student performance has improved. The percentage of Special Education students who met standards in ELA increased from 5.88% in 2017 to 9.52% in 2018 and to 14.92% in 2019. In Mathematics, the percentage went from 0 in 2017 and 2018 to 3.7% in 2019.

Goal #4: Increase Opportunities for Significant and Meaningful Parent Involvement

Goal Objective: Increase the variety (including ethnic groups, language classification, academies, parents of student-athletes and performing arts) of parents who attend South El Monte High School’s various parental involvement events.(25)

The 2018-19 SPSA, in a section titled “Performance Gains Expected for These Student Groups” (25) states that the number of parents participating in site workshops increased from 117 in 2015 to 557 in 2016, a remarkable increase. The stated goal for 2017 was listed in the 2018-19 SPSA as 700, but there is no explanation of why there are no numbers for 2017 or 2018 on a SPSA report created in 2019. More puzzling is the fact that there is no clarity regarding what this number represents, other than the vague “attendance at events related to parental involvement.” The current parent liaison has provided data on the workshops held since she began in the job, but these numbers do little to indicate what the numbers reported on the 2018-19 SPSA refer to. What the current numbers do show is how many parents attended each event, along with a brief descriptor of the event. According to this data, 242 parents attended 15 workshops during the 2018-19 school year. So far this year, 191 parents have attended 20 workshops, 6 of which are a sequence of English classes attended by an average of 3 parents.

In April, 2019, a fifth goal was developed for inclusion in the “School Plan”, but was not formally added until the February 19, 2020 meeting of the School Site Council. Absent more specific documentation, the specifics of this goal remain the language that was shared in April 2019:

Goal 5 Promote A Healthy Social-Emotional Climate For Students

Promote A Healthy Social-Emotional Climate for Students

The objective for this goal is to nurture and enhance positive, healthy relationships between staff and students through Capturing Kids Hearts and other positive behavior incentive and rewards programs on campus. This goal includes increased opportunities for student involvement in after-school programs through LEARN and other school-based clubs and utilizing the MTSS process (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) and Restorative Practices to identify and support struggling students before problems accumulate.

Achievement will be measured through attendance rates, number of students participating in after-school programs, referral and suspension rates. Positive behavior incentives would be measured by the number of students eligible for Perfect Attendance and Acts of Kindness awards (weekly). Additional data points include measuring the number/percentage of teachers who implement the daily strategies of Capturing Kids Hearts, recording the number of visits to therapists/counselors for social-emotional reasons, and using the tools of MTSS to provide additional data.

Because it is a new addition to the plan, it is anticipated that its goals, and the steps envisioned for meeting them, will be taken up by the SLT and SSC as they begin the work of refining plans for the school in the upcoming months.

V: Schoolwide Action Plan/SPSA Refinements

The findings of the current progress report strongly suggest the need for significant work to be done on the development of a workable and relevant schoolwide action plan/SPSA, with specific action goals and detailed plans for addressing and assessing them, that can be finalized and approved by this year's School Site Council for implementation and monitoring beginning in 2020-2021. What one stakeholder described as a "cut and paste, rubber stamp process" has, over many years, resulted in ill-defined and vague plans that make it difficult, if not impossible, to identify areas for refinement. Without a detailed, updated, and meaningful plan, it is unlikely that sustained growth will be achieved in loosely defined "areas" and impossible to claim more than vague and incidental explanations for any success that may occur. A comprehensive and coherent overhaul of the South El Monte High School SPSA will increase the school's capacity for meaningful and effective collaboration by all stakeholders by clarifying the small steps we will take together in the ongoing journey, often slow, toward significant and lasting student success.

This work began in earnest on February 19, 2020, with the first School Site Council meeting of the school year. At that meeting, steps were taken to begin the work of clarifying old goals and combining them into a single document, a real plan. By looking at the goals defined in our multiple plans and reading this report, the SSC will begin to approach its work toward the goal of a useful plan for the school and its stakeholders.