

**MID-CYCLE VISIT
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND
COLLEGES**

FOR

SILVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

35484 Daggett-Yermo Rd.

Yermo, CA 92398

Silver Valley Unified School District

March 18 - 20, 2013

March 7 - 8, 2016

Visiting Committee Members

Matt Tassinari, Chairperson
Teacher, Palmdale High School

Myrna Foster
Dean of Students, Norton Space and Aeronautics Academy

I. Introduction

Include the following:

- **General comments about the school, its setting, and the school's analysis of student achievement data.**

Silver Valley High School (SVHS) is located in the rural high desert of Southern California, approximately half way between Los Angeles and Las Vegas. Silver Valley High School serves students who come from an area comprising 3,200 square miles, including the communities of Calico, Daggett, Fort Irwin, Ludlow, Newberry Springs, and Yermo.

The areas of Calico, Daggett, Ludlow, Newberry Springs, and Yermo are mostly rural, with many living in unincorporated areas without paved roads. Fort Irwin, known as the Army's National Training Center, lies 37 miles north of the school site in the middle of the Mojave Desert. Its location in this isolated desert area makes it ideal for the preparation of the modern U.S. military forces for conflicts in many vital areas of the globe. Acknowledged by many as the U. S. Army's premier training center, the base provides "Opposing Forces" that give the military units realistic combat training.

Silver Valley High School serves a diverse population of students, which is embraced and celebrated on campus. SVHS ended the 2014-2015 School year with the following demographics: 38% White; 35% Hispanic/Latino; 14% African American; 6% Two or more races; 5% Asian; 1% American Indian or Alaska Native. Approximately 45% of Silver Valley's students are classified as socio-economically disadvantaged.

Due to fluctuations in military staffing and the schools direct involvement with Fort Irwin National Training Center, Silver Valley has experienced a consistent decline in enrollment over the past several years. In addition, a new Principal and Assistant Principal started at SVHS beginning in 2015.

- **Include a description of any significant changes and/or developments, i.e., program additions since the last full visit, changes in student enrollment, staffing changes.**

Common Core Implementation

SVHS has been aggressively implementing the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. As part of Silver Valley's Common Core implementation, the district has dramatically increased the professional development opportunities available to teachers since the January 2013 WASC Self-Study.

English/Language Arts teachers have participated in 32 days of on-site professional development, including lesson design, classroom coaching, model lessons, and collaboration. A trainer from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMHCO) has led the majority of these ELA professional development sessions. Another trainer from Scholastic has also provided several of the ELA professional development sessions with specific training and implementation of the Read 180 program.

In addition to the training provided by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and Scholastic, the district also brought in Pat Pavelka, a renowned K-12 speaker, presenter, consultant, and author to work with the ELA teachers on more Common Core implementation and strategies.

Mathematics teachers have participated in 26 days of professional development including lesson design, classroom coaching, lesson modeling and collaboration. This training has been led and facilitated by a trainer from CPM (College Preparatory Mathematics).

Technology

Silver Valley has greatly increased the technology available to staff and students over the past three years. Each class now has at least ten iPads or tablets, laptops, or a combination of tablets and laptops. All classrooms are now equipped with wireless Access Points (WAP) and students have controlled access to the Internet through these WAPs. Each teacher also has a mobile laptop computer, projector, document camera, and printer.

AVID:

Silver Valley High School began offering the AVID Elective course in the fall of 2015. A team of ten staff members, including teachers, administrators, a counselor, and an instructional aide, attended the AVID Summer Institute in the summer of 2015. This team will continue to attend the Summer Institute and bring back to the rest of the staff the AVID strategies for School wide implementation.

PBIS:

SVHS officially began implementation of a school wide PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) plan in the fall of 2013. A PBIS Team was created and they attended implementation training provided by the Desert/Mountain SELPA. At that time, PRIDE was chosen as Silver Valley's acronym for school wide expectations. The acronym stands for the following: Prepared, Respectful, Integrity, Dependable, and Engaged. The PBIS Team continues to meet and analyze data to better improve implementation and impact of positive interactions on campus.

- **Describe the impact these changes and/or developments have had on the school and/or specific curricular programs.**

The continued professional development opportunities to participate in Common core trainings has helped teachers help students be better prepared for college and career readiness.

The increase in technology, not only for students but for staff also, has increased dramatically since the last visit in 2013. Their devices include laptops, iPads, and notebooks, also two computer based classrooms and programs like Odysseyware which helps students be better prepared and take elective courses that are not offered in the regular curriculum. Students on campus have been provided access to both students Gmail accounts and Student Portal.

Professional Development has been provided for the first AVID team and will continue expanding the number of staff trained in the summer of 2016. They are at the beginning stages but committed to grow the program.

The implementation of PBIS along with the recent changes in leadership, new Principal and Assistant Principal, has helped with the decline on suspensions, in-school suspensions and expulsions dramatically. Students show great improvement on positive interactions and mutual respect.

- **Briefly comment on the school's follow-up process. Include a description of the committee that has been responsible for overseeing the progress of the school's action plan and the preparation for the visit.**

During the process of the WASC self-study and analysis of the visiting team's report, Silver Valley identified key areas of focus for the coming years. On-going monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan has been conducted by site administrators. Part of the process involved the participation of Leadership (Department Chairpersons), who were tasked with communicating requirements to their respective departments. Leadership also gathered evidence and artifacts in relation to the visiting committee's report.

- **Describe the process used to prepare the progress report.**

Items in the Action Plan have been and continue to be an integral part of Silver Valley's focus to improve as a school. To ensure multiple perspectives, the committee has been comprised of a variety of staff members with input from various stakeholders. The goal of this composition is to hopefully ensure the unique needs of each sub-group are addressed. In preparation for this visit, a review of the progress to date began with the Leadership team who in turn took it to their departments.

II. Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up/Schoolwide Action Plan

- **Provide an analytical summary about the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section referencing the critical areas for follow-up addressed through each section.**
- **Note the evidence supporting the progress made and the impact made on student achievement.**

1. Based on focus group meetings, classroom observations, and interviews, the visiting committee recommends that SVHS needs a school wide focus on creating a student centered instructional environment built on academic rigor and high expectations for all students.

4. Silver Valley High School needs to implement instructional strategies that embed higher

level thinking skills in daily teaching and learning. This need was supported by the visiting committee's interviews, meetings, and classroom visits.

The actions taken are a part of School Goals 1 and 3 of the current SPSA, provide evidence for accomplishments, which have addressed these Critical Area for Follow-Up.

SVHS staff has been provided with significant professional development for both certificated Silver Valley High School and classified staff in the implementation of Common Core strategies beginning with English Language Arts, Mathematics and Specialized Academic Instruction staff, to include: Holt ELA Common Core, Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC), and College Preparatory Math (CPM). Personalized professional coaching for Science and Social Studies staff in the use of a school-wide writing rubric, which was created by the ELA staff was implemented. Furthermore AVID was introduced for the 9th grade in the fall of 2015 and expansion of AVID and its strategies for all grade levels starting in the 2016 – 2017 school year. Results from the SBAC placed SVHS scores higher than those of San Bernardino County and State of California averages. In addition, D/F rates have significantly declined over the last three years.

SVHS has provided professional development through Project Lead the Way and established a sequence of three courses to increase CTE courses. The first course Computer Science and Software Engineering was initiated in the 2015-2016 school year and the second course of study will begin in 2016-2017

SVHS has significantly increased the number of student user technology devices on campus to include laptops, iPads, and notebooks. Hi-speed Wi-Fi access points throughout the school are provided. In addition, the school has provided two computer based classrooms and programs: APEX for Credit Recovery and for alignment for incoming students taking AP courses not offered in the general curriculum, and Odysseyware Academy allowing students to take elective courses not offered in the regular curriculum. In addition all students on campus have been provided access to both student Gmail accounts and Student Portal access with the expectation that they will use these tools to communicate with their teachers and monitor their own grades in progress.

2. Silver Valley High School staff, students and administration express a need to build a school culture based on positive communications and mutual respect. This need emerged in the school's self-study and is supported by the visiting committee's interview and meetings.

The actions are a part of School Goals #2 and Centralized Service Goals #1-#2 of the current SPSA, provide evidence for accomplishments, which have addressed this Critical Area for follow-up.

SVHS has provided multiple years of training to the staff as it relates to SWPBIS (School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) focusing on the building and implementation of a SWPBIS positive school culture implementation of tiered intervention strategies. As a part of

the implementation, the school established school-wide and area specific expectations for positive behavior and incorporate the informing and training of students in assemblies, homeroom activities and direct classroom instruction. In addition, student input on both the SWPBIS expected behaviors by area and the semester prizes students would want to have recognizing them for their positive behaviors. Consequently, the evidence has shown that suspensions and expulsions have dramatically dropped.

3. The visiting committee recommends that the instructional program at SVHS needs to be driven by ongoing teacher analysis of data results provided by blueprints, rigorous frequent formative assessments and state assessments.

The actions taken are a part of School Goals #1 of the current SPSA, provide evidence for accomplishments, which have addressed this Critical Area for Follow-Up.

With the dissolution of the California Standards Tests and transition to the use of CAASPP, SVHS first used the full Interim Assessment, but because of the time taken away from instruction the decision was made to move to the use of smaller Interim Block Assessments (IABs). The school continues to learn how best to use the information provided by these smaller assessments in guiding the practice leading to higher student achievement.

The math department uses diagnostic tests along with classroom observational data to ensure students are properly placed based on their level of skill. Students who need additional assistance in meeting the rigorous demands of the mathematics classrooms are placed in Math Support classes where they use the ALEX program to hone basic skills and receive more support from their mathematics teachers.

SVHS has also established both reading and mathematics assessments using Read 180 and Math 180 for students who are exhibiting gaps in their acquisition of prerequisite skills for the rigorous level of skill we require. Students who need these supports have these programs embedded as a part of their schedules.

- **If any critical areas for follow-up were not included in the school's action plan, indicate what actions have been taken to address these issue(s) and include supporting evidence.**

Note: The school's school-wide action plan should have incorporated all the critical areas of follow-up or major recommendations that were stated in the last self-study visiting committee report.

All critical areas for follow-up were addresses in the school's action plan.

III. Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations:

- **Comment on significant progress the school has made in responding to the critical areas for follow-up and in carrying out the related action plan.**

Silver Valley High School's progress in responding to the critical areas for follow-up is admirable. With a supportive administration, SVHS is moving in the right direction by preparing students for the Common Core. SVHS has surpassed its ability to carry out their actions. Communication with all stakeholders has propelled SVHS towards its success. The site leadership team has implemented the visiting committee's recommendations with effectiveness and propriety. SVHS's commitment to student success is evident. Classroom visitations showed improved instructional practices which has resulted in student improved academic achievement. Despite budgetary concerns, SVHS continues moving forward and has made commendable efforts to address the recommendations left by the visiting committee in 2013. They have procedures and protocols in place to support professional learning and the use of instructional practice. It must be noted that the staff is empowered in the decision making process which has created a positive learning environment for all.

Recommendations:

- **Comment on any critical areas for follow-up/action plan sections that have not yet been completely addressed, if applicable.**

Making data analysis as a function of the continuing cycle of instructional improvement and instituting a clear vision for schoolwide data use that sustains and fosters a data driven culture is vital in steering SVHS forward.

Identify any new areas of concerns, if applicable.

N/A