

June

2010

WCCHS EDUCATIONAL DIRECTOR REPORT
Continued Progress



WCCHS EDUCATIONAL DIRECTOR

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD

777 Sonoma St. • Richmond, CA 94703
Phone 510.230.4105 • Fax 510.230.7890

Chapter 1

Overview

This year has seen our school transform, grow, and stabilize. From a new location with a view of the Bay, large classrooms and a full-size gym, to upgraded curriculum and a larger, energetic staff, the WCCHS of 2009–2010 is closer to our vision of what we want to be. In some very personal ways, this year was extremely tough for members of our community: parents, students, teachers, and directors alike, but we can also celebrate our first graduating class, our first prom, a fun and creative play, and much, much more.

Building and Schedule

The “most visible change, of course, between last year and this year was our new site. We moved over the summer from 1615 Carlson, which was originally designed to be an elementary school, to 777 Sonoma which had served as a Church-high school in the past.

Gary Einhorn 7/6/10 1:05 PM
Deleted: <sp>

A comparison of the two sites shows the greater space and resources of the new site, but it doesn't capture the “feeling” of the new location. To be fair, some students complained about the new location because they felt it lacked the “coziness” of 1615 Carlson, but almost everyone enjoyed the larger classes, greater flexibility, and, of course, the full-size gym and stage.

| | 1615 Carlson | 777 Sonoma |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Number of Rooms available | 8 | 11 |
| Average size of classroom | 600 sq. feet | 1152.4 sq. feet |
| Size of Office | 200 sq. feet | 884 sq. feet |
| Size of Community Space | 900 sq. feet | 1653 sq. feet |
| Gym | No Gym | 10,000 sq. feet gym |

| | 1615 Carlson | 777 Sonoma |
|------------|---|---|
| Ammenities | Small courtyard. Next to I80 (also has noise and pollution) | View of Bay, parking lot, lower "play" area |

Building upon what we've learned in previous years, we created a classroom schedule which allowed for 5 periods of "4-times a week" classes and two "interwoven" periods of "3 times a week classes". The first five periods are well suited for academics, while the last two are good for electives. Our educational program borrows heavily from Alameda Community Learning Center in which most classes occur 2 or 3 times a week; however, we found that our student population, for the most part, needs more instructional time.

This year, we made it possible for our "Act" level students to elect to miss instruction and spend more time independently studying in the community space. This has been a great step forward in our mission to "create a community of autonomous learners", and allows those students who are ready for the challenge to work more independently.

New Courses

At the end of our second year, the parents and board all indicated that their greatest desire for the school was to improve academics and athletics. Later, I will discuss the progress made in athletics, but here I am happy to report that we not only greatly expanded our curriculum options in the 2009-10 year, but over 60% of our curriculum was approved by the UC Office of the President as college-preparatory. We added nine more classes, improved our "Be the Change" courses, and also encouraged more students to attend Contra Costa College.

| New Classes in 2009-10 |
|--|
| Leadership Biology English 12 Pre-Calculus Poetry Media-Arts Advanced Web Design Civics AVID |

Improved Instruction

We also made great strides in improving the overall instruction at WCCHS. Parents and students often praise our teachers for their care and compassion, but in the first two years, many felt that our instruction lacked enough rigor.

We dedicated almost half of our inservices to working on instructional techniques and improving curriculum. Teachers changed the way they plan lessons by focusing more on student outcomes, making tests more challenging, and improving math and writing instruction.

Perhaps the greatest change we made in the past year was to introduce Academic Probation. When we saw that many students were falling behind, not focusing enough on homework, and coming to class unprepared, the teachers worked together to create a program which would de-incentivize students who are failing classes. It was grueling and unpleasant for many, but it did ultimately lead to better grades for many. I will discuss this more later in the report.

Challenge Day

We've always wanted to improve our connection to the Challenge Day program in Concord which was the inspiration for our school. This year, with the support of Steve Olson, our Community Space supervisor, almost a dozen WCCHS students got to experience the intense connection and compassion found in the three-day Next Step Program.

Many of these kids came back to WCCHS with new inspiration and motivation to create a truly bully-free environment.

Student Initiative

Perhaps as a result of their experiences with Challenge Day, we saw more students starting new clubs and taking greater risks on campus. The Student Cafe which happened on Friday evenings featured poetry, live music, dancing, and comedy. The Student Store raised over \$500 for graduation and became the place to hang-out after school. The anime club continued to thrive and our basketball team was cheered on by our first Cheerleading club.

Charter-Mandated Data

Our charter prescribes that we keep track of various data to see that we are, in fact, providing the education we want. Much of this data has to do with seniors and graduates so, for the first time in our history, we are actually able to begin reporting.

Leading Stats

It is hard to make any conclusions based on these numbers. We had 11 seniors this year and ten received diplomas. As a result, I have to caution the reader against relying too heavily on these numbers. They do ; however, seem to point to a previously-identified concern that we are not spending enough time on college admissions.

| Attendance Rate | 92.8% |
|-----------------------|--|
| Graduation Rate | 91% |
| Concurrent Enrollment | 2% of our students took CC classes |
| College and UC Grades | N/A |
| SAT Scores | N/A |
| College Admissions | 10% at four-year 90% to Community College |
| Survey results | 35% "Strongly Agree" with positive statements about curriculum and school. 58% "Agree" with positive statements. Only 6% Disagree or Strongly disagree |
| SARC | See Below... |

SARC

Every year, we publish a School Accountability Report which covers much of what is in this report as well as information about average class size, teacher credentials, STAR

scores, suspension rates, and more. This SARC is available on our school's website:
www.wcchschool.org

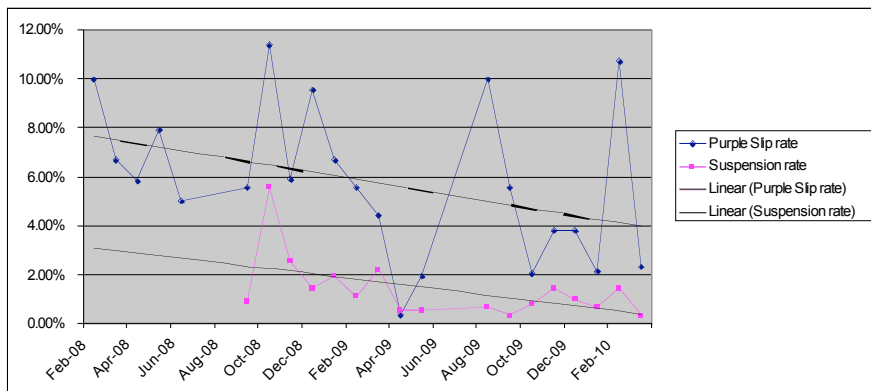
The Rest of the Story

This year has seen our school transform, grow, and stabilize. From a new location with a view of the Bay, large classrooms and a full-size gym, to upgraded curriculum and a larger, energetic staff, the WCCHS of 2009–2010 is closer to our vision of what we want to be. In some very personal ways, this year was extremely tough for members of our community: parents, students, teachers, and directors alike, but we can also celebrate our first graduating class, our first prom, a fun and creative play, and much, much more.

Discipline, Tardies, and GPA

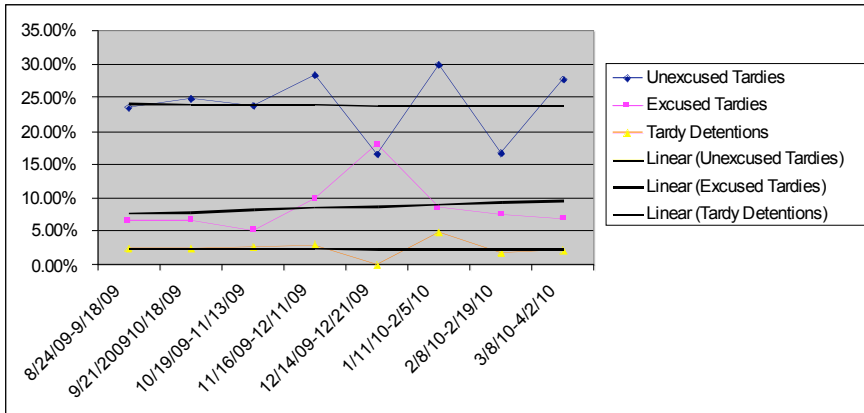
When we opened in 2007, we followed the Sudbury School model for discipline which allows students to create their own environment. While that may work well in New England, it was obvious that here in Richmond, our kids need more guidance and structure to learn what is right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable. We shifted gears dramatically and created a “referral” system (purple slips) and trained our staff in proper classroom management.

Since then, discipline problems have continued to decline and, in fact, whenever visitors come to our school, they always remark about how nice and well-behaved our students



are.

We haven't been as successful in reducing tardies. Despite starting later than most schools and beginning the day with connected and fun homerooms, many students continue to lag in coming to school. One reason may be the homerooms themselves, which some students find superfluous and silly. We will continue to work to improve homerooms and motivate students to come to school prepared and ready to learn.



A good measure of how engaged students are with their coursework is their GPA. For the first two years of WCCHS, many students had GPA's below 3.0 and we even saw a disturbing trend where students' GPA's would **decrease** the more time they spent at WCCHS.

In an effort to combat that as well as provide support for those kids who were failing their classes, we began the Academic Probation program which gave lunch detention for two weeks to any student whose GPA went below 1.5 or was failing 2 or more classes. Students must remain on Academic Probation until they had C's or better in all classes.

While this change was hard for our students, many of our students benefitted greatly. Before instituting the Academic Probation program, average class GPAs ranged from 2.2 to 2.35, but after several months of the program, the GPA's rose from an average of 2.63 to 2.94. And while we started the program with 60 students on probation, it dropped to 30 within a month.

Basketball

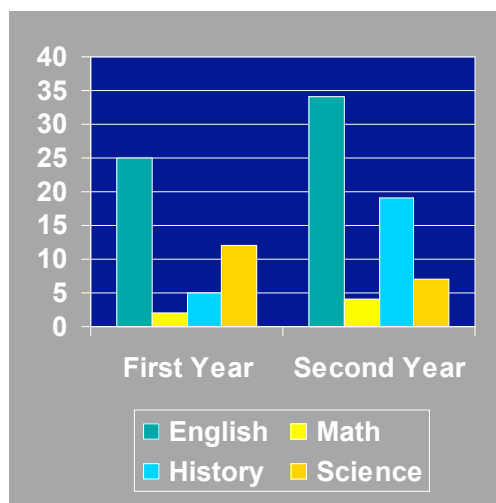
Our new PE teacher this year, Derrick Jones, made it his mission to start a boys basketball team. He recruited players, came early and stayed late for practices, and set

up matches with other schools. Our 1–6 record may not seem very impressive, but to see the team advance and progress with every game was truly inspiring.

Next year, we want to see boy AND girl sports at WCCHS. We are also creating a scheduled slot for practice within the school-day so that students can practice for team sports during PE class.

STAR Test Results from 2008-2009

Our initial API score with the state, which is a total measure of performance was 570, and the State set a growth goal of 12 for us. We more than doubled that goal in our second year earning a score of 595. With the exception of science scores, every subject area rose dramatically from the first to the second year with our largest gains being made in males and economically disadvantaged students.



WCCHS has made great annual gains with students who have been underperforming. Our initial API score from 2007 to 2008 was a very low 570 with a growth target of 12. We achieved a growth over twice as great raising our API scores to 595 after our second year of operations. Because of our low size (only 50 students the first year), we cannot give accurate disaggregated statistics on student sub-groups. Our current rank among similar schools and state-wide is at the lowest level.

From 2008 to 2010 the percentage of students achieving proficiency in every grade level and in almost every subject rose. Likewise the percentage of students achieving the status of “far below” fell half of the grades and subjects.

The following chart shows gains in percentage of students achieving proficiency for our first three years of existence in tests with enough existing data for comparisons:

| | % proficient in 2008 | % proficient in 2009 | % proficient in 2010 |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 9 th English | 31 | 37 | 36 |
| 10 th English | 12 | 30 | 26 |
| 11 th English | | 36 | 35 |
| | | | |
| 9 th Algebra | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| 9 th Geometry | 0 | 0 | 50 |
| 10 th Geometry | 0 | 8 | 10 |

A review of demographic subgroup results are difficult as some subgroups contain less than 10 students. In such cases, a single student can create a percentage change from 10% to 50%. However, some subgroups are large enough to be statistically significant, and most show significant improvement. The greatest subgroup improvements occurred in Economically Disadvantaged students, Hispanics, and Males, but all subgroups showed improvements in most, if not all, tests and declines in some to none.

Percent of Economically Disadvantaged scoring Proficient

| 9 th Grade | | | | 10 th Grade | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|---------|------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| | 2007-8 | 2008-9 | 2009-10 | | 2007-8 | 2008-9 | 2009-10 |
| ELA | 17 | 31 | 34 | ELA | 0 | 22 | 32 |
| Alg 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Alg 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Geo | 0 | 0 | 25 | Geo | 0 | 18 | 6 |
| W. Hist | 0 | 14 | 0 | W. Hist | 0 | 0 | 11 |

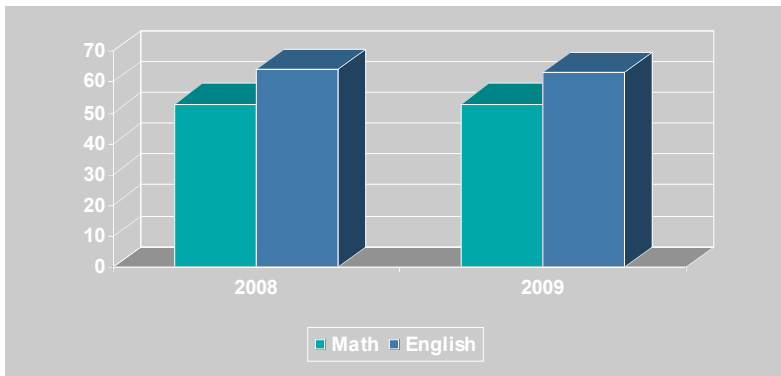
Percent of Ethnically Latino students scoring Proficient

| 9 th Grade | | | | 10 th Grade | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|---------|------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| | 2007-8 | 2008-9 | 2009-10 | | 2007-8 | 2008-9 | 2009-10 |
| ELA | 15 | 45 | 43 | ELA | 0 | 13 | 29 |
| Alg 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Alg 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Geo | 0 | 0 | 66 | Geo | 0 | 18 | 0 |
| Gen Math | 0 | 13 | n/a | Life Sci | 11 | 9 | 21 |
| W. Hist | 0 | 14 | 0 | W. Hist | 0 | 19 | 0 |

Percent of Males scoring Proficient

| 9 th Grade | | | | 10 th Grade | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|---------|------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| | 2007-8 | 2008-9 | 2009-10 | | 2007-8 | 2008-9 | 2009-10 |
| ELA | 19 | 36 | 31 | ELA | 11 | 21 | 24 |
| Alg 1 | 0 | 7 | 10 | Alg 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Geo | 0 | 0 | 50 | Geo | 0 | 17 | 11 |
| W. Hist | 0 | 14 | 11 | W. Hist | 14 | 17 | 18 |

One requirement for graduation is for every student to take and pass the California Exit Exam (CAHSEE). Tenth graders are eligible to take the test once a year, Eleventh may take it twice a year, and twelfth graders have three chances to take it. Currently, 86% of our eligible students have passed the English portion of the CAHSEE exam and 67% have passed the Math portion.



As Richmond has a large population of students from Spanish-speaking families, and WCCHS attracts a great number of Hispanic families, another meaningful statistic is progress made on the CELDT (California English Language Development Test). 58% of our students are “English Only” with 1% identified as Fluent English Proficient although they come from families where English isn’t the primary language. 14% of our students are identified as English Learners and 13% are Redefined as English Proficient who once were learners. 7% have been redefined since matriculating at WCCHS.

Looking Ahead (UCOP and WASC)

In my opinion, the most important issues facing our school for 2010–2011 are the continued improvement of our curriculum, successfully accrediting all our coursework so that it is UCOP approved, and continuing our mission of creating a connected, respectful, compassionate community. All of these goals are wrapped up in our efforts to become WASC accredited.

In April of 2011, WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) will send a three-person team to our school to assess our self-assessment. If that sounds confusing, it isn’t really. Between now and December, our entire community must work together to examine and assess our curriculum, instruction, structure, and culture. Those efforts will result in a book entitled “The Self-Study” which will describe all the things we do well, don’t do well, and plans for improvement. When the WASC team visits in April, their job will be to see how honest we have been and how realistic our plans are for success.

Being WASC accredited is a very important step for our school and crucial in renewing our charter the following year, but better still, it will guide us in continuing to grow and develop and become the school we envision.