

**MID-CYCLE VISIT
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

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

FOR

**CONDOR HIGH SCHOOL AND OPTIONS
ACADEMY**

**1102 W. 2ND STREET
OXNARD, CA 93030**

OXNARD UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Original Self-Study Visit February 28 – March 2, 2016

Mid-cycle Visit October 28-30, 2018

Visiting Committee Members

Tom Whalen, Chairperson
Social Studies Teacher, Arroyo Grande High School

Gavin Bell, Member
Assistant Principal, North Bakersfield High School

Diana Mego, Member
Science Teacher, Applied Technology Center H.S.

I. Introduction

Include the following:

- **General comments about the school, its setting, and the school's analysis of student achievement data.**
Condor has done an excellent job of continually seeking to improve the learning experience in light of massive growth and wholesale changes since our last visit. Condor has almost doubled in size of schools served and enrollment. Condor's principal has been named principal of the district's large Adult Education program while remaining principal of Condor even though she was not required to do so. While still struggling to improve test scores, just like every school in their district, Condor has addressed the Action Plan from their 2016 Self Study with vigor and determination.
- **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.**
Condor has lost a few key teachers from their program due to retirement as well as one untimely death of a beloved English teacher. Due to the excellent program and climate at Condor, they have had no problem in recruiting stellar replacements in key areas specifically related to addressing the Action Plan. The district has mandated an online curriculum district wide which Condor has implemented and is continuing to monitor and perfect. Condor has done a very good job of improving all staff by recruiting key personnel that are able to mentor and develop existing staff in key areas such as math, science, and migration to challenging technological integration. as well as improving their attendance record
- **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.**
The entire staff has been actively involved in addressing school improvement since our last visit through weekly whole staff meetings. Parental and student involvement in school improvement have grown tremendously since our last visit. all families are notified and invited to bi-weekly meetings as well as monthly School Site Council meetings.
- **Describe the process used to prepare the progress report.**
The entire staff has stepped in to work on the progress report under the leadership of the WASC Site Leader and Principal.

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.**
 - **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 schoolwide 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.**

Action Plan from 2016 Visit

The school identified the following six goals at the conclusion of our last visit:

Goal 1: Student Achievement

Condor will work on increasing student's achievement in the areas of mathematics, science and English. Condor staff are working toward improving student achievement in all academic areas with an emphasis on math and science. Condor has recruited two new math instructors and one new science instructor. Condor is utilizing small group instruction with all students as needed and they also offer tutoring on site at their main location on 2nd Street. Science teachers have collaborated and developed uniform mobile labs for biology at each site. Mobile labs are easy to use and offer an array of suitable lessons. Condor has suffered an untimely death of a beloved and energetic English teacher who has yet to be replaced by the district office. In light of the death of the primary teacher leader in English and Condor's doubling in size and reconfiguration of its physical sites, they have yet to take steps to *seriously* overhaul their English approach, but they are in the beginning phases. It is the opinion of the visiting team that they could continue to build upon their math tutoring as this is usually an area of weakness in supporting independent study students.

Goal 2: Increase Teacher Effectiveness

Condor will continue to improve providing its teachers with opportunities for Professional Development in all subject areas to ease transition into 21st Century Teaching and Learning Practices.

Staff at Condor High School meets once a week for two hours. At the beginning of the school year staff does review exemplary, acceptable, and unacceptable work samples so that all teachers are on the same page regarding student work. Alignment to the evolving standards comes down from the district level. Condor is to be commended for having teacher representatives on the district Curriculum Council to aid in the process. Professional development opportunities, such as conferences in and outside the district are available for teachers. While there have been opportunities for teachers to learn about how to utilize simple technology to improve the experience for independent study learners, there is little evidence that it is catching on. Some students listed "better communication with their teachers" when asked what is one thing they would like to change about the school. Condor has been made aware of this. The Technology Specialist, who was formerly in the same role for the entire district, is very knowledgeable. He has been seeing some success in small one-to-one interactions with teachers regarding the use of technology to improve instruction.

Although there has been an effort to organize and streamline the course outlines has developed nicely, there seems to be a need to revise and add more rigor to the courses continually. The course outlines, while they have been uniformly formatted and updates, they could still benefit from closer attention to detail, especially with the Core A and B Life Skills courses.

Student work samples and conversations all pointed to an emphasis on quality and rigor at Condor. 9th and 10th grade students are placed in their Oasis program in order to indoctrinate

them into the Condor way of doing things. Students meet twice per week in small groups for a few hours. The Oasis teachers have been chosen specifically for their patience, and it shows. The Oasis program is at 3 sites, so most of the younger incoming students, who generally need more guidance, are receiving more attention than typical independent study students.

We discussed utilization of a Learning Management System, such as Canvas, so that Condor can load their existing paper course outlines into an internet accessible place so that students who are unable to attend a weekly meeting can still be held accountable for completing work. The students we spoke to who have completed online college course have expressed a desire for such an option. Condor said that they have discussed the idea, but due to staffing issues, they have had to put it aside for now. They have also expressed a desire to have a “math guru” type teacher available to all students to assist remote students with math questions and perhaps direct them to appropriate online tutorials that might be helpful when students are either engaged in an assignment and stuck or unable to drive to Oxnard for tutoring help. The principal suggested that we meet with the superintendent and her assistant. The assistant was able to make it and we did bring up Condor’s wishes, even though they were outside the realm of a Mid-cycle Visit. Condor is short two teachers and has been asking for additional staff as the backlog to get into Condor is near 100 students and they are already short staffed. The meeting seemed very positive and there is hope that Condor will have the ability and staff to accomplish their needs.

Goal 3: Effective use of data analysis to guide instruction

Teachers at Condor use multiple data measures to guide instruction through their various programs. Condor’s overall program data used to drive the school is a product of the California Dashboard, attendance rates, student grades, state testing, and college reports. Students growth is measured through graduation rates, attendance reports, high-stakes testing reports, and through Cyber-High reports. Data is typically disaggregated by the principal and disseminated at meetings once per month. As we get into this time of year, adjustments are being made to adjust instruction to improve results in math and language arts. The principal with a teacher from Condor participate on the district’s Curriculum Committee to maintain cohesion with the district’s comprehensive site programs. As with most schools, Condor could still do more to develop a systematic approach to data utilization even though they are doing a much better job than they were at our last visit. The Visiting Committee concurs that Condor is doing the best they can with their existing resources, but they are dealing with staffing issues that are not being addressed by the district.

Goal 4: Condor will continue its efforts to improve student attendance/production

Condor High School has continued to focus on student attendance with their attendance counselor and the use of an interventionist to help at-risk students who are struggling getting their work done in a timely manner, thus cutting into their attendance at an independent school. The interventionist and the tech guru have implemented a novel system to where attendance letters are sent out with the click of a button by individual teachers. The letter get sent out via mail and email. Notifications are then sent to the principal and interventionist and students are added to a spreadsheet. It is a very ingenious system and it is working quite well

while saving staff a lot of time. The interventionist has freed up a lot of time and is now able to make many more home visits than he had in the past.

Condor teachers are also well aware of the importance of holding students accountable for completing work on time. Teachers were observed having attendance and communication conversations with students. All students commented on the fact that they are learning important time management techniques while at Condor. This only has provided students with a sense of importance as they are in control of not only their education but all the other facets of their time that they now must manage effectively.

The staff demonstrated that they realize the connection between productivity and ADA funds.

Goal 5: Increase and maintain parent involvement.

Condor administration will continue its ongoing parent recruitment efforts and develop a self-sufficient, active and sustainable parent organization.

Condor has done an excellent job of improving parental involvement in a school setting that typically has low engagement by parents. Condor parents are encouraged to use the Condor website to stay current on the school activities and important dates. The district has purchased "Parent Square" for parent notification and updated Condor's website. Parent Square has the ability to provide parents with information about the school via phone calls, text-messages, and email. Parents are also have access to the students information system to monitor their student's progress. Parents are encouraged to attend site meetings and meet with school staff to discuss their student's future in high school. Parent meetings for Condor are monthly during school site council meetings. During this meetings parents are provided time for input on the school. Condor has done such a good job of increasing parental involvement that they now have to hold their site council meetings at the district office. Discussions with parents demonstrated that Condor has really done a top notch job in educating parents about site council responsibilities and parents really do have a say in how funds are being spent at Condor as well as being very informed about changes and improvements in the Condor program. One of the parents who attended the meeting was brand new. Her son has not yet started at Condor. She told us that she received a text and email invitation to our parent meeting which demonstrated how thorough Condor is about parent engagement from the very beginning of the relationship. The relationship between Condor and all stakeholders is very genuine, transparent, open, and honest. The Visiting Committee was very impressed.

Goal 6: Increase and maintain student involvement.

Develop a self-sufficient active and sustainable student organization.

Condor launched ASB in 2015 which promoted student involvement. This effort has continued to grow and in 2017 ASB students participated in field trips, leadership conferences and various activities. The ASB teachers goal is to incorporate students from across the district so there is equal participation. Students meet with the Student Body Advisor twice a week for a Leadership class and to plan together for the upcoming activities. They have also added an online component where the students have a youtube channel that announces the monthly events at Condor High School. The ASB students are an active group that has increased the

pride in their school. ASB students were well attuned to their education and what it takes to succeed in an environment where they have considerable autonomy. Increased student involvement in the school has had the desired effect of providing a voice for students into the direction of the school as well as promoting social connections to other students that they would otherwise miss out on in an independent study program.

III. Commendations and Recommendations

A. 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.**

Condor High School is to be commended for continuing to grow and improve their school in the face of adversity and general neglect from the district office. They were removed from their previous campus and supplanted by a Middle College High School that only supports 39 students. Funding for an sorely needed Assistant Principal was taken from Condor and moved to the Middle College to pay for their administration. Condor staff had to move in with the Adult Ed program in the flight path of Oxnard Airport. It is a noisy environment with constant aircraft of all types flying low overhead all day long. However, instead of complaining, Condor fought for improved staff in order to support the WASC Action Plan while maintaining the caring environment noted on the Self Study visit.

Condor's reputation as a preferred school of choice in the district has led to their expansion to sites on each comprehensive campus. Condor has also had the luxury of being able to select excellent teachers to staff their new sites. While they still have some staffing needs, the cohesiveness of their staff and dedication to their students is superlative. Condor is a school where teachers want to teach, and the principal is careful about who she selects.

Condor has taken school quality very seriously when it comes to student performance. Although they are close to being a school of last resort, they have established and well communicated standards of performance that are continually reinforced. This has created a culture of academic legitimacy that is not often seen in many alternative education settings.

The addition of the ASB program has provided non-traditional students with a voice and active role in student leadership. There is more school pride than we witnessed during the Self Study visit.

Dual-Enrollment options has provided students at Condor High access to taking and earning college credits. Dual-enrollment helps to demystify college for high school students. All students are encouraged to take college courses while at Condor, and the school offers a lot of

assistance in getting started. The students who have taken college courses have claimed that they are now very confident in their abilities as a student. Parents have also extolled how their children have grown into mature young adults with new found pride in their abilities after completing their first college course.

Condor's academic programs and pacing provides students who are credit deficient an approachable path towards graduation and college. There are many students who have family lives that do not allow them to attend regular school. Some of the students at Condor are serving as their head of household. Condor is giving these students hope for a better life.

Condor High School has done an excellent job of increasing student and parent involvement. Condor has better parental involvement than most comprehensive high schools. It isn't just mild involvement. Condor parents are receiving an education in how to run a school and budgeting. speaking to some of the parents was like sitting in a class on school programs and spending.

B. Recommendations:

- 1. Leverage the internet to provide access while students work remotely.**
- 2. Greater mathematics support**
- 3. Create a curated array of online resources that provide a "go-to" for students when they are unable to make it in for tutoring, especially in mathematics.**
- 4. Continue to work with the district office in order to increase staffing while continuing to grow Condor to deal with growing student demand.**