

Mid-cycle Visiting Committee Summary Report

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

FOR

FRONTIER HIGH SCHOOL

**545 Airport Way
Camarillo, CA 93010**

Oxnard Union High School District

March 9th-10th, 2022

Visiting Committee Members

Dr. Scott Wyatt Chairperson
Area Director, Student Services, SBCSS

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SUMMARY

Frontier High School provides an alternative education for students needing a different experience than they were receiving at the large comprehensive high schools. They specialize in providing a smaller setting, intensive interventions, and a caring staff dedicated to helping all students needing credit recovery, social-emotional supports, and a path to achieve a high school diploma and beyond.

Since their last WASC Self-Study visit Frontier High School has seen a steep decline in their enrollment, which has also led to a decrease in the number of students who have earned their high school diploma through their program. The decline in their enrollment can be directly attributed to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Another unfortunate impact COVID has had on their program has been an increase in Chronic Absenteeism with their students. On a positive note, their suspensions and expulsions have decreased significantly due to the virtual platform they were using for distance learning.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Graduation				
ELL	27	24	22	6
SPED	17	12	9	3
Regular	134	142	98	29
Total	151	164	111	38
Chronic Absenteeism	66.9%	*Data not recorded due to COVID-19	83.4%	TBD
Suspensions	177	85	0	5
Expulsions	2	3	0	0
Dropouts	112	70	91	31
RFPEP Students	266	248	205	119

Frontier High School administers a Youth Truth Survey to gather Perceptual Data to measure students’ attitudes towards Student Engagement, Academic Challenge, Culture, Belonging and Peer Collaboration, Relationship, College and Career Readiness. The survey shows a direct correlation between the COVID Pandemic/Distance Learning and a drop in their students’

attitudes towards “Belonging and Peer Collaboration” and “Engagement.” Their academic rigor remained strong during distance learning which was a good sign.

PERCEPTUAL DATA

Youth Truth Survey:

<u>Summary Measure: Student Positives</u>					
	<u>FHS 2021</u>	<u>FHS 2020</u>	<u>FHS 2019</u>	<u>OUHSD</u>	<u>National</u>
Engagement	48%	60%	59%	56%	59%
Academic Challenge	63%	62%	62%	70%	65%
Culture	48%	38%	42%	51%	41%
Belonging and Peer Collaboration	25%	37%	37%	33%	44%
Relationships	45%	44%	53%	49%	49%
College and Career Readiness	43%	40%	47%	41%	41%

Significant Changes and Developments

Since their last WASC visit Frontier High School has experienced significant change in many different areas.

COVID-19:

Like most districts in the state, OUHSD and Frontier High School transitioned to distance learning at the start of trimester 3 of the 2019-2020 school year. Frontier was lucky to have transitioned to a 1:1 school at the beginning of that school year. All of their students were equipped with a Chromebook and a hotspot, if needed. The OUHSD school board adopted a “do no harm” grading policy for that trimester. Students who failed during the start of that trimester were given an incomplete grade and allowed to take the class over. For the start of the 2020-2021 school year, OUHSD switched all schools to a quarter system, this allowed students to focus on a few classes during a time when many students were dealing with additional responsibilities at home. Students came back voluntarily at the start of the 4th quarter of 2020-2021. 2021-2022 marked a full return to campus, with all regulations and recommendations implemented.

District level changes:

The Oxnard Union High School District saw a significant change in administration over the last 3 years. Superintendent Penelope DeLeon exited after four years. She was replaced by Superintendent Dr. Tom McCoy, who was their Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services and previously a principal within the school district. The district promoted Ted Lawrence to Assistant Superintendent of Business Services and Roger Adams to Assistant Superintendent of Education Services. Both are former principals in their district. These leaders also rose through the ranks of the Oxnard Union High School District. In 2020, the district hired the former Simi Valley Unified School District Director of Secondary Education, Dr. Deborah Salgado, as Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources.

New Principal:

After four years as principal at Frontier High School, Christina Mahone left to work at the county level and was replaced by their new principal Ron Briggs. Mr. Briggs started his educational career with the Oxnard Union High School District at Hueneme High School where he taught science and coached various sports for 18 years. Mr. Briggs transferred to Frontier High School as a teacher where he taught science for one year. Mr. Briggs' first position in administration was in the Ventura Unified School District as an Assistant Principal at Foothill Technology High School. After three years at FTHS, he became a middle school principal and spent one year at Carpinteria Middle School and 3 years at Isbell Middle School in Santa Paula.

For the past 26 years, Mr. Briggs has worked mostly with students with challenging situations and limited support outside of school. He grew up in poverty and had a challenging childhood. He had behavior issues and barely graduated from high school. He graduated from college 10 years after graduating from high school. He is the only one in his immediate and extended family to go to college. These experiences have helped him understand the students he serves.

His focus has always been to teach students the importance of education and to help them find connections within the school. He is a strong advocate for students and works to help them with relationship building, regulating their emotions, personal responsibility, and perseverance. As the new principal of Frontier, he stated he will continue to work hard to help students set goals, believe in themselves, and support them where needed.

Loss of dean position:

Due to funding loss with COVID-19, the Frontier High School Dean position was eliminated at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Dr. McNutt assumed a new position with the Ventura County Office of Education

Switch to Quarters:

With the outbreak of COVID-19 and the state's shift to remote learning, OUHSD created a district-wide committee to create the best possible remote learning environment for their students and staff. This committee made up of district officials, principals, and assistant principals, certificated and classified employees, and community members met monthly and bi-monthly to create the best environment for the 2020-2021 school year. The decision was made to switch to a quarter system for one year. The rationale for this was that students would only have to focus on three classes per quarter but would allow for a fourth class if they fell behind. Many of their students began to work

to help support their families or were put in charge of younger siblings during the day. Allowing their students to focus on fewer classes per day gave them a better chance to balance their school and home life.

As Frontier and their district returned to the classroom in March of 2021, they began to evaluate the new quarter system versus the old trimester system. A committee of teachers, counselors, and administration was created to determine the best academic term/calendar going forward. The trimester system consisted of three 60-day periods where the students took five classes and a homeroom for a total of 27.5/82.5 credits. Students enrolling at Frontier in the middle of a semester (oftentimes without transfer grades) were left either entering a class that had already started or put in a transition class that Frontier is no longer offering. The quarter system allowed for their students to take four classes per quarter earning 20 credits four times a year for a total of 80.

A vote took place at the end of May 2021, with all certificated employees participating. The quarter calendar won and became Frontier High School's calendar for the 2021-2022 school year. The benefit of the quarter calendar is that it allows Frontier's schedule to match up with the traditional calendars at the comprehensive sites within their district. There is one trimester school in their district and six semester schools. Students who are behind in credits can transfer to Frontier at each quarter and begin to catch up. Frontier students can earn 80 credits a year and are still able to take summer school and other credit recovery opportunities during the school day. They have begun to also offer "Oxnard Online" at Frontier, which gives students a chance to take 2 classes a quarter after school virtually for an additional 10 credits.

1:1 School:

Starting at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, Frontier High School became a 1:1 school. Every Frontier Rocket was given a Chromebook to take home and bring to school every day. Students who needed internet access were given hotspots paid for by the district. The 1:1 implementation was part of a larger plan for the Oxnard Union High School District, with professional development targeted at increasing teachers' tech proficiency. Frontier has set up Smart Starts at the beginning of each school year for teachers and students to better familiarize themselves with the technology and engage in better ways to implement tech into their classrooms. These Smart Starts also help students develop the skills necessary to use their new Chromebooks.

School's follow-up process and process used to prepare the mid-cycle report

Frontier High School's self-study process has been ongoing since the 2018-2019 self-study visit. The previous Principal, Mrs. Mahone met with the current WASC coordinator, Michael Emard, and the FHS leadership team on a monthly basis to ensure that the recommendations of the report were being monitored and implemented. Michael Emard worked with the entire staff to prepare for the 2021-2022 mid-cycle follow-up. During this time, the leadership team and home groups continued to meet monthly while focus groups met bi-monthly.

In 2021-2022, new Principal Ron Briggs and WASC coordinator Michael Emard met on a weekly basis to discuss the ongoing WASC process and to exchange ideas. Principal Briggs continued to meet with the leadership team once a month to continue the self-study process. They created groups to focus on specific areas that they felt were in need of improvement. These groups used various data as well as LCAP and SPSA goals as a guide. The FHS leadership team meets the first Tuesday of every month and additional meetings have been called to address immediate needs. The second Tuesday of every month is their faculty meeting

where all staff are informed about WASC. The third Tuesday of every month is dedicated to home groups and applying specific issues, techniques, and/or strategies that can be addressed with regards to the home group's direct focus, i.e. English, Science. Focus groups met on the first and third Thursday of every month and for the past two years during half-days as well.

The staff, SSC, and their parent liaison have worked to reach out to the students' parents and guardians during the WASC evaluation process for additional input. Focus groups have focused on including the students in the WASC process through classroom discussions and writing assignments focused on ways to improve their experiences and education. The first period is five additional minutes long and has continued to create an open dialogue and an atmosphere where students feel comfortable talking about what the strengths and weaknesses of Frontier are, how they can improve the school, and what they would be interested in participating in.

Frontier High School also created a new Parent Survey ([link](#)) to help them address the needs and concerns of our school community going forward.

Summary of progress on action plan that addresses student and school needs and critical : Progress on the Implementation of the Schoolwide Action Plan/SPSA

FHS SPSA Goal #1

Decrease the “F” rate across curriculums through rigorous instruction

Frontier High School has worked hard to decrease the “F” rate throughout our curriculum. The data shows that FHS was able to decrease our “F” ratio for quarter 1 of the 2021-2022 school year and dramatically reduce it from a high point during distance learning. They put a point of emphasis on personal connections to content/lessons, relevant 21st Century technology, modalities that allow for different learning styles, and student-centered learning. Teachers participated in professional development targeting inquiry and engagement strategies, trauma-informed teaching practices, EL teaching strategies, and co-teaching models. Teachers also participated in peer observations and lesson studies.

Frontier developed an ELRT team that meets throughout the year to monitor EL student progress and discuss/evaluate EL school plans. Teachers make it a point to discuss “at-promise” students during monthly department meetings and ways to better aid their learning.

FHS will increase and continuously refine assessment practices, including the use of common formative assessments, and utilize this data to drive collaboration, analyze results, and implement appropriate strategies to improve student engagement and achievement.

The Critical Areas for Need as identified in the 2018-2019 Self-Study Report are as follows:

#1. Improve student's access and grasp of 21st-century technology skills and how to use them

Frontier High School has focused on this critical area of need by creating a SmartStart at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. Their tech coach, later replaced by their LIT coaches in 2021-2022, created a 3-day tech boot camp for the beginning of the school year to coincide with the rollout of their 1:1 program. Every student received a Chromebook and a Hot Spot, if needed, to increase their access to technology inside and outside the classroom. The FHS teachers developed and continue to use one of their two LMS programs, Google Classroom or Canvas.

Their district and school have purchased many online resources, such as EdPuzzle, NewsELA, CommonLit, Quizizz, Mote, etc. These programs have become instructional tools consistently being used within their classrooms to increase their student's grasp of 21st-century technology skills.

The Critical Areas for Need as identified in the 2018-2019 Self-Study Report are as follows:

#2 Develop common skills assessments to refine instruction and promote improved lessons

#6. The need for common formative assessments across all academic disciplines to measure student growth

Due to the small size of Frontier High School, it has been challenging to create common formative assessments or common skills assessments that can be used by multiple teachers across the same class. Since their last WASC visit, they have looked to develop assessments and curriculum that can be used in all subjects and classes. For the 2021-2022 school year, they created ACE (Answer Cite Explain) assessments that can be used in all academic disciplines. This way they can assess the academic skills of their students. After a delay due to COVID-19 this program was developed during the 2021-2022 school year and has yet to be implemented.

FHS uses commonlit.org to assess English and reading skills. They use the assessments to put students in the appropriate classes. FHS plans on post-testing their students towards the end of the school year to evaluate progress.

The Critical Areas for Need as identified in the 2018-2019 Self-Study Report are as follows:

#3. Continued focus on implementation of Common Core Standards across the curriculum

#7. The need for professional development and implementation of research based instructional strategies in all areas

#8. Implementation of curriculum is inconsistent among teachers school wide

The WASC visitation team observed several teachers using weekly agendas and having students check their grades and emails on Mondays as a routine. Also, students were using Chromebooks in almost every classroom. The credit recovery class tries to match content with the content being covered in the quarter long Frontier classes

Frontier teachers took part in professional development at their campus, prior to COVID-19, that was developed by their technology coaches and instructional coaches. The trainings took place twice a month after school and each one focused on a specific skill that would aid in the instruction of their students. When COVID-19 impacted their school, the district developed an extensive online professional development program that all their teachers took part in. The trainings were held daily after school and teachers could attend any or all training sessions. Several teachers from Frontier were instrumental in developing the trainings and leading them. In addition to the district and site PD, their tech coaches are available for any teacher who needs additional support.

For the 2021-2022 school year the tech and instructional coaches have been replaced with LIT coaches who continue to carry out the PD program and seek out new instructional strategies to

help their teachers and students. During the 2020-2021 school year Principal Mahone purchased *Grading for Equity* for the leadership team to read. Principal Briggs purchased “*Beyond Discipline*” for their PBIS and MTSS teams to read to help with new instructional strategies and classroom management. FHS is waiting on a shipment so that all teachers will have access to a copy. Several copies of *EduProtocol: Field Guides 1 & 2* books were purchased and distributed to interested teachers.

FHS SPSA Goal #2

Every student will participate in four college and career experiences throughout the school year

Frontier High School has worked hard to immerse their students in college and career experiences throughout their time in high school. Prior to COVID-19, every student on campus attended at least one college tour with their homeroom class. The students were provided with information about the school, the path to attending college, and the purpose and benefits of college attendance. Once the students return to school from their tour, their homeroom teacher continues to discuss how college is a viable option for each student.

COVID-19 adversely impacted their programs, so their teachers worked with local community colleges and trade schools to virtually bring in speakers and presentations. This practice has continued in the 2021-2022 school year, as it allows for students to participate in a more well-rounded look at their future. Teachers also continue to provide students with personal information about their college experiences, why they attended college, why some joined the military and their experiences in the workforce. One benefit FHS has is that many of their teachers graduated from within their district. Their personal connection to the community and colleges helps to show that these opportunities are real for their students.

Frontier has expanded their presentations to include speakers and presenters from local community colleges, the military, trade schools, and local businesses. In an effort to ensure that as many students are getting these opportunities, they have brought presenters in at lunch, during back to school, and open house. During the 2021-2022 school year, Frontier has made an emphasis on college and career experiences and field trips. FHS created a [spreadsheet](#) to track the speakers that presented, where they are from, and how many students are taking advantage of these opportunities.

The Frontier counseling staff works with every student to ensure that they are on the correct path towards graduation and college success. Each graduate of Frontier will fill out a college application and will sit down with a college counselor to fill out the FAFSA. During the 2021-2022 school year, FHS has brought in a college counselor, Griselda Rodriguez, two days a week to meet with students and help fill out college applications and FAFSA.

As part of their Measure A funds, Frontier has added a new college and career center. This portable is dedicated to fulfilling their students' college and career needs.

FHS SPSA Goal #3

Ensure that 100% of FHS students have the supports they need to increase their academic achievement

FHS student intervention specialist targets social-emotional supports to support students' academic progress. Both individual and group support is offered to FHS students. FHS partners with community agencies when appropriate to provide additional support to students and families. Once a quarter, a survey is sent to all staff members that asks for them to check off each student that they had a positive interaction with during that quarter. Using this feedback allows them to identify any students who have not built a relationship or had a positive interaction with an adult on campus.

During COVID-19 the district created a weekly SEL check-in for students to take. It was a simple form that would give a quick snapshot of how the students were doing during this difficult time. Many of Frontier's teachers have continued this practice after their return to campus. Frontier created a focus group during the WASC process to focus on SEL check-ins and develop a way to improve and continue to use them. This focus group brought a new program called [Sown to Grow](#) to their campus and they have begun to work with them to use their program for SEL check-ins and to support students who need it.

Frontier continues to use PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports). The program seeks to change the culture and climate of the school community by focusing on positives, rather than negatives. Their PBIS team works with the FHS staff to develop simple positive solutions to everyday problems and behaviors and to create an environment where students feel welcomed and supported. In essence, a place where they want to be. The FHS staff developed a PBIS guideline for students and faculty to follow that is designed to promote success and positivity, known as P.R.I.D.E.

Perseverance

Responsibility

Integrity

Dignity

Empowerment

FHS staff have developed several strategies while working on PBIS. Every FHS teacher tries to stand at the door every period and welcome every student as they enter the class. The staff has developed one-liners so that every staff member can reinforce positive behaviors, such as "walk and talk" and "catch and release." It has also created a positive daily interaction with the students as they arrive from the buses. Students are greeted and welcomed to FHS daily, helping them feel welcomed and part of the Frontier community.

During the 2021-2022 school year, their staff created the Rocket Closet. Teachers, staff, and the community have donated gently used clothing, toiletries, food, and educational supplies for students who are in need. The FHS staff have worked hard to create a "shopping experience" for each student who chooses to participate. Clothing items have sizing tags. Each "shopper" is given a shopping bag and allowed to take whatever they feel they need. Most of their students come from

lower-income families and struggle to have their basic needs met. The Rocket Closet is a program they are proud of and hope to continue to grow.

FHS SPSA Goal #4-

Provide meaningful parent involvement throughout the year

The Critical Areas for Need as identified in the 2018-19 Self-Study Report are as follows:

#4. Improve parent and guardian communication to promote meaningful involvement

Parent involvement at Frontier has been a struggle. Many of their parents and students come from impoverished backgrounds and struggle to be involved. Therefore, involving their parents/guardians has been a constantly evolving process. Principals Mahone and Briggs held coffee with the principal meetings with their parents/guardians. This has been a struggle during COVID-19, but they are committed to continuing this opportunity to engage their community.

FHS held monthly ELAC meetings that met after school before COVID-19 and those workshops moved to an online format during COVID-19 but were not well attended. For the 2021-2022 school year, Principal Briggs brought back in person after school meetings, but was again met with limited success. Mr. Briggs and his team moved the meetings back to an online platform in hopes that the issues were transportation-related but again the meetings were poorly attended. Recently Mr. Briggs and his team moved the meetings again, but this time to Saturdays, in-person and there has been a much better response. This willingness to try new formats and times shows Frontier's commitment to improving parent involvement at Frontier.

Every student and a parent or guardian attends a new student orientation prior to enrollment. Their orientation team provides a detailed presentation about Frontier, ways for parents/guardians to be involved, ways their students can be successful, and a tutorial on the programs and communication tools that their school and district use. During the WASC process, they evaluated the effectiveness of their orientation process and are moving towards an open house style orientation. Parents and students will attend orientation and still learn the same information as before, but they will also have a chance to visit classrooms, meet teachers and staff, engage with current students about FHS, and hopefully come to school day one with a better understanding of and connection to Frontier.

A big push was made after emergency distance learning in the spring of 2020 to increase parent participation across the board, including the use of ParentSquare. ParentSquare is a communication tool that sends messages to students/parents/guardians in their home language. A flier went home to all families in the summer mailer and tutorial videos were posted by the district, but many of their parents lack technological know-how to even access the program. This is something that is addressed at orientation and at back-to-school night/open house but many of their parents/guardians still struggle with it.

FHS also sends home "Great News From FHS" postcards. Any staff member can send home a postcard to any student for any reason. Many of their staff use these to recognize improvement in attendance, grades, participation, or any other positive that they want to highlight. Parents and guardians often mention how they enjoy getting positive feedback from school and it's not uncommon to see a postcard on the parent's refrigerator or tucked into a student's notebook.

School Site Council Meetings (SSC): Frontier High School's School Site Council (SSC) is composed of students, teachers, staff, parents/community members, and the principal. Members are voted into office every school year. The council meets a total of five times per school year to discuss and vote on important school matters such as the Single Plan for Student Achievement. Frontier High School is supported financially by the District Office. The district's LCAP funding is currently being used for supplemental materials, student educational field trips, and laptops. Frontier High School is a Title 1 school. Allocation of these funds is also voted on at school site council meetings. All decisions related to the allocation of funds are made collaboratively with the school's vision, mission, schoolwide learner outcomes, and student learning needs in mind.

Frontier High School and the Oxnard Union High School District have increased the use of their Social Media platforms. For the 2021-2022 school year, OUHSD hired Senerey De Los Santos to create content aimed at increasing the involvement of their students, parents, and community. Frontier has begun to use [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#) accounts with the hopes of engaging their community. This is an area that they are hoping to continue to grow and over time they feel this could be a big benefit for Frontier High School.

Schoolwide Strengths

- State Model Continuation School - 2021
- Wellness Center
- Measure A Bond (New PE facility, Multi-Purpose Center)
- Student/Staff Relationships
- Positive School Culture (pride and appreciation)
- Use of Technology in the classrooms
- Supportive Leadership

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement: The visiting committee concurs with the school's identified areas for growth:

- Develop Formative Assessment program for all students
- Decrease Chronic Absenteeism
- Decrease "F" rate, increase Graduation rate
- Increased Parent/Family engagement
- Increase College and Career Readiness
- Increase use of Wellness Center
- Use of LIT Coaches

Additional Areas for Growth:

- On-going professional development
- Consistent implementation of curriculum, weekly planner
- Time for staff collaboration/PLCs
- Increase student activities/clubs
- Continue implementation of student supports (SEL, PBIS, MTFSS)
- Continue the use of ELRT team