

SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS, WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR

Santa Maria High School

**901 S. Broadway
Santa Maria, CA 93454**

Santa Maria Joint Union High School District

Apr 6, 2025-April 9,2025

Visiting Committee Members

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Principal, Newbury High School

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Teacher, Ridgeview High School

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Vice Principal, Antelope Valley High School

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Chris Dutton, Member
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NOTE: The visiting committee report format now includes the ratings on the accreditation status factors and the rationale integrated throughout the report. Please bold and underline the ratings. Use the Accreditation Status Worksheet.

- **Highly Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a high degree of impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- **Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a satisfactory level of impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- **Somewhat Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a limited impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
- **Ineffective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had little or no impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.

Introduction

- **Provide a brief background of the school, a concise description of programs offered.**
- **Summarize the involvement and collaboration of educational partners in the self-study process.**

Santa Maria High School, located in the heart of Santa Maria, is the second oldest public high school in California still operating on its original site. Serving the downtown and western areas of the city, the school is part of the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District and has a long-standing history, recently celebrating its 131st commencement in 2024. SMHS is deeply committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, with a strong focus on supporting English Learners through its Multilingual and Migrant Education Program, which serves 20% of the student population.

The school partners with Orenda Education to ensure student success is not limited by demographics, and the Wellness Center supports students' mental and emotional well-being. SMHS offers a wide range of academic and career-focused programs including CTE pathways, dual enrollment, AP and Honors courses, AVID, and credit recovery. Faculty and staff played a major role in the WASC self-study process, which began in spring 2024 and involved extensive collaboration in Focus on Learning groups. With support from leadership and tools like AI, the WASC team worked to identify areas of strength and growth, while maintaining the authentic voice of the school community.

The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study reflects a thorough, accurate description and analysis of what currently exists at the school, as well as aligned schoolwide prioritized areas of strength and growth.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): **Highly Effective** Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale: Santa Maria High School demonstrates high effectiveness through its strong alignment with its mission to serve a diverse student population with equity and academic excellence. Located in the heart of the city and serving over 3,000 students, the school has strategically implemented programs such as Career Technical Education (CTE), dual enrollment, and AP courses to meet a wide range of learner needs. Its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is reflected in the school's robust Multilingual and Migrant Education Program, support for English Learners, and culturally responsive initiatives. The

school's engagement in data-driven decision-making, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and the adoption of standards-based instructional practices through Orenda Education highlight a culture of continuous improvement. In addition, the newly established Wellness Center enhances support for students' social-emotional well-being, reinforcing a holistic approach to education. Stakeholders are actively involved in site planning through the School Site Council and ELAC, ensuring shared ownership of student outcomes. These efforts collectively show that SMHS meets institutional goals and prepares students for college, career, and life beyond high school.

Chapter 1: Progress Report

- **Synthesize any significant developments since the last self-study visit and their impact on student learning.**
- **Briefly describe the action plan/SPSA implementation process and how the school monitors progress.**
- **Summarize the school's progress on the action plan/SPSA that incorporated all schoolwide growth areas from the last self-study and all intervening visits.**
- **Analyze how the use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data are driving school improvement to increase high achievement for all students and why identified growth areas may not be identified in the current schoolwide action plan/SPSA.**

Since the last WASC visit, Santa Maria High School has experienced several key developments supporting student success and instructional improvement. The opening of a new, state-of-the-art three-story building in 2023–24 significantly enhanced learning spaces and includes a centralized Wellness Center focused on student mental health and emotional support. The school has implemented Orenda-facilitated Cycle Assessments and PLC collaboration to improve instructional alignment and data-driven decision-making. Leadership changes have brought renewed energy and led to innovative practices, such as adjusted testing schedules and increased academic rigor, particularly with a new three-year math graduation requirement. The school has strengthened partnerships with Allan Hancock College to expand dual enrollment opportunities and 2+2 articulation pathways. Additionally, SMHS has prioritized equity, especially for English Learners and students with disabilities, and made strides in building inclusive, supportive systems for academic, emotional, and college-career readiness.

The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive school improvement.

Visiting Committee Rating: **Highly Effective** Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale: Santa Maria High School is highly effective in using prior accreditation findings and data to drive continuous school improvement and ensure student achievement. The school has systematically aligned its WASC Action Plan and SPSA goals to address gaps identified in previous self-studies, such as low SBAC performance in ELA and Math. Through the implementation of Orenda-facilitated Cycle Assessments, PLC collaboration, and targeted intervention programs like Saturday Academy and early morning tutoring, the school has taken concrete steps to improve academic outcomes. Adjustments to the testing schedule and the use of data reflection sessions (DRS) demonstrate a commitment to using assessment results to inform practice. Additionally, the active involvement of all stakeholders—including staff, students, and families—in the review and monitoring of action plans reflects a culture of accountability and shared responsibility for student success.

Chapter 2: School and Student Profile and Supporting Data

- Succinctly describe the school location, type of school, grades served, demographics, major school programs, and other relevant school information.
- Include the school's vision, mission, schoolwide learner outcomes/graduate profile and 2-3 identified major student learner needs.
- Include the CDE CA School Dashboard School Performance Overview data for the school in the report along with other relevant local measures from the school profile as applicable

School Overview

Santa Maria High School (SMHS) is located in downtown Santa Maria, California, and is part of the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District. SMHS serves students in grades 9–12 and is one of four comprehensive public high schools in the district. With a student population of over 3,100, the school serves a predominantly Hispanic student body (approximately 97%), with over 86% considered socioeconomically disadvantaged and around 21% identified as English Learners.

Programs and Facilities

SMHS offers a broad range of academic and career-prep opportunities, including:

- **CTE Pathways** (Agriculture, Business, Family Consumer Sciences)
- **Dual Enrollment** with Allan Hancock College
- **Advanced Placement (AP)** and **AVID** college preparatory courses
- **Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO)**
- **Multilingual & Migrant Education Programs**

In 2023–24, SMHS opened a **new 89,000 square-foot building**, which houses 50 classrooms, the administrative offices, and a **new Wellness Center**—the **Saint CARE Center** (Counseling, Assistance, Resources, and Education)—dedicated to supporting student mental health and wellness.

Vision, Mission, and Graduate Profile

SMHS is guided by its mission to provide **equitable access to learning and support** for all students, promoting college and career readiness, emotional growth, and responsible citizenship. The **schoolwide learner outcomes** emphasize academic achievement, critical thinking, communication, and preparation for life beyond high school.

Major Student Learner Needs (Identified)

1. **Improved performance in ELA and Math**, especially among English Learners and students with disabilities.
2. **Increased A-G and AP completion rates** to improve college and career readiness.
3. **Expanded in-school intervention systems**, particularly for students not meeting standards in core academic areas.

Local Measures & CDE Dashboard Data

The school experienced gains recognized in a **2024 CDE News Release** for improved CAASPP test scores districtwide—largely attributed to Santa Maria High School. The school implemented a new testing schedule and intervention supports to improve outcomes. However, as of the latest update:

- **ELA scores:** 28% met or exceeded standards
- **Math scores:** 11% met or exceeded standards
- **A-G Completion Rate:** ~35% (below the state average of 50%)
- **College and Career Readiness:** 38% of graduates met the criteria

Acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined schoolwide learner outcomes/graduate profile (major student learner needs), academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.

Visiting Committee Rating: **Highly Effective** Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

Santa Maria High School has demonstrated acceptable progress toward its schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards. Recent developments, including the implementation of Orenda-facilitated Cycle Assessments and expanded use of PLCs, show that the school is using data to drive instruction and inform responsive interventions. The introduction of instructional coaches and a three-year math requirement reflects a district-wide commitment to raising rigor and closing achievement gaps for all student subgroups, including English Learners and students with disabilities. The newly opened Wellness Center and the continued collaboration with Allan Hancock College have further supported the school's mission to prepare students academically, socially, and emotionally for life beyond high school. However, the school acknowledges the need for increased A-G and AP completion rates, along with stronger support systems for English Learners, as ongoing priorities. Overall, the school is making steady strides toward meeting institutional expectations and improving outcomes for all learners.

Chapter 3: Quality of the School's Program

Based on the school's self-study and visiting committee findings:

- For each category of criteria, summarize the findings about the school's effectiveness in addressing each of the *criterion* and *all the indicators within each category*; include supporting evidence as appropriate.
- Rate the effectiveness of each criterion and complete the narrative rationale for the rating
 - Highlight the areas of strength
 - Highlight the growth areas for continuous improvement
 - List important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these findings, strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement.

Note: When writing the summary for each criterion, use the indicators as a guide to ensure that all important aspects of each criterion are addressed (see the *WASC/CDE Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet*).

CATEGORY A. ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING: VISION AND PURPOSE, GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, STAFF, AND RESOURCES

A1: Vision and Purpose

To what extent a) has the school established a clearly stated vision and purpose reflecting students' needs, current educational research practices, with a focus and a belief that all students can achieve?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

A1.1 Vision and Schoolwide Learner Goals/Graduate Profile: The school has established a clear, coherent vision and purpose and schoolwide learner goals/graduate profile based upon high-quality standards and congruent with research, school practices, and aligned with district goals for students.

A1.2 All Students: The vision and purpose of the school reflects a belief that all students can learn and achieve.

A1.3 Development/Refinement of Vision and Purpose: There are effective processes in place to ensure involvement of all stakeholders/educational partners in the development and periodic review and refinement of the vision and mission, and schoolwide learner goals/graduate profile.

A1.4 Communicating and Understanding Vision and Purpose and Schoolwide Learner Goals: There are effective processes for communicating with all stakeholders/educational partners to ensure the understanding of the vision, purpose, and schoolwide learner goals/graduate profile.

Visiting Committee Comments

SMHS's vision emphasizes the importance of student success in college, career, or post-secondary training. The school's mission to continually improve, and belief that all students are capable of academic success are reflected in the schoolwide learner goals, developed and agreed upon by the staff of SMHS through VC observations and the self study.

The school has effective processes in place to review and refine its vision and mission statements. The WASC cycle provides a structured opportunity for this process. Additionally, the Guiding Coalition, composed of certified staff, plays a critical role in ensuring the vision and mission remain aligned with the needs of students, ensuring ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

The Counseling Department plays a key role in communicating the vision and mission, particularly through grade-level lessons designed to meet students' needs and reinforce the belief that all students can achieve. Furthermore, the integration of various departmental policies and programs. These efforts are supported by frequent communication and collaboration among all stakeholders, ensuring a shared understanding of the school's goals confirmed through FG conversations

Vision and Purpose that supports high achievement for all students. :Defining of the school's vision and purpose through schoolwide learner outcomes/graduate profile and academic standards.

Visiting Committee Rating: **Highly Effective** Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

SMHS's vision and mission statements establish a high standard of excellence, emphasizing the importance of student success and continuous improvement. They reflect a belief in the potential of all students to achieve, supported by robust programs and practices that are regularly reviewed and refined to ensure alignment with educational research and district goals. The clear communication of these principles across all departments further strengthens the shared commitment to these goals.

A2: Governance

To what extent is school's purpose aligned with governing board goals and policies and focused on student achievement and well-being through data driven decisions with the aim of preparing students for college and career readiness?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

A2.1 Relationship between the Governing Board and the School: The school community has a clear understanding of the role of the governing board and how the governing board's decisions, expectations and initiatives guide the work at the school with the aim of improving academic achievement and well-being of all students.

Visiting Committee Comments

The school's purpose aligns with the governing board's goals and district LCAP initiatives, tailored to our school's needs through the SPSA. The school community gains an understanding of these expectations through professional development, PLCs, and the WASC Self-Study process. Monthly school board meetings, streamed in English, Spanish, and Mixteco, ensure transparency. Recently, the board mandated three years of math for all students, reinforcing their commitment to academic achievement to ensure students are A-G ready. SMHS provides professional development opportunities for teachers to refine instructional practices and address diverse student needs, ensuring continuous improvement in student learning.

Governance that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective **Effective** Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

The school effectively aligns with governing board goals, focusing on student achievement. The community engages with these expectations through PD, PLCs, and transparent board meetings. Recent decisions, like the three-year math requirement, reflect the board's focus on academic success. Ongoing staff development ensures that teaching practices evolve to meet diverse student needs.

A3: Leadership for Learning

To what extent do the school leadership, faculty, staff, and parent/community collaborate, make decisions and initiate actions that focus on all students needs and achievement?

To what extent is there evidence of accountability through implementing practices, programs and providing services based on the school's purpose, student needs, and the schoolwide action plan/SPSA goals aligned with the district LCAP?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

A3.1 Broad-based and Collaborative: The school's leadership, faculty, staff a) assess data to determine student needs, and b) determine and implement strategies and actions, and c) monitor results and impact on student learning to support continuous improvement.

A3.2 Leadership Role in Accountability: The school leadership and faculty demonstrate shared decision-making, responsibility, and self-reflection on actions and accountability expectations for implementing practices, programs, actions, and services that support student learning.

A3.3 School Action Plan/SPSA Correlated to Student Learning: The schoolwide action plan/SPSA is directly correlated to and driven by the analysis of student achievement and other data and aligned with the LCAP.

Visiting Committee Comments

The school's leadership team, including the admin, Guiding Coalition, WASC committee, and School Site Council, collaboratively assesses data to determine student needs. This data informs the SPSA and WASC Self Study, contributing to a continuous improvement cycle. These processes ensure strategies and actions are implemented based on data analysis, and results are consistently monitored to improve student learning. FG confirmed these conversations through conversations,

PLC collaboration fosters a data-driven approach, where departments are held accountable for ongoing improvement. Assessments aligned with state standards are analyzed to guide instructional changes and ensure continuous growth with the help of Orenda.

SPSA is directly informed by student achievement data, particularly CAASPP exam results, and recommendations from Orenda.

Leadership for Learning that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective **Effective** Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

SMHS uses a collaborative, data-driven approach to support continuous improvement in student learning. The administration, faculty, and staff work together through PLCs and other teams to assess student needs, implement strategies, and monitor outcomes. The school's SPSA is grounded in data analysis, particularly from standardized testing, and is regularly refined based on feedback from the WASC process. Continuous improvement is a shared responsibility, with accountability built into every level of the process.

A4: Qualified Staff and Professional Development

To what extent do qualified staff and leadership facilitate achievement of the student academic standards and the schoolwide learner goals/graduate profile through a system of preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development?

To what extent is there a systematic approach to continuous improvement through professional development based on student performance data, student needs, and research?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

A4.1 Qualifications, Preparation, and Supervision of Staff: The school understands district and school procedures to ensure that leadership and staff are qualified based on staff background and preparation. The school implements effective supervision and evaluation procedures in order to promote professional growth of staff.

A4.2 Professional Learning and Impact on Student Learning: The school effectively supports professional development/learning and evaluates its effectiveness on teacher practices and student learning, with time, personnel, and resources to facilitate all students achieving the academic standards and college- and career-readiness expectations.

A4.3 Communication and Understanding of School Policies and Procedures: The school implements a clear system to communicate administrator, faculty, and staff written policies, procedures, and handbooks that define responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff.

Visiting Committee Comments

The district's Human Resources department manages hiring through the Personnel Action Request (PAR) process, ensuring that leadership and staff are qualified based on their background and preparation. Only 77% of teachers hold a clear credential. Effective supervision and evaluation procedures are in place to promote professional growth.

The school's PD efforts are led by Orenda, which focuses on equity-driven action and data-based practices. PD with Orenda includes alignment of curriculum across grade levels, supported by walkthroughs to evaluate instructional effectiveness. Additionally, time for PLCs is built into the schedule, fostering collaboration. PD opportunities, like those on ELD strategies and educator wellness, are offered each semester to address the evolving needs of staff. These efforts aim to enhance teaching practices and improve student learning outcomes.

Communication of school policies, procedures, and responsibilities is facilitated through multiple channels. The Principal's Weekly Update, a newsletter sent via email and Parent Square, provides key information to parents, students, and staff. In the parent FG meeting parents expressed the ineffectiveness of ParentSquare.

Qualified Staff and Professional Development that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective **Effective** Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

SMHS ensures staff qualifications through a structured hiring process and promotes professional growth through regular evaluations and ongoing PD opportunities. Professional development, led by Orenda, focuses on equity and data-driven practices, supporting student learning improvements. Communication of policies and procedures is handled through a variety of platforms, ensuring transparency and alignment with the school's goals.

A5: Resources

To what extent are the human, material, physical, and financial resources sufficient and utilized effectively and appropriately in accordance with the legal intent of the program(s) and LCAP to support students in accomplishing the schoolwide learner goals/graduate profile, academic standards, and college- and career-readiness standards?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

A5.1 Resource Allocation Decisions: School leadership and staff are involved in resource planning and allocation decisions aligned with student and personnel needs, and goals of the schoolwide action plan/SPSA and the LCAP.

A5.2 Practices and Procedures: Transparent district and school procedures are in place to develop an annual budget, conduct audits and follow quality accounting practices.

A5.3 Instructional Materials: The policies and procedures for acquiring and maintaining adequate instructional materials and equipment, such as textbooks, other printed materials, instructional technology, manipulatives, and laboratory materials are current.

A5.4 Facilities Conducive to Learning: The school's facilities are safe, functional, well-maintained, and sufficient to support student achievement and the educational program(s) including the use of technology and digital learning.

Visiting Committee Comments

SSC is responsible for developing, reviewing, and annually updating the SPSA, including

resource planning and allocation decisions. School staff participate in discussions with input collected through surveys to track progress and identify changes. The budget, which supports the goals of the SPSA, LCAP, and site objectives, is developed with input from staff, the leadership team, and departments, before being approved by the SSC and the district school board.

The school follows clear policies and procedures to acquire and maintain instructional materials, including textbooks, printed materials, instructional technology, and lab equipment. These resources are consistently evaluated to ensure they effectively support student learning and meet educational needs from VC observations

The school's facilities are safe, functional, and well-maintained, providing an environment conducive to learning. This includes the effective use of technology and digital learning resources to support the educational programs from VC observations

Resources that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective **Effective** Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

SMHS ensures effective resource allocation through the School Site Council, which involves staff and stakeholders in the budgeting process, with decisions aligned with the SPSA, LCAP, and school goals. The school follows transparent procedures for budgeting and acquiring instructional materials, ensuring support for student achievement. Facilities are well-maintained to create a safe, conducive learning environment.

CATEGORY A: ORGANIZATION: VISION AND PURPOSE, GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, STAFF, AND RESOURCES

Areas of Strength for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership, Staff, and Resources:

1. PLC model that promotes principles of continuous improvement and supports our vision and mission. The PLC model provides a structured, data-driven approach to assessing student needs and refining school improvement efforts. Built-in PLC collaboration time allows teachers to discuss curriculum alignment, assessment strategies, and instructional improvements.
2. Communication between parents, administration and teachers. School Board meetings are live-streamed in multiple languages (English, Spanish, Mixteco), ensuring accessibility and transparency. Additionally, the school uses a variety of tools including Parent Square and email to ensure two-way communication between parents and the school staff. The school keeps parents informed through the Principal's Weekly Update, newsletters, and face-to-face communication.
3. Organizational transparency and inclusion among all educational partners in determining budget expenditures. The School Site Council (SSC), with representatives from various stakeholder groups, plays a key role in reviewing the SPSA, budget allocations, and school policies to reflect evolving priorities.

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership, Staff, and Resources:

1. Alignment of standards and assessments with monitoring of student learning. While PLCs utilize cycle assessments and CFAs to analyze student achievement and adjust

instruction, refining the alignment between assessment results and targeted instructional strategies could enhance student learning outcomes.

2. Some Orenda cycle standards do not line up pacing-wise with some already-established Curricula. Work is needed to harmonize curriculum pacing in some instances where cycle standards do not align with curriculum standards.
3. Communication between district and site to develop and implement MTSS protocols that foster equity and achievement. A well-integrated MTSS ensures that academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports are systematically implemented to meet diverse student needs.

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement include the following:

LCAP	Learning Walks
SPSA	Cycle Assessment Instructions
WASC Action Plan Staff Survey	Human Resources
Wellness Center	Departmental Meeting Minutes
SMHS Counseling Program	District PLC
Parent Square	ELO Team
Principles Weekly Update	VC Observations
SMHS School Newsletter	FG Meetings

CATEGORY B. CURRICULUM

B1: Rigorous and Relevant Standards-Based Curriculum

To what extent do all students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-based curriculum that supports the achievement of the schoolwide learner goals/graduate profile, academic standards, and the college- and career-readiness standards in order to meet graduation requirements?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

B1.1 Current Educational Research and Thinking: The school provides a rigorous, relevant and coherent curriculum based on current educational research and thinking that supports the schoolwide student goals and academic standards.

B1.2 Congruence with Schoolwide Student Goals: There is congruence and integration among the concepts and skills taught, the schoolwide learner goals/graduate profile, academic standards, and college and career indicators.

B1.3 Academic Standards and College- and Career-Readiness Indicators: The school has college- and career-readiness indicators and academic standards for each subject area, course, and/or program that meet or exceed graduation requirements.

Visiting Committee Comments

B1.4 Community Resources and Articulation: The school engages with community partners and resources, articulates regularly with feeder schools, local colleges and universities, and technical schools.

Santa Maria High School offers a rigorous, standards-based curriculum across all departments, aligning with state standards and schoolwide learning goals to provide a comprehensive education tailored to diverse student needs. Core departments like Math, English, Science, and Social Science use Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to ensure consistent curriculum, assessments, and data-driven instruction, promoting key skills in critical thinking, communication, and independent analysis. Specialized programs in departments such as International Languages, Agriculture, Family Consumer Science and Visual Arts prepare students for career readiness and advanced proficiency, while the Counseling and Special Education Departments provide targeted support through frameworks like RAMP and tailored curricula for students with disabilities. Through collaboration, common assessments, and alignment with district and state goals, Santa Maria High fosters a cohesive learning environment that equips students for academic success and practical application of their skills.

Rigorous and Relevant Standards-Based Curriculum that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective **Effective** Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

SMHS provides a rigorous and coherent curriculum for many students based on current educational research and reflected in high levels of success for many students. The curriculum supports the schoolwide learner goals/graduate profile, academic standards and graduation requirements. The curriculum is congruent and aligned with school goals in some classrooms and departments. There is some integration between/among areas of study, academic standards and college- and career preparedness goals. The school communicates and engages with feeder schools, community partners and others to best meet student needs using a range of strategies.

B2: Access to Curriculum

To what extent do all students have equal access to the school's entire program and to what extent does the school prioritize opportunity and advancement for all students? To what extent do students receive assistance with a personal learning plan to meet the requirements of promotion or graduation and are prepared for the pursuit of their academic, personal, and career goals?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

B2.1 Variety of Programs — Full Range of Choices: All students are able to make appropriate choices and pursue a full range of realistic college and career and/or other educational options. The school provides for career exploration or pathways, preparation for postsecondary education for all students.

B2.2 Access to Curriculum, including Real World Experiences, by All Students: A rigorous, relevant, and coherent curriculum that includes real world applications is accessible to all students through all courses/programs offered. Course enrollment patterns reflect the needs of all the school's students.

B2.3 Student-Parent-Staff Collaboration: Parents, students, and staff feel valued within the school community and collaborate in developing and monitoring a student's personal learning plan, including college and career and/or other educational goals.

Visiting Committee Comments

Santa Maria High School offers a comprehensive and inclusive educational experience, blending rigorous academics with targeted support and community engagement. The Math Department exemplifies this approach, providing advanced courses like Statistics, Math Analysis, and Calculus for high-achieving students while supporting those struggling with

concepts through interventions like Math Development courses, Saturday Academies, and tutoring sessions. The integrated math curriculum aligns with state standards, emphasizing interconnected concepts and real-world applications, ensuring that students are prepared for both college and careers.

In the Science Department, the adoption of Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) fosters hands-on, real-world learning through electives like Anatomy and Physiology, which connect students to health and environmental stewardship. Similarly, the Social Science curriculum incorporates Ethnic and Gender Studies/PROD across multiple grade levels, providing a more inclusive historical perspective. Courses like Economics focus on practical skills such as financial literacy, ensuring students are prepared for life after high school.

The English curriculum, featuring the Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum (ERWC), focuses on real-world literacy skills through engaging modules, preparing students for college and beyond. In Physical Education, fitness education is emphasized with innovative tools like In-Body scales, helping students track and improve their body composition while fostering lifelong wellness habits.

Santa Maria High also prioritizes family and community engagement through Back-to-School Nights, Cafecito meetings, and Family Math Nights, which foster collaboration among parents, teachers, and administrators. Tools like ParentSquare and translation services ensure clear communication with families, creating a strong support network around each student. These efforts reflect the school's commitment to holistic education, ensuring academic success while promoting inclusivity, engagement, and community involvement.

Access to Curriculum that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective **Effective** Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

Most Santa Maria High School students are able to make appropriate choices and pursue a full range of realistic college and career and/or other educational options. A rigorous, relevant, and coherent curriculum includes real world applications accessible to all students. Course enrollment patterns reflect the diversity of the school's students. Most parents, students, and staff experience a sense of belonging and value within the school community and often collaborate to support students' success.

CATEGORY B: CURRICULUM

Areas of Strength for Curriculum:

1. **Rigorous and Standards-Based Curriculum:** Santa Maria High School offers a well-rounded, standards-aligned curriculum across all departments, ensuring consistency and rigor. Core subjects like Math, English, Science, and Social Science emphasize critical skills such as problem-solving, communication, and critical thinking. Programs like Integrated Math and the Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum (ERWC) prepare students for both academic success and real-world applications.
2. **College and Career Readiness Pathways:** The school prioritizes college and career preparation through advanced course offerings, electives meeting A-G requirements, and specialized programs like Ethnic and Gender Studies, PROD and Social Science and Science electives. Practical skills and inclusive perspectives are integrated, ensuring students are equipped for diverse

academic and professional trajectories.

3. **Holistic Support and Community Engagement:** Santa Maria High provides tailored support through its Special Education and Counseling Departments, utilizing frameworks like RAMP and the Unique Learning Systems curriculum. Community-focused initiatives, such as Back-to-School Nights, Family Math Nights, and Cafecito meetings, foster collaboration between families and educators, creating a strong support network for students.

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement for Curriculum:

1. **Enhanced Analysis of Student Progress:** While the school uses common formative assessments and benchmark data, a more robust, ongoing system to analyze individual student growth across all subjects could further support data-driven instruction and ensure that interventions are effective over time.
2. **Increased Integration of Technology and Real-World Application:** Though many departments utilize standards-aligned curricula, incorporating more technology-based learning tools and real-world projects across subjects could further engage students.
3. **Strengthening Family and Community Engagement:** While initiatives like Back-to-School Nights and Cafecito meetings foster connections with families, increasing the frequency and variety of events could strengthen relationships further. Workshops for parents on academic standards, college preparation, and student wellness, as well as partnerships with community organizations, could enhance support for students outside the classroom.

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement include the following:

Lesson Progression	CA State History	Math 1 Assessment Cycle
Example	Framework Agriculture	and DRS Days 24-25 for
Kognity learning principles	Program	Staff
Teacher created ELD	Business Program	Core Connections
portfolio	Agriculture Course	Geometry Pacing Guide
LBDL website - 23-24	Description Book	Social Science Pacing
class completed Gross	FCS District Advisory	Guides
Anatomy lab	Agenda	Data from Social Science
SOMOS	FCS District Advisory	Tosa
TEMAS syllabus	Committee NotesRAMP	Counseling Department
Spanish articulation	Master Schedule	SMHS IM 1 SMJUHS
Meeting notes	ELA Matrixes 9, 10, 11	Geometry Common
AP results	Cycle Assessments	Agreements 22-23 .docx
Spanish AP Themes	ERWC Curriculum	CCA2 Pacing Guide

2024-2025 Algebra 2
2024.docx
Integrated Math 1
Assessment Dates
24-25.docx

Grading Agreement
Algebra 2 2024.docx
Norms and Common
Agreements Algebra 2
2021.docx
Art Sketchbook Cove

CA Standards
SPED Art Book
Research Studies & Peer
Reviews | n2y BI
PEERS
Language Line

CATEGORY C. LEARNING AND TEACHING

C1: Student Engagement in Challenging and Relevant Learning Experiences

To what extent do all students experience an engaging learning environment and are involved in challenging and relevant learning experiences reflecting school wide goals, academic standards, and college- and career-readiness indicators?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

C1.1 Results of Student Observations and Examining Work: All students are involved in challenging and relevant work in a learning environment.

C1.2 Student Understanding of Learning Expectations: All students understand the standards/expected performance levels for each area of study in order to demonstrate learning and college and career readiness.

Visiting Committee Comments

Santa Maria High School utilizes the PLC process to provide equitable access to the curriculum to all students despite their learning needs. The Co-Lab classes are designed to ensure that all students are held to the same standards and assessed in the same manner. Co-Lab teachers are provided additional time to collaborate on lessons and make adjustments as necessary. Classroom observations indicate that Co-Lab teachers are working well together to create positive student learning environments. There are teachers in certain subjects that are using common pacing guides and common assessments, but it is not consistent across all academic areas.

In addition, TOSA and Instruction Coaches work with teachers to ensure that all students are given the opportunity to become proficient at the standards. SMHS has been working through the PLC process for years, though there has recently been a shift in the structure and process with the introduction of Orenda. The PLCs appear to be thriving, creating a collaborative environment among teachers while promoting rigorous and relevant learning and assessment for all students.

Teachers at SMHS are working to help students understand the standards and expected performance levels in each course. Through teacher collaboration initiated with on-site PLCs and the push for district-wide course uniformity with the Orenda process, it is evident that the course content and continuous student assessments at SMHS are aligned to the standards. While most students experience relevant learning, there is inconsistency in grading practices across the school. Some Content area teachers are working on, or have aligned grading

policies. Continued efforts to align grading policies and clarify expectations within all departments will help create a more equitable learning environment for all students.

Student Engagement in Challenging and Relevant Learning Experiences that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective **Effective** Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

SMHS utilizes the PLC process to promote equitable access to curriculum for all students, regardless of learning needs. Co-Lab classes ensure students are held to consistent standards and assessments, with teachers given extra time for collaboration and lesson adjustments. Observations show strong teamwork among Co-Lab teachers, fostering positive learning environments. While some departments use common pacing guides and assessments, this practice is not consistent across all subjects. Teachers, supported by TOSAs and Instructional Coaches, work collaboratively to align instruction and assessments with standards, further supported by the district-wide Orenda initiative. Though PLCs are thriving and course content is mostly aligned, grading practices vary across the school. Continued efforts to align grading policies and clarify expectations will strengthen equity and consistency in student learning experiences.

C2: Student-Centered Instruction through a Variety of Strategies and Resources

To what extent do all teachers use a variety of strategies and resources to create a learning environment that actively engages all students in creative and critical thinking skills, problem solving, and application of learning?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

C2.1 Teachers Facilitate Learning: Teachers use a variety of evidence-based instructional methodologies and encourage student agency.

C2.2 Student Voice and Agency: Student voice and agency are equally applicable for all students, empowering them to be meaningfully engaged in decision making about their own learning, strategic thinking and problem solving.

C2.3 Digital Learning and Problem Solving: Teachers use technology and digital learning tools to enhance and support student learning and help students solve real-world problems.

C2.4 Career Preparedness and Applied Learning: Teachers provide learning opportunities that extend beyond the textbook and classroom, deepen students' depth of knowledge, and prepare them for college and careers.

Visiting Committee Comments

SMHS teachers use different evidence-based instructional methodologies to promote student learning and encourage student agency. The school reports that teachers are focusing on student-centered inclusive teaching strategies to enhance learning. In many classes, students engage in real-world scenarios that are designed to meet their learning needs in order to promote and encourage higher levels of learning. The PLC process continues to allow for teachers to improve their instructional strategies and increase student learning.

Staff reports that students have a voice in their learning, both inside and outside of the classroom. They are able to express themselves through leadership roles by serving on committees, including superintendent councils, school site councils, and other committees. Students also have agency in their learning, whether it involves classroom assignments, projects, or accessing reading materials at their literacy levels. Students of all levels are provided opportunities to engage in learning and critical

Teachers use a variety of technology tools to enhance learning and provide equitable access to course work. These tools support diverse learning needs and promote student engagement. Teachers are supported and given opportunities to learn more about technology and how to use it to enhance student learning and promote real work experiences.

Student-Centered Instruction through a Variety of Strategies and Resources that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective **Effective** Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

At SMHS, teachers implement a variety of evidence-based, student-centered instructional methodologies. Instruction is inclusive and often incorporates real-world scenarios tailored to meet diverse learning needs and encourage critical thinking. The ongoing PLC process supports teachers in refining their strategies to enhance student outcomes. Students are provided an opportunity to have a say in their learning by participating in leadership roles through various councils and committees or, when available, exercising agency in classroom assignments, projects, and reading materials appropriate to their literacy levels. Technology is widely used to support equitable access, engagement, and differentiated instruction, with staff receiving ongoing support and training to integrate digital tools effectively and connect learning to real-world experiences.

CATEGORY C: LEARNING AND TEACHING

Areas of Strength for Learning and Teaching:

1. **Collaborative Culture:** Staff at SMHS have a culture of collaboration. SMHS has utilized the PLC/RTI process for years, and it is clear that students benefit from the outcomes of the collaboration

2. **College & Career Ready:** The systems are in place for all students to graduate from SMHS College and Career Ready. Students are placed in courses in 9th grade

that are A-G approved. Additionally, SMHS offers several industry-approved certifications in a variety of CTE pathways, allowing students to immediately enter into career fields

3. **Technology:** There is a strong technology presence at SMHS. Students are all provided with Chromebooks. Teachers and staff are very comfortable using technology in the classroom. Teachers have courses on Canvas, give assessments online using tools, and there is a variety of learning tools supported by the district for teachers to access and use in the classroom. Additionally, there is a strong technology support system that includes TOSA and professional development

for all teachers.

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement for Learning and Teaching:

1. **Intervention:** Implementation of interventions during the school day for students who are not meeting the expected proficiency levels is needed.

2. **Implement Uniform Teaching Strategies:** Implement more uniform teaching strategies and technologies across all content areas.

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement include the following:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| - Classroom Observations | Matrices |
| - Collaboration Schedule | - Pacing Guides |
| - Co-Lab Classes | - Counseling Visits |
| - Certifications | - A-G celebrations |
| - English and Math Assessment | - Student Work Samples |
| - Choice Boards | |
| - AHC PROD Syllabus | |

CATEGORY D: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

D1: Reporting and Accountability Process

To what extent do the school leadership and instructional staff use effective assessment process to collect, disaggregate, analyze, and report student performance data to the school staff, students, parents, and other educational partners?

To what extent does the analysis of data guide the school's programs and processes, the allocation and usage of resources, and form the basis for the development of the schoolwide action plan (SPSA) aligned with the LCAP?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

D1.1 Professionally Acceptable Assessment Process: The school leadership and instructional staff use effective assessment processes to collect, disaggregate, analyze, and report student performance data to all educational partners.

D1.2 Basis for Determination of Performance Level: The school leadership and instructional staff have agreed upon the basis for students' grades, growth, and performance levels to ensure consistency across and within grade levels and content areas.

D1.3 Assessment of Program Areas: School teams use assessment results to make changes in the school program, implement professional development activities, and allocate resources demonstrating a results-driven, continuous school improvement process.

D1.4 Schoolwide Modifications Based on Assessment Results: School leadership partners with district leadership to periodically assess programs and expectations for students' academic growth and progress.

Visiting Committee Comments

SMHS uses a wide variety of professionally acceptable methods for collecting student assessment data and using that data to make changes at the district and site levels. The data is shared with all stakeholders efficiently and effectively through discussions with focus groups and student conversations.

SMHS and SMJUHSD use a wide range of assessments (CAASPP, CAST, ELPAC, CFAs, etc.) to collect and analyze student performance data. Data is disaggregated by subgroups and shared with staff and families via Aeries, staff meetings, and advisory councils. This process ensures equity, transparency, and informed decision-making.

Grading practices are aligned across some departments through PLCs. Most teams use common grade categories and expectations, ensuring consistency within courses like Biology and English. Counselors also support placement and grading equity for all students, including newcomers and students needing credit recovery.

Site and district leaders use assessment data to adjust programs and expectations. Collaborative efforts have led to targeted interventions, updated curriculum materials, and aligned PD. Ongoing data analysis drives continuous improvement and supports student growth at every level.

Reporting and Accountability Process that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective **Effective** Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

Most SMHS teachers determine and monitor all students' growth and progress toward meeting the schoolwide learner goals/graduate profile, academic standards, and college and career readiness expectations. Most teachers provide timely, specific, and descriptive feedback in order to support students in achieving learning goals. VC observations varied wildly from department to department regarding students being able to express what they are learning and lack of a common board in some departments.

D2: Using Student Assessment Strategies to Monitor and Modify Learning Progress

To what extent do teachers employ a variety of appropriate assessment strategies to evaluate student learning?

To what extent do students and teachers use these findings to modify the learning/teaching practices to improve student learning within and across grade levels and departments?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

D2.1 Monitoring Student Growth: Teachers determine and monitor all students' growth and progress toward meeting the schoolwide student goals/graduate profile, academic standards, and college- and career-readiness expectations.

D2.2 Teacher and Student Feedback: Teachers provide timely, specific and descriptive feedback in order to support students in achieving learning goals. Teachers use student feedback and dialogue to monitor progress and learn about the degree to which learning experiences are understood, relevant, and prepare students for college and careers.

D2.3 Demonstration of Student Achievement: Teachers use the analysis of formative and summative assessments to guide, modify, and adjust curricular and instructional approaches.

Visiting Committee Comments

Departments, PLC's and teachers at SMHS use a wide variety of assessments to monitor student progress towards learning goals and use the data from assessments to modify instruction during lessons and in planning for future lessons. Teachers have the tendency to not give timely feedback from discussions from focus groups. Counselors and special programs also track progress toward academic and postsecondary goals.

Formative and summative assessments guide instruction across all departments. PLCs support ongoing instructional improvement based on results. VC observed the beginning stages of this process.

Using Student Assessment Strategies to Monitor and Modify Learning Progress that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective **Effective** Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

Most SMHS teachers determine and monitor all students' growth and progress toward meeting the schoolwide learner goals/graduate profile, academic standards, and college and career readiness expectations. Most teachers provide timely, specific, and descriptive feedback in order to support students in achieving learning goals. VC observations varied wildly from department to department regarding students being able to express what they are learning and lack of a common board in some departments.

CATEGORY D: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Areas of Strength for Assessment and Accountability:

1. **Comprehensive use of assessment data.** SMHS collects a wide range of assessment data (CAASPP, CAST, ELPAC, CFAs, IEP testing, Orenda Cycle Assessments, etc.) and effectively disaggregates and analyzes it. This data-driven approach informs instructional decisions, program modifications, and targeted interventions, such as Saturday School and Winter Intervention programs.

2. **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) Collaboration.** The PLCs at SMHS demonstrate strong collaboration by establishing consistent grading practices, sharing best practices, and developing Common Formative Assessments (CFAs). This fosters a standardized approach to evaluating and supporting student progress across departments and within grade levels.

3. **Frequent and Timely Feedback to Students.** Teachers provide students with specific, targeted feedback through tools like Formative, Edpuzzle, and Kahoot, enabling real-time responses to student performance. These practices ensure students are supported in addressing their learning gaps promptly.

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement for Assessment and Accountability:

1. **Support for struggling students and underserved groups.** While the site and district have taken steps towards identifying students who are struggling, we still have many students, especially those who are homeless, English Learners, and Special Education students, who are achieving below grade level.

2. **Support for All Subject Areas in Data Analysis.** While some departments (e.g., English, Math, International Languages, Science, and Social Science) have TOSAs for data analysis, others lack such support. Expanding resources for data analysis and professional development across all departments would ensure equity and consistency in instructional improvement efforts.

3. **Ensuring Uniformity Across Grade Levels and Departments.** While PLCs have established consistent grading practices within departments, expectations still vary between grade levels. Strengthening alignment between grade levels and providing additional support for subjects transitioning to new systems (e.g., Orenda and Cycle Assessments) could help enhance consistency.

Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement include the following:

December 2024 Board Meeting	All Staff Email	ELA 1 PLC Minutes
Presentation of 2024 CAASPP Data	Testing Results Email from Superintendent	FCA PLC Minutes
LCFF Budget Overview for Parents	Spanish 2 Syllabus B	Algebra 2 Grading Agreements
Instructions for Parents	POU Minutes with Agreements	Spanish 2 Syllabus A
Counselor Advisory	Biology of the Living Earth	PowerPoint from All Staff
Council Flyer	PLC Minutes	Testing Meeting
All Staff CAASPP Kickoff	Social Science Common Agreements	Staff Testing Schedule
		Vote Spring 2024
		Saturday Academy Job

Posting	Description	
Winter Intersession Job Posting- ELA	Winter Intersession Math Winter	NGSI Physics of the Universe Trainings
Winter Intersession Job Posting- Math	Intersession English	NGSI CES PD's
Saturday Academy Job	Counselor Pre/Post Test Data	VC Observations
		FG Meetings

CATEGORY E: SCHOOL CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

E1. Family and Community Involvement

To what extent does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to encourage family and community involvement, especially with the learning/teaching process?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

E1.1 Strategies and Processes: SMHS uses platforms like ParentSquare, flyers, phone calls, and workshops to connect with families. However, many families report that these methods are not effective, particularly for parents who are illiterate or who speak Mixteco. Phone calls from parent liaisons have been the most effective communication tool, revealing a need for more personal and culturally responsive outreach. Although SMHS encourages parents to attend events and participate in committees, parents report confusion about the roles and purposes of such groups, and some feel excluded due to language and cultural barriers. As one parent expressed, “You have to LOOK for ways to get involved”, highlighting the reactive rather than proactive nature of current outreach.

E1.2 Rapport and Trust: There is a deep-rooted family feel among staff, with many alumni returning to work at SMHS. This creates a sense of continuity and community trust among those within the system. However, that same trust and rapport are not fully extended to all families, particularly those who are unfamiliar with how the educational system works. The administration has begun laying foundations for improvement, such as the many Wellness Center services and increasing visibility of liaisons, but there remains a need for more intent and perception, especially among newer or less-resourced families.

Visiting Committee Comments

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective **Effective** Somewhat Effective Ineffective

SMHS employs a variety of strategies to encourage family and community involvement, but these efforts are at varying levels of effectiveness and cultural sensitivity. While there are notable efforts such as academic cohort nights, A-G informational events, and committee invitations, there still remains a communication gap, particularly with marginalized groups like the Mixteco community and Spanish-speaking families.

E2: School Culture and Environment

To what extent does the school leadership focus on continuous school improvement by providing a nurturing learning environment?

To what extent does the school leadership develop a culture that is characterized by trust, professionalism, and high expectations for all students?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion

are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

E2.1 Policies and Resources: SMHS has implemented meaningful changes to promote a safe and structured learning environment. These include doubling the number of security personnel, introducing a digital ID system, implementing a restroom pass system, and enforcing a “no phone” policy in classrooms. These steps have helped students feel physically safe on campus, and students report positive interactions with security staff who engage with them personally and often coach athletic teams.

E2.2 Trust and Respect: Students find refuge in open classrooms during lunch, clubs like SOMOS and sports programs, and the newly added Wellness Center. These are informal but vital support structures. Teachers and staff are seen as approachable, and counselors frequently recommend Wellness Center services for students who are struggling. The “Saint of the Season” initiative and other recognition programs show a commitment to valuing students beyond academics. However, some students and parents feel that recognition is uneven. Students in band or non-sport activities report feeling underappreciated compared to athletes.

E2.3 School Culture: On paper, Santa Maria High may still contend with stereotypes of being the “bad school,” often associated with race and class bias. Yet day-to-day, the school feels supportive and familial. Substitute teachers report preferring SMHS over other campuses, and staff take pride in their school community. Despite this, a hard truth remains, systems like vertical articulation and grading consistency are lacking, which undermines the broader culture of academic excellence and improvement.

Visiting Committee Comments

SMHS has been proactive in identifying safety concerns on campus and has acted to address these concerns through security measures and the promotion and support of a variety of opportunities for parents and students to get involved in their campus community.

Addressing security concerns, the administration doubled the number of security guards working on the school’s campus, adopted the use of a digital i.d. system for students entering campus, implemented a restroom pass system, changed the dress code, adopted a “no phone policy” for cell phone use in the classroom, and initiated a restorative approach to discipline.

Believing that students’ engagement and sense of belonging to the school community are an important component in school culture and safety, the opportunities for student involvement in clubs, organizations, and extracurricular activities are numerous. The school has also implemented the Saint of the Season award and luncheon to honor and recognize students exhibiting “Saint Pride” through their actions and behaviors.

The Wellness Center opened on the campus in the 2023-24 school year to address the social emotional needs of the student body, providing counseling, crisis intervention, connections with community agencies parents and students may access for help, and activities for students on campus.

School Culture and Environment that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective **Effective** Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

Certificated and classified staff support student success in and out of the classroom. Teachers and counselors are collaborating to send a clear message to students that they will have more choices at graduation if they meet the A through G requirements. We see posters in every classroom, and around the campus. Students have opportunities to tour college campuses, parents are invited to campus to learn about the A through G requirements, and students are routinely celebrated during lunch periods and awards nights for achieving good grades and completing the A through G requirements.

Students and teachers report that the security staff get to know the students by working in a specific zone, talking to and checking in with students on a daily basis. Many security staff also act as coaches for athletic teams on campus. Parents agree that there are many clubs, programs, and activities in which the students can participate, creating a positive connection to the campus.

E3: Academic, Social-Emotional, and Multi-tiered Supports

To what extent do all students receive appropriate academic, social-emotional, and multi-tiered supports to help ensure student learning, college and career readiness and success?

To what extent do students with special talents and/or needs have access to a system of personal support service, activities, and opportunities at the school and in the community?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

E3.1 Multi-tiered Support: There are multiple intervention strategies in place, including summer school, Saturday school, Winter Intersession, Edgenuity, and the ELO program. The SST (Student Study Team) is designed to support students who are still struggling even when showing up consistently. However, stakeholders have pointed out that interventions are not always timely or sufficient, and the Aeries portal is not widely used or effective as a communication tool for struggling families. There is also concern that the discontinuation of programs like Reading Plus has left a gap in support without a viable replacement.

E3.2 Student Involvement: A diverse array of co-curricular and extracurricular activities are available, allowing students to find belonging and purpose through clubs, sports, and events like Club Rush. Newcomer students are supported through targeted programs and clubs, and SPED students thrive in the inclusive culture. However, the lack of common grading practices and limited feedback loops for struggling students hinders full alignment between involvement and academic success.

E3.3 Student Self Advocacy: Students are encouraged to be involved and advocate for their needs, particularly through counseling support and activities at the Wellness Center. Still, self-advocacy skills are not consistently developed across the student body. More could be done to embed these opportunities within the curriculum and provide platforms for student voice, especially for those in non-traditional programs or marginalized backgrounds.

Visiting Committee Comments

SMHS has contracted with Orenda to identify students' needs and advance effective strategies in implementing a comprehensive multi-tiered support system for these needs. Targeted interventions and opportunities for families to engage with staff on campus have been implemented to support the school's vision, mission, and goals of ensuring continuing success of students in achieving college and career readiness.

Future Saint's Nights, academic planning, grade level parent meetings, and mental health resource fairs are events to which the parents are invited and encouraged to attend, giving them information needed to support their students. Students are also encouraged to participate in school wide events such as the college and mental health fairs.

Targeted academic intervention through summer school, Saturday sessions, Winter intersession, and independent study reflect the school's commitment to supporting the diverse needs of all students at SMHS.

The Wellness center on campus provides social emotional support for students, in addition to the college and career center, AVID program, and numerous athletic programs and clubs also reflect the school's dedication to providing opportunities for the students to engage in the school community and advocate for the campus culture they want.

Academic, Social-Emotional, and Multi-tiered Supports that support high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective **Somewhat Effective** Ineffective

Narrative Rationale: The certificated and classified staff care about the well being and success of all students at SMHS. The Special Education department feels there are a lot of opportunities for their students to be included in campus activities. There are credit recovery systems in place with Saturday sessions and winter intersessions, but the counseling staff states they are not well attended. Some staff voiced a desire for intervention and remediation classes within the school day, to address the learning gaps as they present in the collected data from assessments. The Wellness Center offers a variety of activities and small group opportunities for students who need support, but there does not seem to be a clear process by which the teachers can refer a student to tier 2 supports.

CATEGORY E: SCHOOL CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

Areas of Strength for School Culture and Support for Student Personal, Social-Emotional, and Academic Growth:

- The strong familial culture among staff, with alumni returning to serve the school community.
- A genuine focus on safety and security, with students feeling protected and seen by staff.
- The opening of the Wellness Center and teacher-led informal supports like open classrooms during lunch.
- A wide range of extracurricular offerings promoting student belonging.
- Recognition efforts like "Saint of the Season" and A-G academic awards.

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement for School Culture and Support for Student Personal, Social-Emotional, and Academic Growth:

- Improve communication methods with families, particularly those from underserved linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- Develop clearer, more accessible pathways for family engagement in governance and academic planning.
- Reintroduce or replace valuable academic support programs like Reading Plus.
- Build systems to support students who are chronically failing despite consistent attendance.
- Implement consistent grading practices and vertical articulation across grade levels.
- Recognize and celebrate non-athletic student involvement equally.

Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement include the following:

- Parent testimonials reveal gaps in understanding school systems and feeling welcomed.
- Observations of security staff-student interactions highlight trust and rapport.
- Documentation of extracurricular offerings and student participation rates.
- Internal notes and staff interviews about students struggling despite support.
- Parent and student feedback regarding ineffective communication tools like ParentSquare and Aeries.

Chapter 4: Synthesis of Schoolwide Strengths and Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement

Schoolwide Strengths

The purpose of identifying schoolwide strengths is to provide input and support for the school to use these strengths in their continuous improvement to ensure high quality student learning and well-being. Synthesize school wide areas of strengths and list numerically. *Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.*

The visiting committee identified the following specific schoolwide strengths and their rationale for the identification: **Include a Who, What, and Why for each schoolwide strength.**

1. **Collaborative Culture and PLCs:** Santa Maria High School has a well-established Professional Learning Community (PLC) model that fosters a collaborative culture

among teachers. PLCs meet regularly to align instruction, analyze data, and share best practices across departments and grade levels, contributing significantly to instructional coherence and continuous improvement

2. **Rigorous, Standards-Based Curriculum:** The school offers a rigorous and coherent curriculum aligned with state standards, college and career readiness goals, and real-world applications. Programs like Integrated Math, ERWC, and NGSS-based science courses provide strong academic foundations, while electives and CTE pathways expand opportunities
3. **College and Career Readiness:** SMHS provides multiple pathways for students to become college and career ready. This includes a wide range of CTE courses with industry certifications, dual enrollment options, A-G approved classes, and career planning support such as the AHC PROD 301 course and college field trips
4. **Comprehensive Family and Community Engagement** The school demonstrates strong outreach to families and the community through programs like “Un Cafecito,” family math nights, and multilingual parent communications via ParentSquare. These efforts promote inclusivity, build trust, and support student success beyond the classroom
5. **Targeted Student Support and Wellness Initiatives:** The recent launch of the Wellness Center, along with expanded counseling services and multi-tiered supports, highlights the school’s commitment to student well-being. The center offers mental health counseling, SEL education, workshops, and collaboration with outside agencies to meet students’ academic, emotional, and social needs

Schoolwide Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement

The purpose of supporting the school’s identified growth areas for continuous improvement and sharing additional growth areas is to ensure the school’s continuous improvement for student learning and well-being encompasses the greatest student and school needs.

Synthesize school wide growth areas for continuous growth and list numerically. *Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.*

- Ensure that all Growth Areas have a “who,” “what,” and a “why” in relation to the impact on student learning
- Confirm areas already identified by the school in the action plan sections
- Confirm areas to be strengthened within the already identified areas
- Identify any additional areas to be added to the action plan that have been identified by the visiting committee. *This includes areas related to student achievement and other profile data, the school program and operation, and the action plan.*

The visiting committee concurs with the school’s identified growth areas for continuous improvement that are outlined in the schoolwide action plan. The school’s growth areas for continuous improvement are explained below.

In addition, the visiting committee has identified additional concrete, specific growth areas that need to be addressed: **Include a Who, What and Why for each growth area for continuous improvement.** (Note: Show the relationship to what the school has already identified, if possible.)

1. **Development and Implementation of a Comprehensive MTSS Framework:** While some strong support structures exist, the school has not yet fully documented or implemented a schoolwide Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). A more unified and

well-communicated framework is needed to ensure consistent support for students' academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs

2. **Alignment of Standards, Assessments, and Instruction:** There is a need to better align Orenda Cycle Assessments with actual instructional pacing and content delivery. Some standards do not line up well with current curriculum pacing, making it difficult for teachers to deliver effective instruction while also meeting assessment expectations
3. **Increased School-Day Interventions:** While interventions like tutoring and Saturday Academy are in place, more targeted and consistent in-day academic interventions are needed to support students who are below proficiency, especially English Learners and students with disabilities
4. **Uniformity Across Grade Levels and Departments:** Despite strong PLC collaboration, there are still inconsistencies in grading practices, pacing, and instructional strategies across different grade levels and subject areas. Greater standardization would improve equity and clarity for students
5. **Curriculum Integration:** Santa Maria High School would benefit from increased integration across subject areas to create more interdisciplinary learning opportunities for students. Integrated curriculum allows students to make deeper connections between what they are learning in different classes, promoting critical thinking and real-world application of knowledge.

Chapter 5: Ongoing School Improvement

- Include a brief summary of the schoolwide action plan/SPSA
- Evaluate the school improvement issues:
 - The effectiveness of the action plan to enhance student learning and support the identified major student learner needs
 - The level of commitment to accomplish the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide
 - The alignment of the schoolwide action plan/SPSA to the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)
 - The soundness of the follow-up process for implementing and monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan/SPSA.

<Enter text here>

The alignment of a long-range schoolwide action plan to the school's areas of greatest need to support high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

Enter text here

The capacity to implement and monitor the schoolwide action plan/SPSA.

Visiting Committee Rating: Highly Effective Effective Somewhat Effective Ineffective

Narrative Rationale:

Enter text here

Accreditation Status Factors Summary

Accreditation Status Factors	Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
The involvement and collaboration of the entire school community in the self-study that reflects a thorough, accurate analysis of what currently exists as well as aligned prioritized areas of strength and growth.	X			
The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive continuous school improvement.	X			
Acceptable progress by all students	X			
Vision and Purpose (A1)	X			
Governance (A2)		X		
Leadership for Learning (A3)		X		
Qualified Staff and Professional Development (A4)		X		
Resources (A5)		X		
Rigorous and Relevant Standards-Based Curriculum (B1)		X		
Access to the Curriculum (B2)		X		
Student Engagement in Challenging and Relevant Learning Experiences (C1)		X		
Student-Centered Instruction through a Variety of Strategies and Resources (C2)		X		
Reporting and Accountability Processes (D1)		X		
Using Student Assessment Strategies to Monitor and Modify Learning in the Classroom (D2)		X		
Family and Community Engagement (E1)		X		
School Culture and Environment (E2)		X		
Multi-tiered Personal, Social-emotional, and Academic Support (E3)			X	
Alignment of a schoolwide action plan/SPSA to school's areas of greatest need	X			
The capacity to implement and monitor the schoolwide action plan/SPSA	X			