



HILLTOP HIGH SCHOOL WASC/CDE MID-CYCLE SCHOOL PROGRESS REPORT

**555 Claire Avenue
Chula Vista, CA**

Sweetwater Union High School District

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**Accrediting Commission for Schools
Western Association of Schools and Colleges**

Introduction

School Background

Hilltop High School (HHS), home of the Lancers, is an AMAZING comprehensive grades 9-12 high school in the Sweetwater Union High School District (SUHSD) in San Diego County, California. Boasting a rich tradition of rigorous academics, inclusive social experiences and competitive athletics, HHS is truly a school where students can and do excel! The faculty and staff continuously work to seek out innovative and engaging programs and activities to maximize students' experiences, and to provide students with robust and rewarding pathways to success while enrolled and beyond. Our student body is comprised of 1,710 students in grades nine through twelve representing various constituencies as found in this current comprehensive [2024-2025 Student Data Report](#). HHS has just over 100 credentialed teachers, counselors, and administrators, and approximately 30 additional classified support staff.

Student Performance: Academic Data:

Various indicators point to the academic success of all students at HHS, with improvements in certain categories for special populations of students. HHS was recognized this past year as “Silver” Awardee from the College Board for increasing the number of students enrolled in Advanced Placement Courses, exam participation, and increased score rates. The California Dashboard Data shows significant improvements from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 for English Learners (ELs) and Students with Disabilities (SWDs) in the areas of English language arts and mathematics: [2024 HHS SBAC Data](#). The following data from the California Dashboard [2024 HHS 5X5 Matrices Indicators](#) shows growth for all student groups in ELA and Math (except White students in math, which declined). The suspension rate has improved for SWDs and ELs, however, those rates have declined slightly for African American students, Hispanic, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students, but this belies the low totals for actual numbers of students who have been suspended (N<20 for both SWDs and ELs). Changes in graduation rates are mixed, with SWDs having maintained, while EL students and the All Students indicator having declined slightly.

SEL Competencies and Adherence:

Core SEL Survey and California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) data suggests strong foundations for students' engagement in the culture of HHS. While there is improvement needed in this area, approximately 50% of students generally feel connected to the school. However, more current data from our Community Schools Grant survey suggests that these percentages have increased well above fifty percent. Please see data here: [Core SEL and CHKS Survey Data](#). One indicator of school connectedness is participation in athletics: HHS boasts the fact that over fifty percent of both boys and girls participate in Lancer Athletics.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The SUHSD LCAP Goal 2 focuses on each student's social emotional well-being: Create a safe and healthy learning environment for each student by building a culture of equity and a positive climate that promotes excellence throughout the district. At HHS, students are members of our School Site Council, Safety Committee, Lancer Principal's Roundtable, and Parent Teacher Student Organization. Care is taken to ensure wide representation of students that identify with

various groups on campus. We encourage students to challenge themselves by enrolling in higher level courses and invite them to have rich educational experiences through engagement in extra-curricular opportunities such as school clubs, athletics, and community service opportunities. Various clubs that celebrate diversity and inclusivity host school-wide and district-wide events at HHS including math and visual arts events sponsored by the Black Student Union (BSU) and the Holiday Posada sponsored by the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanos de Aztlán (MEChA) clubs; Peer Mediators (upper class students who mentor 9th graders) in our Connect Crew courses are selected from our richly diverse student body. As well, our Lancer Buddies Club of general education and moderate to severe students supports our district Unified Sports teams' competitions throughout the year.

Summary Description of Programs offered

In addition to the courses outlined in our district's [SUHSD Curriculum Guide](#) for student placement and our school [HHS School website](#), At HHS, we offer the following programs for students:

- **Foreign Language and Global Studies (FLAGS):** F.L.A.G.S. is a nationally recognized magnet program in which students may take language courses in Italian, Chinese, German, Japanese, and Spanish. With sufficient mastery of the language of study, students can become eligible for biliteracy seals on their diplomas and are eligible to take Advanced Placement exams.
- **AVID:** Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a global educational college-preparatory program dedicated to closing the achievement gap by preparing all students for college and other post-secondary educational experiences.
- **Career Technical Education (CTE):**
The Engineering and Design CTE pathway (Introduction to Engineering; Principles of Engineering; and Civil Engineering and Architecture) provides a strong foundation in engineering and design for students at HHS. Students are enrolled in an instructional program that integrates academic and technical preparation while preparing them for the vast scope of job opportunities in this field.
Information Technology (IT) Academy: The IT Academy is one of two California Partnership Academies (CAPA) experiences that students may enroll and expose students to careers that involve the design, development, support, and management of hardware, software, multimedia, and systems integration services. CTE courses at HHS that are foundational to this CAPA are: Multimedia Productions, Video Production, and Introduction to Computer Science.
The Hospitality and Tourism (HT) Academy: The HT Academy is the second CAPA available to students who are interested in furthering their knowledge of the travel, recreation, and food-hospitality industries in the state of California. CTE courses in this CAPA at HHS are: Hospitality, Travel Destinations, and Sales and Marketing.
The CTE Sports Medicine Program offers students the opportunity to learn basic anatomy, health, emergency scenario preparedness, as well as injury management, treatment, and prevention. Students are given the opportunity to become CPR certified, and are provided with interactive, hands-on learning opportunities. These courses are intended to help students gain an understanding of sports medicine related career paths and how they work together in a physically active community.
- **Co-Teaching:** Classes in English language arts, mathematics, and Introduction to Ethnic Studies are offered to SWDs at the "resource" (RSP) level in an inclusion setting are provide

them with supports, services, and accommodations by assigning a resource specialist and general education teacher as partner Co-Teachers. Enrollment of RSP students in these classes is limited to twelve RSP students.

- **Athletic Program:** Hallmark to HHS is our prep athletic program in which over 50% of our students boast membership to one or more teams at the junior varsity or varsity level. The ratio of female student athletes to male student athletes is roughly equal at just over 50% of each gender.
- **Dual Enrollment:** All seniors are eligible to take classes on campus that are hosted by Southwestern Community College. Courses in Criminal Justice, Oral Communication, and Learning and Success are offered each semester and will allow students to earn actual college credit for these courses.

2: Significant Changes and Developments

Leadership Changes & Alignment of Programs

With the recent appointment of a new principal (2023-2024) and the reconstitution of the administrative team, there has been a rededication to the HHS commitment to meeting students' needs while remaining connected to traditions of our past. The specific focus of the new administration in the 2023-2024 school year was the alignment of the School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) to the SUHSD LCAP Goals and then cross reference those goals to the goals articulated by the 2020-2021 WASC Self-Study and Visiting Committee Report. Upon introduction at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, the new principal introduced the SUHSD learning goals for buffering and extending the PLC processes for all high schools with a learning focus tailored specifically for HHS in which teachers move from ensuring best INTENTIONS to implementing specific ACTIONS of practice. Acknowledging the fact that staff arrive at school each day with the best intentions for students' success, all staff were asked to reflect and evaluate their actions in order to support that success. This gave support and inspiration to our department PLCs, and motivated discussions of aligning our SPSA goals' strategic actions to meet the needs of various constituent groups in a variety of contexts.

At the start of the 24-25 school year, our new principal challenged staff to evaluate the IMPACT of those ACTIONS upon student engagement, performance, and learning, and ensuring safe environments for ALL students. Simultaneously, the administrative team was reorganized for efficiency and efficacy to establish areas of responsibility closely aligned to our SUHSD LCAP goals (ensuring 1. Student Achievement, 2. Healthy Environments and Culture of Equity, 3. Parent and Community Engagement, and 4. Coherent and Transparent Systems for Operational Excellence) by assigning the following leadership areas to assistant principals: 1. Learning and Teaching, 2. Culture and Belonging, and 3. Innovation and Engagement. At HHS we are committed to the promise that the academic and social experiences we offer to students daily is forever future-forward, dynamic, and progressive in meeting the immediate needs of our students and maximizes their potential. The following link summarizes the [HHS Learning Focus](#).

3: Engagement of Educational Partners in Continuous School Improvement

HHS hosts a regular School Site Council Meeting (SSC), English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), Coffee with the Principal (CWTP), Principal's Lancer Student Roundtable (student advisory group) Faculty Advisory Committee, Classified Advisory Committee, School Safety Committee, Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO). Our WASC Action Plan is fully

aligned with our SPSA and SUHSD LCAP goals. Stakeholders, including staff, students, and parents, provide feedback on data analysis and goal creation, strategic planning, and asset allocations through multiple meetings. Teachers, staff, counselors, and administrators are informed of the goals, actions, asset allocations, and measurable outcomes of the SPSA. The HHS Learning Focus as outlined in the SPSA is monitored through classroom visits, data review, and constant evaluation of supports in areas of need.

Various departments within SUHSD have provided support for HHS in the areas of Curriculum and Instruction, data collection and analysis, professional development, and guidance in prioritizing learning goals and areas of focus. In the recent past, HHS has worked collaboratively with WestEd to provide teachers with professional development and also to provide “principal coaching” for former and the current principal. This year, HHS has partnered with the San Diego County Office of Education for implementation of the SD9UP program (Lancer9UP), in which teachers across disciplines coordinate in a student study team to analyze students’ academic performance and social behaviors and coordinate activities to support those students.

4: Progress on the Implementation of the Schoolwide Action Plan

The following goals were identified as performance indicators for HHS to work on after the last WASC visit in 2020-2021. Each goal below identifies supporting data and strategic actions implemented to achieve growth on those goals.

HHS WASC Goal #1: Increase overall performance of ELs and SWDs to succeed in high school and post-secondary life.

The 2022-2023 HHS SBAC data reflected a decrease in mathematics and ELA proficiency levels for our ELs and SWDs. In English language arts (ELA), our students with disabilities scored 90.3 points below standard, categorizing this subgroup in the orange performance level on the State’s performance bands. In ELA, our ELs scored 110.5 points below standard, categorizing this subgroup in the red performance level. The 2023-2024 SBAC scores showed some improvement. In the area of ELA, our EL subgroup increased by 29.4 points and moved into the orange performance level. Our SWDs increased by 35.1 points. In the area of mathematics, our ELs increased by 29.1 points and our SWDs increased by 31.7 points. According to the California School Dashboard, 16.5 % of our EL students progressed on the Summative ELPAC.

The following strategic actions have been implemented to support increased student achievement as called for in Goal #1: PLC Structures & Supports

- Co-Teaching for Resource-level SWDs (Professional Development)
- Targeted Resource Teacher, Student Program Facilitators, ELD and SPED Resource Teachers monitoring of at-risk students
- Strategic Placement (SEI, SPED, Prep for Success, Lancer 9UP, Study Skills)
- Strategic Student Monitoring: Administration, Counselors, Teachers monitor students with one or more failing grades
- Assign credit deficient students to APEX courses during instructional day

Analysis of various data including subject-area common formative and summative assessments, grades issued at Progress Reporting periods, attendance rates, credit recovery rates, and student attendance at intervention sessions support the evaluation of the efficacy of these strategic actions.

HHS WASC Goal #2: Provide support, scaffolds and resources for students who challenge themselves beyond the base high school graduation requirements.

The following strategic actions have been implemented to support increased student achievement as called for in Goal #2:

- Access to AP/Accelerated Courses: Increase total students taking AP courses, exams, increase AP exam pass rates
- Placement Recommendations: ensure course level placement through a recommendation system that includes teacher, counselor, admin input
- CARPE: participation will provide our staff with tools to help students access university/college/FAFSA applications/resources
- Ensure innovative and engaging programs and academies such as FLAGS, Hospitality, Information Tech, CTE

The HHS administration has placed an emphasis on strengthening Tier I supports for students. In the following graph, [A-G requirements](#), we have an illustration of the percentage of students in different groups who are on track to satisfy the course requirements for admission to the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems. The top pie chart displays the overall percentage of students meeting A-G requirements (58%) versus those not meeting them (42%). We have identified the disparities in A-G completion rates among different student demographics. Females appear to have a higher percentage of completion compared to males, while English Learners and students with disabilities have significantly lower completion rates. This information has guided targeted interventions to improve educational outcomes; however, students may opt for different graduation alternatives.

[HHS Advanced Placement Results](#) (linked), represent the number of tests taken by students across the 2016-2024 academic years. The number of students taking only one test shows slight fluctuations over the years. The year 2023-2024 shows an increase in students taking two or more tests compared to prior years, indicating that the efforts from administration, teachers, and counselors to encourage students into higher level courses has yielded an improvement in student engagement and testing opportunities. Overall, the data suggests a steady test participation across the years. The increase in students taking multiple tests in the last couple of years reflects enhanced academic support, greater access to testing, and an emphasis on the benefits of taking rigorous coursework.

HHS WASC Goal #3: Increase the overall performance of students through the development of “First Best Lesson” and effective PLC practices.

The following strategic actions have been implemented to support increased student achievement as called for in Goal #3:

- PLC Structures & Supports (Professional Development & Guidance)
- Professional Development Opportunities (Content and Instructional Delivery)
- Inclusive participation in the development of the master schedule process
- Learning Walks
- Learning Leaders Impact Team (Resource Teacher Meetings)

Over the past several years, SUHSD has focused on Professional Learning Community training. As a district, we have been reflecting on the “Five Conditions of Thriving PLCs ” with the goal to improve teaching and learning experiences for our students. [The SUHSD Professional Development webpage](#) has the resources teachers need to meet our district goal of, “building a culture of learning that ensures each student has access to the disciplinary knowledge, literacy and life skills to be college and career ready.” As a site, we help our staff with PLC collaboration by establishing the following systems:

- Weekly PLC Meetings: We dedicate time to discuss lesson design, analyze student data, and set action plans.
- Focused Professional Development: Our district and our site have aligned training opportunities with identified needs, such as language production activities, co-teaching instruction, and technology integration such as the use of Formative for our digital assessments in order to access results in a timely manner
- Celebration of Student and Teacher Success: We recognize improvements in teaching practices and student performance to maintain motivation. We do this through the presentation of data at our faculty meetings and acknowledging hard work through staff celebrations. We have award assemblies for our students who have demonstrated growth and have attained good standing with grades, behavior, and attendance.
- Learning Walks: We recognize that this is an area of growth. For both collegial and administrator learning walks, improvements can be made for the frequency and data collection of these learning walks.

HHS WASC Goal #4: Explore the incorporation of Restorative Practices and SEL strategies into regular classroom instruction and entire school culture. The following strategic actions have been implemented to support increased student achievement as called for in Goal #4:

- Presentation of the Six Conditions of Learning
- Restorative Practices Resource Teacher
- ED SWD Resource Teacher
- Climate and Culture Collective Committee

SUHSD has worked diligently to refocus efforts to espouse restorative practices, and the board of trustees understands that by incorporating restorative practices and social emotional learning (SEL) into regular classroom instruction and school culture, schools foster a more inclusive and emotionally intelligent educational environment.

Critical to our mission at HHS is the importance of building relationships with our students, our staff, and our community. Teachers and staff consistently demonstrate empathy, aim to have supportive classrooms, and model inclusivity; however, after surveying our staff, we found out they feel that as a school, we are in the developing stage. Staff have requested more professional development in the area of SEL and how to incorporate strategies into classroom instruction. Many staff have regular classroom discussions, team-building circles, and provide strategies for managing anxiety, especially during tests or social challenges, yet argue for more training to deal with challenging behaviors.

The administrative team uses restorative practices when working with students who have made wrong choices in order to repair relationships and foster accountability rather than inflict punitive measures. We do our best to include all partners when a student commits a serious offense. We have hired a Restorative Resource Teacher who helps lead restorative circles, helps with training staff, and helps students work on behavior plans.

HHS WASC Goal #5: Examine ways to systematize existing academic and mental health intervention programs, policies, and processes into a more coherent and functional system that allow all staff members to be able to steer students toward needed academic and socio-emotional support services and resources.

The following strategic actions have been implemented to support increased student achievement as called for in Goal #5:

- HHS Learning Focus Analysis and Inventory of Program Assets
- WASC Mid-Cycle Review
- Align our resources through our drivers: WASC, LCAP, and SPSA
- Community Schools Grant

Paramount to the work of the new administration are its efforts to collaborate with staff (teachers and counselors) in order to systematize academic, SEL and mental health, and engagement goals into coherent and meaningful structures for HHS. Our staff and administration review our district and school drivers such as our School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), SUHSD LCAP Goals, our Safety Plan, and our WASC report. We continue to align our documents through the lens of continuous improvement. We review academic performance by looking at progress report I, progress report II, and semester grade data; we review attendance records, and soft data in order to target areas requiring improvement.

We are currently working on resource mapping. Through this process we are inventorying all current programs to identify initiatives that are yielding results and areas that need modification and/or are no longer needed. We are collecting input from students, staff, parents, to identify gaps and overlaps in current services. We review academic performance, attendance trends, and referral rates to target areas requiring improvement. The following is a link for the [HHS Resource Mapping Tool](#).

Based on the data we have collected and examined, we have found the need to revisit our Restorative Practices training with our staff. Our departments provided feedback and collectively reported we are at an emerging stage with our restorative practices and need additional support for our students and staff. We also understand that out of the 1257 students who took the CORE SEL survey, 48% reported they “feel like I am part of the school” and 54% reported “I am happy to be at this school.” We find this to be an area of growth for our school. These numbers have remained consistent for several years. We are also working on minimizing the number of students out and about during class time. For this reason we are currently working on a digital system to monitor hall pass use. Our goal is to decrease the number of students who abuse the hall pass and wander around campus.

We have gathered input from parents through our community schools survey. Currently, we have 683 parent responses. Most of our parents/community members are in favor of having additional

funding to provide mental health resources for our students and our community. Parents and guardians are expecting us to continue to improve our systems in order to help guide our students as they graduate and get ready for college and career.

Revised Schoolwide Action Plan/SPSA/LCAP:

The Hilltop High School [School Plan for Student Achievement \(SPSA\)](#) is reliant upon our annual [Learning Focus Development Plan](#), which is built on the principle of a “continuous improvement” model through the lens of multi-tiered systems of support for students’ academic and social needs. WASC and district LCAP goals are identified by various achievement and survey indicators and then articulated as “driver” goals that inform the Site Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) achievement goals which are then supported with strategic actions and funding. On a biennial basis, WASC and LCAP goals are revisited and revised by analyzing various data in order to inform SPSA goals. This cycle ensures that goals are aligned to students’ needs and ultimately provide for increased achievement.

Analysis of programs at HHS produced the following WASC-oriented foci that and areas of need that will be redressed and articulated into the 2025-2026 SPSA:

- Effective PLC structures implementation emphasizing consistency of implementation across departments and in all areas of PLC work (content, instructional delivery, assessment, responses: including Interventions and Supports).
- Responsive systems of Restorative Practices supported through the multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) framework with prioritization placed upon professional development for teachers in order to promote effective classroom implementation.
- Student-centered inclusive Master Schedule development that specifically articulates appropriate program needs of SWDs, ELs, and students who challenge themselves beyond the base program.
- Adoption of school culture goals that focus on school safety (physical, psychological, emotional) through school connectedness.
- Effective monitoring of unduplicated populations (SWDs, ELs, HFY) and implementation of intervention systems that are time-bound and measurable.
- Implementation of innovative programs and course offerings that motivate all students’ post-secondary focus.
- Implementation of coherent systems for all HHS programs that are based upon the continuous improvement cycle.