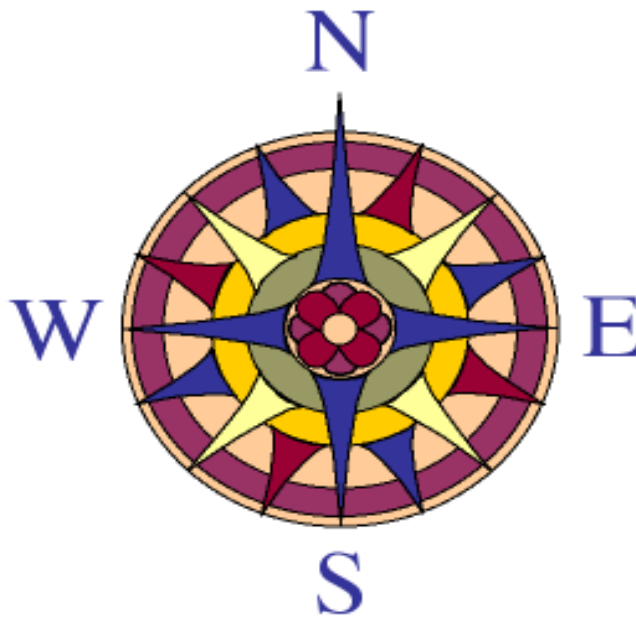


# WASC MIDTERM REVIEW

*Walnutwood High School*



*Home of the Pathfinders*

**Walnutwood High School**  
10848 Gadsten Way  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

March 15, 2010

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Note: Walnutwood is often referred to as Walnutwood High School, or WHS, and currently has an emphasis on secondary education, with the majority of students in grades 11 and 12. However, the school was founded as a K-12 school and the school's programs continue to serve students in K-12 levels.

***District Leadership***  
***Folsom Cordova Unified School District***  
***125 East Bidwell St.***  
***Folsom, CA 95630***  
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***Board of Education***



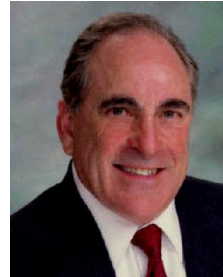
Ed Short  
President



Theresa Stanley  
Vice President



Roger Benton  
Member



Richard Shaw  
Member



Joane Reinking  
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Patrick Godwin  
Superintendent

Deputy Superintendent, CFO

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Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Instruction

Assistant Superintendent of Educational Options and Accountability

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services

Public Relations Officer

Debbie Bettencourt

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Mark Rickabaugh

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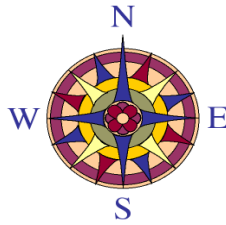
Stephen Nichols

# Walnutwood High School Staff

10848 Gadsten Way  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

## Leadership and Support Staff

Principal Charlie Linebarger	Counselor Candy Harris
Administrative Assistant Jean Orbanosky	Registrar Patti Williams
School Nurse Sheila Holcomb	Custodian Harry Williams
Child Development Center Aides Eileen Kvasager Lucy Lopez Beth O'Farrell Jean Patterson Donna Whittaker	Independent Living Skills Aides Debbie Haughn Kristen Lochtie



## Teaching Staff

Fulltime WHS Staff Cary Burns Reallynn Cordova Jenny Harmon Mike Miller Joyce Schile Kathy Ynclan	Part-time WHS Staff Will Angelopoulos Vicky Barthell Sarah Franscioni Vince Guarna Ola Oliynyk John Taylor
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# I. Introduction and Basic Student/Community Profile Data

## A. Community Profile

Walnutwood High School (WHS) is part of the Folsom Cordova Unified School District (FCUSD) and serves the communities of Rancho Cordova and Folsom. Rancho Cordova formed as a city in 2003, with a population of 61,000 in 2008. Though primarily a bedroom community serving the greater Sacramento area, Rancho Cordova is becoming a business center. Following the closure of Mather Air Force Base, the county successfully redeveloped it into a major airport for cargo aircraft and as a source of area employment. Many new businesses are locating in Rancho Cordova and several new housing subdivisions have been completed. It is estimated that 53,000 new jobs and 19,000 new homes will be in place by the year 2020.

The city of Folsom has been one of the fastest growing communities in the state, primarily the result of new businesses, including Intel Corporation, locating in Folsom. The housing growth has been primarily upscale which tends to attract permanent residents. By contrast, Rancho Cordova has many apartment complexes and concomitantly a high level of transience.

WHS serves families from through out the district with approximately 30% of our students residing in Folsom and 70% in Rancho Cordova. Though adjacent, the two communities are distinct as the following socio-economic indicators, from the American Community Survey 2006-08 estimates, point out.

Comparison of statistics for Rancho Cordova, Folsom and the state of California

	Rancho Cordova	Folsom	California
Median Household Income	\$51,020	\$92,642	\$61,154
Mean Household Income	\$63,144	\$106,420	\$83,970
Percentage of Families with Children under 18 years old Whose Income is below Poverty Level	19.2%	2.7%	14.2%
Families with female householder, no husband present, with children under 18 years old, below poverty level	27%	9.4%	24.1%
Children under 18 living below poverty level	25.7%	3.1%	17.9%
Grandparents living with own grandchildren and responsible for them	35.5%	N	28.9%
Female grandparents responsible for grandchildren	83.2%	N	61.9%
Female Householder, no husband present, with children under 18 years	8.1%	5.3%	7.3%
Educational Attainment (2006-2008)			
Less than high school diploma	15%	10.4%	20%
High School Graduate (includes GED)	26.0%	20.2%	22.4%
Some college, no degree	26.5%	20.9%	20.8%
AA degree	10.8%	8.6%	7.6%

Bachelor's	16.8%	26.6%	18.8%
Graduate or professional degree	5.0%	13.4%	10.6%
Foreign Born, entered 2000 or later	37.6%	25.4%	22%
Foreign Born, entered before 2000	62.4%	73.8%	78%
Language spoken at home			
English only	66%	82.1%	57.6%
Language other than English	34.0%	17.9%	42.4%
Other Indo-European language, speak English less than "very well"	7.8%	1.4%	1.4%
Spanish, speak English less than "very well"	7.5%	2.2%	13.7%
Females 15 years and over, divorced	14.9%	12.4%	11.2%
Hispanic or Latino	19.1%	11.1%	36.1%
Black or African American	8.9%	6.4%	6.2%
Asian	11.3%	10.7%	12.3%

N = data for this geographic area cannot be displayed because the number of sample cases is too small.

Families made up 65% of the households in Rancho Cordova, including married-couple families (46%) and other families (20%). In Folsom, 70% of the households are families, including 59% married-couple families and 11% other families. Families make up 68% of the population of California, with married couples making up 50% of that population.

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the people living in Rancho Cordova in 2006-2008 were foreign born. 75% were native born, and among these, 51% were born in California. In Folsom, 12% were foreign born, with 88% native born, and 62% who were born in California.

In Rancho Cordova, among people at least five years old, (2006-2008), 34% spoke a language other than English at home. Of those speaking a language other than English at home, 36% spoke Spanish and 64% spoke some other language; 55% reported that they did not speak English "very well". Among Californians in general, 42.4% spoke another language at home, and 67% spoke Spanish, while 33% spoke some other language; 47% reported that they did not speak English "very well". Among residents of Folsom, 18% spoke a language other than English at home. Of these, 40% spoke Spanish, and 60% spoke some other language, with 32% reporting that they did not speak English "very well".

In 2006-2008, 18% of people in Rancho Cordova were in poverty, compared with 3% for Folsom and 13% of the population in California. In RC, 27% of related children under 18 were below the poverty rate, compared to 3% for Folsom and 18% for California. Fourteen percent (14%) of all families in RC, and 27% of families with a female householder and no husband present had incomes below poverty level and related children under 18 years. In Folsom, 1.7% of all families had income levels had incomes below poverty level. Among families with female householders, no husband present and related children under 18 years, .4% had incomes below poverty level. In California, 10% of all families, and 25% of families with a female householder and no husband present had incomes below poverty.

The percentages of owners with mortgages, owners without mortgage, and renters, were identical between RC and California: 53% were owners with mortgage, 15% were owners without mortgage, and 54% were renters who spent 30% or more of household income on housing. In Folsom, 45% are owners with mortgages and 18% are owners without mortgages, while 43% were renters who spent 30% or more of household income on housing.

Median monthly housing costs for mortgaged owners in RC was \$1,926, nonmortgaged owners \$357, and renters \$942. For Californians, median monthly housing costs for mortgaged owners was \$2,354, nonmortgaged owners, \$444, and renters, \$1,118. Median monthly housing costs for mortgaged owners in Folsom was \$2,548, nonmortgaged owners was \$577, and renters was \$1,239.

The socio-economic make up of Rancho Cordova and Folsom provide our school with students and families with unique strengths and challenges.

WHS has a positive working relationship with the business community. Our students are encouraged to pursue work experience or ROP while attending WHS thus having the opportunity to learn job skills while earning credits toward graduation. Independent study allows students to work during the day which they could not do in a traditional school program. Each teacher monitors student progress, and should any infractions occur, work permits are suspended until the student meets academic standards.

## **B. School Profile**

The FCUSD serves approximately 18,600 students in the cities of Folsom and Rancho Cordova. In addition to Walnutwood High School (WHS), there are seventeen elementary schools, four middle schools, three traditional high schools, one charter school, one community day school and two continuation high schools. WHS, with a four year average enrollment of 175 students, serves students in traditional Independent Study for grades 7-12, as well as in three district programs including Adolescent Parent Program (APP), Medical independent Study (MIS) and Independent Living Skills for 18-22 year old students.

The FCUSD began to develop an independent study program with one teacher during the 1983-84 school year. It met the needs of an increasing number of students and became a separate high school with its own CDS number for the 1990-91 school year.

Walnutwood's schoolwide goals for our students, validated and affirmed by our 2007 WASC process, are anchored by our vision statement and Expected Student Learning Results (ESLR's). Our vision: The Vision of Walnutwood High School is to provide each student an individualized opportunity, with parent and teacher support, to earn a high school diploma, acquire values, skills and knowledge necessary to promote life long learning, enhance self-esteem and become productive, responsible citizens. Our ESLR's are: Self-directed Learners, Effective Communicators, Quality Producers/Performers and Responsible Citizens.

Independent study students typically meet with their teacher once each week for forty-five minutes. During that time teachers verify student homework, administer tests, give instruction,

and provide new assignments. Students are primarily responsible for organizing their learning activities during the week; however, the teacher is available via e-mail or telephone to assist or advise students who are in need of help with their studies. Open access tutorial time, staffed by a WHS instructor, is available for students desiring additional academic support. Computers and supplemental computer programs plus internet access are available.

WHS welcomes and encourages parent involvement in their student's education. All students, with at least one parent, participate in an orientation as part of the enrollment process where they are introduced to our school and independent study's unique processes and procedures. In addition, students and parents are encouraged to participate in our School Site Council.

### **C. Staff Profile**

Walnutwood High School's main campus is located in Rancho Cordova, with a satellite location on the Sutter Middle School campus in Folsom. The school currently has six full time and five part-time instructors, a .5 counselor and a .5 principal. Due to the unique structure of the independent study program, teachers instruct outside of their credentialed areas. Our classified staff includes an administrative assistant, a .6 registrar, 2 instructional assistants, 4 part time Child Development aides and a part time custodian.

Our specialists include a .4 FTE special education instructor who provides support for WHS students who have been identified as having special needs, a full time teacher and two instructional aides for our Independent Living Skills program, 2 teachers for APP and a .6 FTE MIS teacher. Staff longevity ranges from one to twenty years with the program.

Staff members keep students informed regarding their academic standing. The counselor prepares a credit worksheet for each student as part of the enrollment process. The instructor works with the student to prepare an individualized academic plan. Students are able to keep track of their progress on a weekly basis when they meet with their instructor. They not only have regular, ongoing assessment in their coursework, but are also kept apprised of their progress towards completion of their graduation requirements.

### **D. Student Profile**

For many of our students, WHS is their school of choice where they attend, thrive and make progress towards graduation. For others, WHS may not be their best option but, for a variety of reasons, it is their only option. Thus we have a wide array of students from college bound, self-motivated, and goal oriented, to others who have not been successful anywhere else in their school career. We welcome them all and do our best to develop an individual education plan that best meets their needs.

Some of our students participate in Medical Independent Study which is a new program designed to address the needs of students who, for medical reasons, are unable to attend class at their home school. The District's Health Services validate the medical need and, in conjunction with the doctor's office, determine if the student is best served at home or at WHS. Though the numbers vary, we currently have 15 students, from preK -22 years old, participating in MIS.



Our Adolescent Parent Program serves students who are pregnant or parenting. The school has an on site Child Development Center to care for infants and toddlers while their parents are in class. Students in APP attend classes four hours each day where they not only work on graduation requirements but also learn essential parenting skills.

Our APP students are predominately female and range in age from 13-19 years old. The program has a five year average enrollment of approximately 26.5 students. This year we've experienced an increase in student enrollment in excess of 25%.

Our ILS program serves students 18-22 years old who have a current Individual Education Plan indicating this as the educational option that would best meet their needs. The program serves approximately 10 students.

**Student Enrollment – Grade Level**

Data listed show the number of students in each grade level, as reported by the California Basic Education Data System in October of every year, which shows an increase in enrollment this past year of approximate 20% with the largest increases found in our pre-K-8 and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students.

<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Enrollment 2007-08</b>	<b>Enrollment 2008-09</b>	<b>Enrollment 2009-10</b>
Grade pre-K-6	0	3	4
Grade 7	3	3	4
Grade 8	4	8	10
Grade 9	16	7	16
Grade 10	27	33	19
Grade 11	40	41	44
Grade 12	76	69	98
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>195</b>

**Student Diversity**

Our students reflect the diversity of our community with our percentage of enrollment as follows:

- White (not Hispanic) 57%
- Hispanic or Latino 24%
- African American 13%
- Asian 3%
- Filipino 2%
- Pacific Islanders 1%

**English Language Learners (ELL)**

After a three year plateau, the number of ELL students attending WHS dropped by 54%.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Armenian	1		3	3	
Farsi					1
Hindi	1				
Hmong	2	2			
Russian	2	8	12	11	5
Rumanian				1	
Spanish	4	6	4	7	4
Serbo_Croatian				1	1
Tongan					
Ukrainian	2	4	4	1	2
Urdu		3			
Other EL		1			
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>

**Student Enrollment-Mobility**

Like our community, our student population is fluid, which is reflected in our changing demographics and high student turnover which for 2008-09 was a turnover rate of 71%.

**Change in key ethnic make-up, 2006-2009**

	Enrollment 2006-07	% of total enrollment	Enrollment 2009-10	% of total enrollment	Change in % of total enrollment
Hispanic or Latino	25	15.9%	43	23.8%	+ 9.5%
African American	12	7.6%	23	12.7%	+ 5.1%
White not Hispanic	108	68.8	104	57.5	-11.3%

**Student Attendance-Yearly Average**

2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
85.8%	86.9%	88.1%	89.1%	87.9%

Our four year average of 87.6% falls in the ASAM designation “Sufficient” which ranges from 84% to 94%.

### **Suspension and Expulsion 2007-2009**

2007-08	Suspensions: 6	Expulsions: 0
2008-09	Suspensions: 6	Expulsions: 0
2009	Suspensions: 1	Expulsions: 0

### **Students enrolled in Special Education**

WHS has seen an increase in the number of Special Education students it serves.

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
LH	1	1	4
RSP	14	9	28
SED	0	2	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>35</b>

### **E. Significant Developments**

#### **Staff**

In July of 2007 WHS had a teacher take a voluntary .5FTE reduction in her teaching assignment. The .5 FTE reduction was not filled. In July 2008 we lost our .5 FTE teacher who was our primary ESL instructor. The loss of full time contracted staff hurts the school, especially when it comes to the non-student-contact aspect of running a school. Teachers can be hired on a hourly basis to teach students in excess of our staffing capacity and, although our part time staff is exceptional, they work under an arduous burden of having to be familiar with the nuances involved in a complete high school curriculum of 72 semester courses. Without adequate fulltime staffing, the program quality suffers from not having the ability to develop, analyze and refine curriculum along with support materials on an ongoing basis. This can only be accomplished through daily experience with students and regular consultation amongst all staff members.

In addition to teaching staff, we lost a .4 FTE from counseling in 2008. This loss was especially hard on the students and staff in the Adolescent Parenting Program (APP), as the counselor spent much of her time supporting these students and their families.

In 2008 we received a .4 FTE Special Education allocation, which allows us to better serve our students with special needs. In addition to the student's assigned appointment time, our Special Education instructor is available for additional one-on-one or small group support.

In July of 2007, WHS received a new principal for whom the primary focus of responsibility was WHS. Though the staff and students welcomed the change and appreciated the attention and focus a dedicated principal provides, in July 2009 that principal was given the additional responsibility of the Folsom Cordova Adult School. This dual principalship, which was addressed during our last WASC review, is possible with the inclusion of Adult Education in Tier III of categorical flexibility.

#### **New Programs**

Middle School Success (MSS) was created to fill a need for middle school students who are not being successful at their home schools. Launched in Fall 2007, MSS differs from traditional

Independent Study in that students typically come twice a week, 1.5 hours per session, and are taught in a small group setting.

WHS Summer School was started in the summer of 2007 to provide summer school for our students, as well as students throughout the district, who would benefit from an independent study option.

In the 2008-09 school year, WHS received University of California “a-g” approval for our four year ELA program, Algebra, Geometry and Government. This designation helps our students who, upon graduation, are interested in attending a 4-year university.

In 2008 WHS was selected to be the host school for our district wide Independent Living Skills program for 18-22 year old students. This community-based program contributes to the diversity and richness of our school environment.

After a year of planning, the FCUSD has initiated a Medical Independent Study (MIS) program at WHS. Along with the program came a .6 FTE MIS instructor. Though a demand on the WHS staff, especially the counselor, nurse and clerical staff, MIS provides a quality option for our students with medical issues that impact their ability to attend a traditional school.

After much research and evaluation, 2009 finds WHS as one of the district schools piloting the use of on-line curriculum from Apex Learning. This program will allow us to offer courses we previously have not been able to, including upper level math and science. These courses are also an option for our Medical Independent Study students.

In school year 2007-08, WHS became an ASAM (Alternative School Accountability Model) school. ASAM is an accountability protocol designed to assist alternative schools measure and evaluate their effectiveness in three California Department of Education (CDE) approved areas. In our desire to participate in an evaluation process that is relevant to a school our size and with our demographic make up, WHS chose the following three indicators: 1) Student Persistence Rate, 2) Student Credit Completion Rate and 3) 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation Rate.

### **Facilities**

Our Adolescent Parenting Program received a new re-locatable classroom in the Fall of 2008 which allowed us to expand our Child Development Center (CDC). The doubling in size of the CDC enables us to offer a better program to more teen parents and their children. It came none to soon as this year we have experienced an increase in the number of teens and infants participating in the program.

### **Budget**

Like all schools and school districts in the state, WHS has endured cutbacks in all our budgets resulting in fewer options, materials and opportunities for students and staff.

## **F. Student Performance Data**

Given that WHS is a small school with a high transient rate, it is difficult to obtain much meaningful data from standardized tests. The small number of students tested means a small group of students can have a disproportionate impact on test results. The transient population means that many of the students tested are no longer enrolled at our school by the time the data is available to us. These factors oftentimes result in large year to year variations in test results, e.g. 9<sup>th</sup> grade students scoring proficient or advanced ranging from 48% to 15% to 39% over a three year span. Thus, the best we can glean from such testing is general trends. This variability of data was one of the main factors in WHS becoming an ASAM (Alternative School Accountability Model) school.

### **Alternative School Accountability Model (ASAM)**

ASAM is an accountability protocol designed to assist alternative schools measure and evaluate their effectiveness in three California Department of Education (CDE) approved areas. In our desire to participate in an evaluation process that is relevant to a school our size and demographic makeup, in 2007, WHS became an ASAM school and chose the following three indicators: 1) Student Persistence Rate, 2) Student Credit Completion Rate and 3) 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation Rate.

The CDE evaluates schools performance on the agreed upon criteria and awarding it one of the four performance standards: 1) Commendable, 2) Sufficient, 3) Growth Plan and 4) Immediate Action. Our results to date are as follows:

	2007-08	2008-09
Student Persistence Rate	Commendable	Commendable
Student Credit Completion Rate	Sufficient	Sufficient
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation Rate	Commendable	Growth Plan

Our ASAM data indicated a graduation rate of 58.7% in 2008-09. Last year we had 6 students go to the Folsom Cordova Adult School, which is located on the same campus as WHS, and graduate. Without looking for other students who may have gone to their home school to graduate, these 6 students, when factored into the graduation rate, increases it to 71.7%. Though closer to the ASAM threshold of 73% for a designation of sufficient, the WHS staff is dedicated to increasing our graduation rate.

## California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)

Walnutwood High School offers the CAHSEE as prescribed by the state on the established timeline and sequence. Interventions are built into the school year.

### CAHSEE Results for Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) Combined 2009 for All Grades

School	Tested or Passing	Subject	All Students	Special Education Students	English Learner (EL) Students	Redesignated Fluent-English Proficient (RFEP) Students	Socio-economically Disadvantaged	Not socio-economically Disadvantaged
Walnutwood High (Alter.)	# Tested	Math	81	6	12	4	32	40
Walnutwood High (Alter.)	Passing	Math	39 (48%)	n/a	2 (17%)	n/a	16 (50%)	18 (45%)
Walnutwood High (Alter.)	# Tested	ELA	74	8	14	3	30	33
Walnutwood High (Alter.)	Passing	ELA	47 (64%)	n/a	4 (29%)	n/a	16 (53%)	25 (76%)

To protect privacy, "n/a" appears in place of test scores wherever those scores are based on 10 or fewer students.

### CAHSEE Results for Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) Combined 2009 for Grade 10

School	Tested or Passing	Subject	All Students	Special Education Students	English Learner (EL) Students	Redesignated Fluent-English Proficient (RFEP) Students	Socio-economically Disadvantaged	Not socio-economically Disadvantaged
Walnutwood High (Alter.)	# Tested	Math	29	1	1	3	11	15
Walnutwood High (Alter.)	Passing	Math	23 (79%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	7 (64%)	13 (87%)
Walnutwood High (Alter.)	# Tested	ELA	30	1	1	3	12	15
Walnutwood High (Alter.)	Passing	ELA	27 (90%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	9 (75%)	15 (100%)

### CAHSEE Results 2008

2008		All Grades	10th
Math	Tested	58	25
Math	Passed	29 (50%)	16 (64%)
ELA	Tested	52	25
ELA	Passed	35 (67%)	22 (88%)

### CAHSEE Results 2007

2007		All Grades	10th
Math	Tested	95	38
Math	Passed	44 (46%)	30 (79%)
ELA	Tested	76	35
ELA	Passed	38 (50%)	27 (77%)

While reviewing the data, two main results jump out. The first is the difference in the pass rate between Math and ELA. We have a three year average of 48% pass for Math while ELA enjoys a pass rate of 60.3%, a difference of 12.3%.

The other outstanding result is among 10<sup>th</sup> graders whose three year pass rate is 63.7% for Math and 85% for ELA, a 21.3% difference. The 10<sup>th</sup> graders mirror the trend of greater pass rate for ELA as well as a higher pass rate than the All Grades results, Math 85% vs. 48% and ELA 85% vs. 60%.

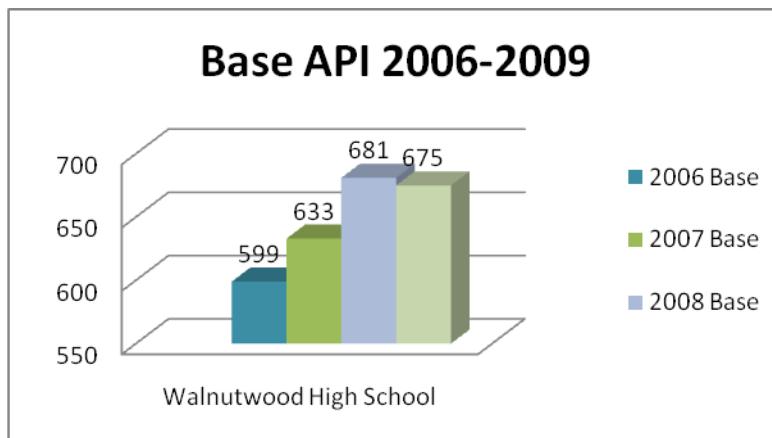
Consistent with the community profile data, many of our students, over 80%, taking the CAHSEE are classified as socio-economically disadvantaged.

### **Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**

Since our last WASC review, WHS has met all six of the AYP criteria: Participation Rate for ELA and Math, Percent Proficient for ELA and Math, Academic Performance Index and Graduation Rate. WHS is not, nor has it been, in program improvement.

### **Academic Performance Index (API)**

Though our 2009 score of 675 indicated a 6 point drop from the previous year, it also represents a 76 point, or 12%, increase over the past four years.



### **California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR)**

Since all students take a grade level English Language Arts (ELA) test, it affords us the best data to examine. The most striking trend that emerges is the percent of students scoring basic or below and the fact that the percentages increase by grade level. Of our 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, over the past three years, 66% have a score of basic or below. This percentage is the same if you go back five years. Our 10<sup>th</sup> grade students have a 3-year average of 69% at basic or below, a decrease from the 5-year average of 71%. Our 12<sup>th</sup> graders recent average of student scoring basic or below is 72%, a 4 point decrease from the 5-year average of 76%. The bad news is the number of students scoring basic or below; the good news is in the case of the 9<sup>th</sup> graders it is not getting worse, and is in fact getting better for our 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders.

Another grade level test that we look at is US History where we have a 3 year average of 81% of our students scoring basic or below, a 2 point decrease from a 5-year average of 83%. What is

lost in this simple analysis is the 3-year increase of students scoring proficient or advanced going from 9%, to 17% to 32%, a 23% increase.

Given our school’s demographics and the small number of students tested, there were no significant subgroups.

**G. Ongoing Improvement**

**Implementing and Monitoring of the School-Wide Action Plan**

Walnutwood High School continues to work with the revised Action Plan and Critical Area of Follow-up that came out of the March 2007 WASC visitation. To better focus our work and allocate resources, we aligned our six Areas of Improvement found in the Action Plan with the WASC’s committee’s four Critical Areas of Follow-up as follows:

<b>WASC Critical Areas of Follow-up</b>	<b>Walnutwood’s Action Plan Areas of Improvement</b>
1. Establish a Benchmark Diagnostic process...to establish academic growth	6. Benchmarks in all academic areas.
2. Continue to develop and advertise college/career pathways	1. Improvement of School to Career
3. Increase focus on Security Infrastructure to decrease vandalism and increase safety...	3. School Safety and Cleanliness
4. Increasing curricular alignment with state and district standards.	2. Continue to seek ways to improve student performance in Math/standardized tests. 4. Provide Rigorous, Relevant, Coherent Standards Based Curriculum. 5. To improve student competency and success in English/language Arts.

How we can improve as an institution of learning, how to best implement the action plan, has been a constant in all our staff and curriculum meetings. In addition to these frequent conversations, we have formally looked at these issues annually with input from stakeholders, and submitted for district/board review as part of our annual SLIP and School Safety Plan process.

Throughout the process, staff has been engaged in the midyear review and many assisted in the writing of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Action Plan. A draft of this report was shared at a site council meeting in February 2010 to obtain final comments and concerns.



## **II. Schoolwide Action Plan Progress**

### **A. Critical Areas of Follow-up.**

#### ***1. Establish a Benchmark diagnostic process that will establish a baseline academic skillset, provide ongoing benchmark assessments and include an exit diagnostic to establish academic growth.***

When we were considering becoming an ASAM school, one of the perceived benefits was the utilization of a California Department of Education (CDE) approved diagnostic protocol that would inform us of individual students' strengths and weaknesses, as well as where school wide interventions would be appropriate. ASAM has nine approved tests that range from paper/pencil to computer based, taking anywhere from 15 minutes to 1.5 hours to complete. Discussions with the CDE consultant revealed that the ASAM process was under review and the fate of the testing indicator was not known. Given the lack of certainty, we were reluctant to invest the resources, mainly time and money, necessary to research, pilot and adopt a testing protocol not knowing how long it would be a valid ASAM indicator.

This year WHS has access to Renaissance Learning's STAR Reading assessment which we plan on piloting in the Spring. Given the financial situation of the district and state funding, it is unknown if we can find the necessary resources to implement such a program in the future.

As a staff we have agreed that the key benchmark for our school will be passing CAHSEE and graduation. Success in these two areas will be the focus of our school wide interventions and support. Multiple individualized assessments will continue to be utilized for each student and each subject with modifications and remediation provided as needed.

We currently use a paper/pencil reading assessment as part of our orientation process and utilize publisher provided pre-tests for Algebra Readiness and Algebra to determine student placement.

#### ***2. Continue to develop and advertise college/career pathways.***

Over the last two years Walnutwood High School has worked to form a stronger relationship with Folsom Lake College (FLC) and the Los Rios Community College District. Students in Rancho Cordova can access admissions counselors, financial aid counselors, placement testing, and some college courses at the Rancho Cordova Center of Folsom Lake College. Students from Folsom can access these same services on the Folsom Lake Campus. Our school counselor meets with ISP students and connects them directly with an Outreach Specialist at either location. This person can then give one-on-one guidance to students seeking admission to FLC.

Students in the Adolescent Parent Program have timely classroom visits twice a school year from FLC Outreach Specialists who give a general presentation to students in 9 – 12<sup>th</sup> grade to begin to acquaint them with the college admission process, college options, and the financial aid

process. These specialists then meet directly with graduating seniors and walk them through the admissions, financial aid, testing, and registration processes one-on-one. The students benefit from this direct assistance, as well as from having a contact who knows them by name.

Along with the admissions Outreach Specialists, APP students have had presentations each semester from representatives of EOPS (Extended Opportunity Programs and Services) and from FLC CalWorks. These programs are designed to help students who are receiving cash aid, or who come from families where they are the first to attend college, among other criteria. The students from APP all qualify for support from EOPS because they are teen parents, and many of them also qualify for support from CalWorks. Again these students benefit from having a direct contact whom they have already met before going to the offices to complete the applications..

Students at Walnutwood also have access to Advanced Education admissions at the Los Rios Community College District. This provides an opportunity for high school students to simultaneously earn college and high school credits free of charge. This opportunity is presented to students and parents during orientation to Walnutwood, and is reinforced in the Walnutwood Student Handbook.

Ever widening arrays of scholarships (both school based and outside organization based) are available to students at Walnutwood High School. ISP students are directed to these opportunities by the school counselor as well as by their individual teachers. APP seniors visit scholarship sites and select and fill out applications for a variety of scholarships as a part of an ongoing college and career curriculum. (Last spring students received scholarships from Planned Parenthood and etc.etc....)

Last spring, students at Walnutwood benefited from a partnership between the Folsom Cordova Community Partnership and SETA (Sacramento Employment and Training Agency). These organizations received Stimulus/Recovery Act funding to hire young people for summer jobs. Representatives from SETA and the Community Partnership met with students in the classroom and helped them to fill out applications, provided support and transportation, and referrals to interviews. Five students from Walnutwood received jobs last summer via this process. These organizations will be facilitating this again this coming summer, pending funding.

### ***3. Increase focus on security infrastructure to decrease vandalism and increase safety after hours and increase positive community presence.***

WHS hosts and participates in regular neighborhood meetings with the goal of closer cooperation and increased neighborhood security. These monthly meetings began as a response to neighbors wanting to know what plans the District may have for the CEC campus, and have evolved into the creation of a Walnutwood Neighborhood Watch. As part of the community effort, the principal meets regularly with Walnutwood Neighborhood Watch, often holding the meeting at school.

After much community input, we have completed a two year process to close two access points at the rear of our campus. This closure reduces/eliminates foot traffic on campus from people

who have no school related business which makes the campus all the more secure during the school day. On weekends and evenings, much to the delight of our neighbors, the closure reduces the attractiveness of the area for illegal activities, e.g. loitering, drugs and graffiti.

To communicate with our parents and community, we utilize Connect Ed, a program that will call designated homes with a recorded message. In addition, we refer folks to our District's award winning web page.

Three years ago the district installed two surveillance cameras to serve as a deterrent to illegal activities such as vandalism. The bad news is that last year one of the cameras was stolen. The good news is the theft was the single most expensive hit the campus took over the last three years.

Approximately four years ago, gates were installed in the front of campus. When locked, these gates keep all vehicle traffic off the main campus. Coupled with the gates, secure parking has been provided for district vehicles stored on campus. Since the installation of the gates and secure parking, cars are no longer being abandoned and/or burned on the campus.

As a deterrent to vandalism and theft, metal cages have been installed around the HVAC units on all relocatable classrooms.

The District provides security patrols for Rancho schools at times of high incidents, e.g. the start of the school year.

New energy efficient, long lasting exterior light fixtures have been installed in overhangs of buildings A, B and C. Staff who work late have commented how much they appreciate the lighting from a safety and security perspective. Neighbors have told the principal that the new lighting makes it easier for them to keep an eye on the campus and see if anything suspicious is going on.

#### ***4. Increasing curricular alignment with state and district standards.***

Since our last WASC review, WHS has applied for and received UC "a-g" acceptance of our core English, Algebra I, Geometry and Government courses. We did apply for all the social science courses as well, but did not obtain approval.

WHS has continued to comply with the Williams Act and is using FCUSD Board approved texts. In order to continue to serve our diverse student population (ELL and below grade level reading), we have also obtained supplemental materials as a component of our Response to Instruction strategies. This is primarily composed of adapted reading material to help with comprehension of course content.

To assist in keeping us aligned to and current with and current with district curriculum and state standards, WHS has representation on the Districts' Secondary Curriculum Advisory Committee.

We also are an active participant in the district's new textbook adoption process; most recently for Algebra and Algebra Readiness.

To increase our elective options for students we have created a new ten credit course, Ecology, which was reviewed and approved by the district Curriculum Advisory Committee. Additionally, we have continued to adapt district elective courses to our independent study model so as to support student progress and achievement. Examples may be found with the new texts and materials for Math Reasoning, Foods, Interior Design, Art, Geography, Child Development, Short Stories and Computer Applications. This past year we received a Donor's Choice and a state VAPA grant to purchase materials to support standards based art curriculum.

Walnutwood has also taken the lead in exploring the use of online learning approaches for the District. Our principal was tasked by the superintendent to investigate the various vendors and issues involving online learning throughout the district. We are currently piloting the use of the APEX learning system for our APP students and possibly expanding its use to independent study students as well as for use by long term Home and Hospital students.

WHS teachers strive to provide support for all our students who are struggling with the rigors of independent study, or who may just need explanation, direction, or feedback on a particular assignment. Out of this desire to meet our students' needs we established, and continue to refine our tutorial program.

In 2006/2007, we provided six hours of after-school tutoring. The tutoring was predominately for math students who needed extra support in algebra, and for seniors who were preparing for their senior project, a graduation requirement.

In 2007/2008, we provided three hours of after-school tutoring for math students who needed extra support in algebra. During the school day ninety minutes of tutoring was available for seniors who were preparing for their senior project, a graduation requirement

In 2008/2009 school year we implemented a mandatory tutorial program for specific students. Students were required to fulfill two hours a week of tutorial time. Tutorial time was available eight hours a week, Monday – Thursday.

Student participation in the tutorial program was open to all and was mandatory for students if:

- They are credit deficient;
- They have been classified as a habitual truant student within the past two academic years;
- They scored "Below Basic" on the California STAR test or scored more than two grade levels below their current grade level on a school administered assessment test.

At the end of the school year the staff decided not to continue with the mandatory tutorial as we were spending a disproportionate amount of our time policing student attendance. The senior project tutoring was also discontinued, as the project is no longer a district graduation requirement.

This year, 2009/2010, we decided to implement tutoring in the area of math, both classroom math and CAHSEE preparation. The tutoring is for 45 minutes a day, M-TH. Also we provide

tutoring for the language arts section of the CAHSEE for ninety minutes on Wednesday mornings. A workshop on study skills is also offered to our students. This year we have available Holt on-line video tutoring in algebra and algebra readiness and PowerPoint support for World Cultures and US History. Students are able to access the website from school or home. Homework support from the textbook publishers is also offered on-line for language arts and social studies.

Another way for students to improve their academic skills and improve their performance on standardized testing is to participate in WHS summer school. WHS summer school was first introduced in 2007 as an additional means of remediation for our students.

## **B. Next Steps**

The WASC midterm review has been a positive experience for our school. It reminded us of the diverse socio-economic, ethnic and academic backgrounds of students. It validated anecdotal information and observations with data, e.g., it seems like we have more Special Education students and the data shows our population has more than doubled over the last three years. Our significant developments remind us that we have not been sitting passively by the last three years, that we have actively been changing and adapting new ways to better meet the needs of all our students. Our analysis and subsequent discussions have provided us with clear direction for the future.

Our 2007 Action Plan contains six (6) areas of improvement. We will continue to maintain our efforts in school safety and cleanliness, as well as developing and strengthening our relationship with our neighbors. For our five (5) curricular areas of improvement and their 25 sub goals, we propose streamlining to a continuum of strategies for our students as follows:  
Orientation → CAHSEE → Graduation → Post High School Transition.

We have found that many of our students do not know what it takes to be an independent study student. Our orientation class will set students up for success from day one. It will among other things, introduce them to the different aspects of independent study, educate them on the many resources that are available to them, how to access those resources and what it means to be making academic progress towards promotion or graduation.

With CAHSEE being the definitive high school benchmark test as well as a condition of graduation, we will put a renewed focus on students passing it. This will include reevaluating our current CAHSEE support and tutorial efforts.

The ultimate academic goal for our students is to complete their education with a high school diploma which is, after all, the capstone of our K-12 educational system. A serious and sincere focus on graduation has a positive trickledown effect which impacts all our curricular efforts regardless of a student's grade or current academic success.

The message we strive to impart to Walnutwood students is yes, we want you to complete your education and get a diploma, but we also want you to be ready to take your first post K-12 steps

and not fall on your face. Thus, it is incumbent on us to prepare our students for what comes after they leave us.

We present these four strategies as part of a continuum as they are interrelated with a common goal of student success. If we are effective in our orientation, more students will be successful in their class. If students are successful in class work, the number who pass CAHSEE and ultimately the number who graduate will also increase.