

SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

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

**CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FOR**

Northwest Charter Prep

2590 Piner Rd, Santa Rosa

Piner Olivet School District

Visiting Committee Members

Jayna Gaskell, Executive Director, Pivot Charter Schools

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Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

Briefly summarize the most critical information from the student/community profile that impacts the school. Include the following:

Northwest Prep Charter is a Project Based Learning Charter in the Piner-Olivet Union School District in Santa Rosa, California. It services 75 students in grades 7-12. It has a staff of 4 teachers that focus on project based learning and inquiry based instruction that immerse students in critical thinking and deeper level thinking. The school is designed with blended grade levels such that students work together regardless of grade assignment. Northwest Prep's students, staff, and parents are active participants in a truly collective endeavor focused on instilling in students a desire to develop successful habits of mind, and an appreciation for the importance of continuing education. Northwest Prep works hard to develop strong positive relationships and a culture of appreciation, trust, and respect within the entire school community. Students produce weekly whole-school Community Meetings where they communicate important information, showcase student talents and accomplishments (music, poetry, athletics, etc.), and address issues they feel are important in town hall style forums. Though Northwest Prep is a small educational enclave, students and staff work to regularly find opportunities for students to interact with other students, and successful adults, in the community and beyond. Northwest Prep encourages and accommodates students in taking classes at nearby Santa Rosa Junior College.

As part of the Crossroads college and career exploration, students interact with experts in the fields that they are exploring, and with professional mentors with whom they are communicating, job shadowing, or interning with. Students are also required to communicate through email or video-conferencing with students from other states and countries in order to gain diverse perspectives on project topics and issues. Northwest Prep's Crossroads program guides students through a multi-year college and career exploration, job shadows, and professional internships. All students are taught professional public speaking and communication skills on an ongoing basis. Grades 7 and 8 focus on exploring their interests, abilities, and talents. Grades 9 and 10 focus on exploration of the vast range of careers and different types of colleges and training programs that prepare students for them. Grades 11 and 12 learn how to identify and secure professional internships and develop a plan to actively contribute in their placement. The school's goal is to actively link students to all levels and fields of the professional workplace. It provides students with the opportunity to apply the many practical benefits from their Project Based Learning experience and learning of the Leadership Skills, to provide a service to their mentor and their organization, and to further develop their professional and academic skills. This guides their ability to make informed choices for life after high school.

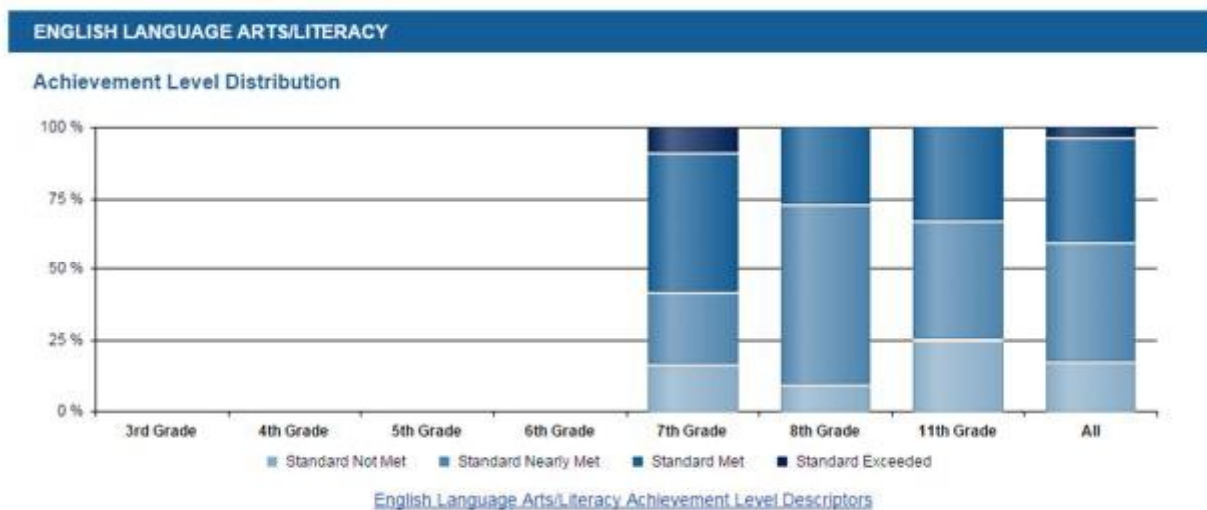
Northwest Prep Leadership Skills are the foundation and backbone of the Northwest Prep program. The end goal for all of its students is not just high test scores and high GPA's. When students leave the school for postsecondary experiences they are pursuing, the Leadership Skills represent what the school wants each student to actually know and be able to do. If graduates are truly proficient in these skills, they will

be successful no matter what direction they choose.

Overall student achievement results from the CAASPP Test Scores for 2015 cannot be compared to previous year's tests as these test scores reflect the first full year of implementation of the online Smarter Balanced test aligned to new California standards, which set new baseline scores.

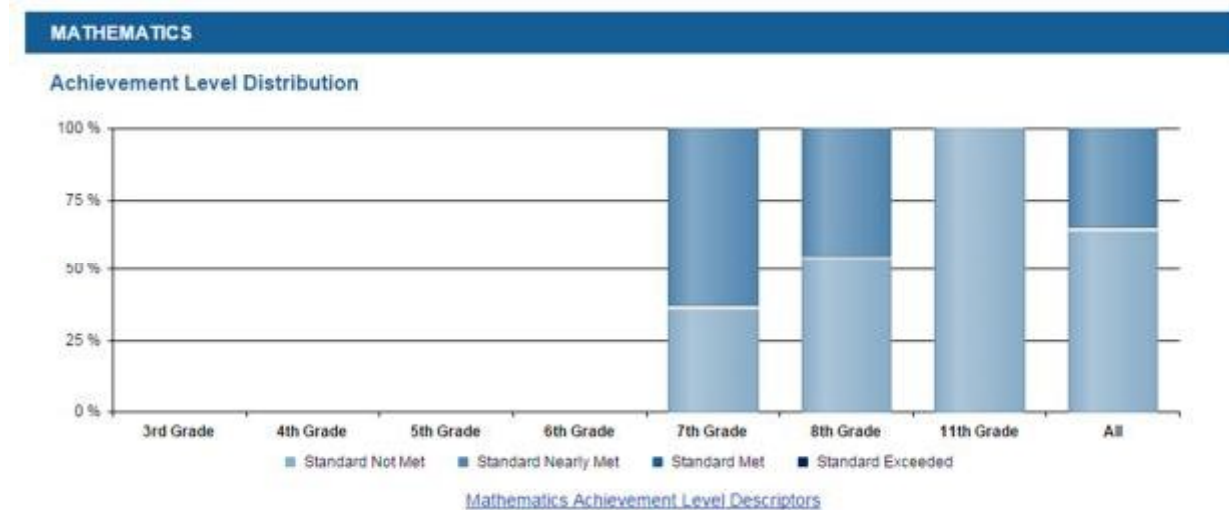
California's educational system is still transitioning to rigorous new learning standards that require students to develop critical thinking skills needed for college and careers. This year's CAASPP ELA/Literacy and Math tests were administered to Northwest Prep's 7, 8th and 11th grade students. The results from the March 2015 testing showed that of the 55 students in the 3 grade levels, 49 tested. The EL test results were not available and are therefore not included in the overall test results for the school.

Northwest Prep's ELA/Literacy results compared to California State results are as follows:



In 7th grade the state had 44% of students meet or exceed the literacy standards, while NWP had 54% of 7th graders meet or exceed the standards. In 8th grade, 45% of students met the standards statewide compared with 27% of 8th grade students at NWP. In 11th grade, 56% of students statewide met or exceeded the standards in comparison to 33% of NWP students. In total, 39% of NWP students met or exceeded the state's literacy standards according to CAASPP testing in comparison with 44% statewide.

The CAASP Math test results for Northwest Prep compared to California State results are as follows:



In 7th grade the state had 34% of students meet or exceed the math standards, while NWP had 0% of 7th graders meet or exceed the standards. In 8th grade, 33% of students met the standards statewide compared with 0% of 8th grade students at NWP. In 11th grade, 29% of students statewide met or exceeded the standards in comparison to 0% of NWP students. In total, 0% of NWP students met or exceeded the state's math standards according to CAASPP testing in comparison with 33% statewide.

Additionally, The CST Science results for 8th grade show: 9% proficient, 27% basic, 37% below basic, 27% far below basic, and the 10th grade results show: 31% proficient, 38% basic, 23% below basic, and 8% far below basic.

Overall, the data from the CAASPP test provides a critical starting point for ongoing analysis, inquiry and improvement of Northwest Prep's educational process. Examining these baseline results gives the school insight into what areas they need to pinpoint for improvement including improving achievement in mathematics for all students, grade levels, and sub groups. CAASPP scores are just one indicator of achievement in mathematics. To improve achievement in mathematics, Northwest Prep has employed an Integrated Math Program that often factors into the school wide projects, and the daily structure of the math classroom is based on the principles of Project Based Learning. Through mini projects and unit problems students learn math as a connected set of principles and concepts, helping them to build more knowledge, instead of simple fact gathering, as the year goes by. Through group work and open ended problems students learn to think like mathematicians; applying problem solving techniques to complex tasks. All sub groups of students can benefit from this type of math instruction. Group work helps mitigate language barriers, while open ended and multi-level problems allow students of different abilities to approach problems with varying degrees of depth.

Measuring student achievement in a program like Northwest Prep's will be more complex than a simple multiple-choice test. Just assessing students' ability to apply problem solving techniques, for example, requires a well written mini project, a knowledgeable assessor, and a significant amount of time. While Common Core standards and testing practices seem promising, the school does not rely on them solely. In addition to standardized test results, they will be relying on teachers to assess student achievement using multiple measures. Teachers are using the framework of their developing graduation portfolio to build their assessments. Most recently, the Northwest Prep's staff mapped all performance assessments to the expected outcomes of a Northwest Prep graduate (NWP's Leadership Skills) while also integrating Common Core State Standards into their instruction. Students archive and showcase their work in digital portfolios to provide additional evidence of overall academic progress. With the planned addition of a 40% Math teacher next school year and continued high standards for student learning, the staff are working to improve overall learning and increased competency in the critical thinking skills needed for college and career.

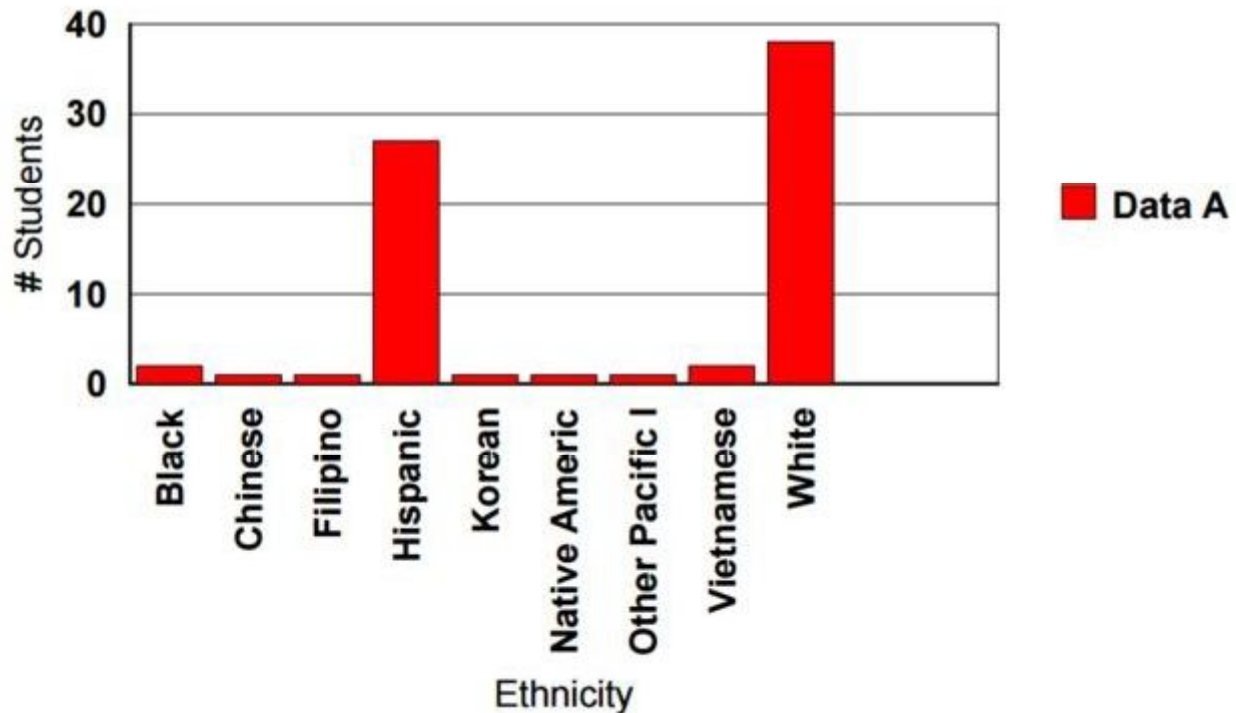
It can be said that of the seniors enrolled at Northwest Prep over the past three years there were no dropouts, but some students did transfer to other schools or different programs. The same applies for graduation. All seniors enrolled did graduate. The number of students who have historically remained enrolled from grade 9 through 12 is very low but the numbers who stay are increasing. Of the 10th and 11th grade classes last year, 100% of the students remained at the school. The challenge has been in retaining students who enroll in middle school and leave to attend 9th grade at other high schools. This year's 9th grade however includes 9 new students to the school, or 50% of the 9th grade class. Over the past 6 years attendance rate has consistently improved from lows of 90% in 2010-2013 to 94.45% in 2013-14, 93.82% 2014-2015, and currently at 95.71 %. Northwest Prep continues to work on student and parent accountability to ensure positive attendance rates. The Director immediately checks in with students who are starting to show signs of attendance issues and contacts parents to inform them of the importance of their student's attendance for school success.

The staff is comprised of:

- One 60% Director/40% Counselor and Teacher
- Three full-time Teachers (1 Social Studies, 1 English, and 1 Science)
- One 60% teacher (Math)
- One full-time Office Manager
- One 20% RSP teacher (district)
- Ethnicity of the staff is white
- All teaching staff are fully credentialed in the core academic subjects they teach and are also CLAD or SDAIE certificated.

See the following table for current student enrollment and ethnicity data:

Northwest Prep Ethnicity - March 1, 2016



Northwest Prep Charter School is a small, personalized, rigorous learning community where students are deeply engaged in, and thoughtful about, their learning. Teachers know students well and guide them towards expected outcomes by teaching them to ask good questions, and identify and solve meaningful problems. All students participate in a standards-based, academically rigorous Workplace Learning Program that allows them to interact with successful adults, apply their talents to real world challenges, and exhibit their skills and problem-solving abilities. Northwest Prep features standards-based, project and problem-based instruction, integrated curriculum, advanced technology, visual and performing arts, and performance-based assessments.

Prior to graduation all Northwest Prep students are expected to: master the Northwest Prep Academic Performance Outcomes, practice and refine the Northwest Prep Leadership Skills (ESLRs), pass their Graduation Portfolio defense, meet UC/CSU requirements for admission and be well-prepared for college.

The Northwest Prep Leadership Skills have been adopted as the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs). Students are evaluated each semester on their growth in each of the Leadership Skills. In order to graduate from Northwest Prep, students must demonstrate evidence of proficiency, and receive an assessment of “capable” or “excellent” on all Leadership Skills in their Graduation Portfolio.

Northwest Prep Academic Performance Outcomes

- Read critically and write persuasively in the English language ☐
- Recognize and describe relationships and patterns mathematically to solve concrete and abstract problems ☐
- Apply scientific concepts and skills to solve problems, and use critical thinking skills to interpret scientific data ☐
- Demonstrate an understanding of historical, political, social, and economic issues from multiple perspectives ☐
- Use digital technologies appropriately as tools to enhance the achievement of academic and aesthetic goals and interpret, experience, create, and present original ideas and products

Chapter II: Progress Report

A. Comment on the school's major changes and follow up process

Attention to meaningful analysis, evaluation, and revision of school plans, intervention strategies, and overall student and school progress are now being implemented at NWP. Teachers meet quarterly with students and parents for an in depth personal conference and analysis of student work. Narrative evaluations, which began in the 2014-15 school year, provide an assessment at the end of each semester. These narratives along with a traditional GPA provide students, parents and staff with a broad range of approaches to measure academic and personal growth. Both students and teachers routinely examine progress and proficiency using systematic inquiry and reflection. Students now employ personal web portals to compile and share digital portfolios, collaborate with peers on project benchmarks, post blogs, video conference, archive work, and post work for peer and teacher evaluation. All students participate in culminating Academic Exhibitions where members of the entire school community evaluate them. Finally, starting this year, prior to graduation each student must formally present and defend a multimedia portfolio of work and experiences that demonstrates evidence that they have achieved proficiency in Northwest Prep's Leadership Skills.

Additionally, over the past three years NWP's staff has changed dramatically, with just 4 teachers remaining from the original 8 just 3 years ago. One of those teachers who was a teacher/counselor became Director of the school in March of 2015, after the former director, who lead NWP through the school's PBL reinvention, retired last year. The new Director had been at Northwest Prep for almost 10 years serving as the School Counselor and Teacher and brings 30 years of experience in education, counseling and advocacy to the school.

Significant Developments since June 2013:

- Returning staff members work as a cohesive team planning an integrated curriculum for project work.
- Four staff members either resigned or retired.
- Northwest Prep's website is a central informational resource. ☐
- Graduation Portfolio defense was established and implemented for the 2015-16 school year.
- Spotlight Blocks emphasizing standards- based subject specific learning were

- implemented in the 2015-16. □
- NWP Leadership Skills are an integral part of the school's true ESLR's and as the foundation for its Project-Based program. □
 - Each morning 8-9 am is designated and is now being utilized as an informal study hall and multi- use hour for staff and students. □
 - Collaborative staff planning meetings two days each week continue.
 - Grade levels were blended in 7/8, 9/10, and 11/12 configurations.
 - Project groups have begun to integrate grades 7-12. □
 - Crossroads program for career and college exploration was implemented to include professional internships for all 11/12th grade students and job shadow opportunities for 9/10th grade students.
 - Bi Weekly whole school Community Meetings continue and evolve to include Career presentations by community members and parents.
 - NWP Leadership Team formed consisting of representation from administrative, classified, and certificated staff, students, and parents. □
 - Process for UC course approval was re-initiated with the goal of having 2 new courses approved each year. □
 - Chromebooks and newly purchased iPads are in regular use and checked out by each teacher for use where needed each day. □
 - Individual assignments were replaced by group project benchmarks. □
 - Semester-long integrated projects were replaced by varied length projects determined by the teachers, some 2 months long, others longer. □
 - Assignment grades were mostly replaced by benchmark sign-offs. □
 - Demonstration mostly replaces test-taking. □
 - Schoolwide assessment rubrics were adopted. □
 - Final exams were replaced by Academic Exhibitions presented to the entire school community.
 - Performance on project benchmarks and Academic exhibitions became the assessment focus and true gauge of student progress, growth and success. □
 - Formative assessments using grades were de-emphasized in favor of conversation and narrative.
 - New Electives were formed including Wood Shop, Coding, Mandarin, Seed to Table, Drama and Independent Study where students design their own elective course. □
 - All students utilize Web 2.0 technologies to produce and manage almost all work digitally. □
 - A school emergency plan has been developed and implemented including revised evacuation maps in all rooms. □
 - Regular Shadow Days and Informational opportunities were implemented for prospective students and parents. □
 - Leadership Team has identified the need to continue laying out a plan to guide the new direction and development of Northwest Prep over the next three to five years. □

NWP reports that so far this year the overall impact of these changes has been overwhelmingly positive for the majority of stakeholders in the Northwest Prep school community. Students now comment on their appreciation of the high level of curriculum

and instruction being delivered this year, and students are especially happy with the new Spotlight Blocks where they feel like there is more discipline-specific structure that aids them in the completion of their various projects. They also appreciate the opportunity to work in teams, have voice and choice in their work, and develop (Leadership) skills that they can see practical applications for in their daily lives. □The teachers comment on the empowerment they feel being allowed to collaboratively create and deliver high level, cross-curricular instruction, and to assess student work and progress in an authentic and meaningful manner. As a result, there is a new academic ethic emerging at Northwest Prep and the student body has been totally willing to negotiate the new path that they and the staff are creating. Though Northwest Prep has seen the transfer of several students out of the school last year, NWP has also enrolled several new students as well (more now than the □number as have left) and most of these can be attributed to the changes in the program as well as the change in reputation of the school over time.

B. Discuss how the school through its action plan has incorporated each of the critical areas for follow up, including the impact on student learning

1. The first Critical Area identified by the visiting committee in 2013 was to develop a school wide action plan to guide the implementation of their dramatic changes and monitor the progress of their strategies for student improvement. The new Director and staff are very cognizant of this critical need. Monitoring overall progress within this non-traditional educational model requires appropriate gauges and metrics that are effective for the task. As stated in their Report, “Though the newly revised NWP Charter can serve as a basic school plan in the short term our intent over the next year is to create a new school plan, using the charter as a roadmap, and using new performance assessments and Digital Portfolios as the measures of student's achievement and growth. This plan will serve to guide the future development of this school and provide a tool that both measures our progress and holds us accountable for attaining our objectives.” In response to this Critical Area, NWP updated their School Improvement Plan in 2011, 2012, and most recently in 2015, approved by both the advisory council and the governing board in those years. While the advisory council has the opportunity to review the SIP yearly, approved updates are not always initiated.

In addition, the committee, based on interviews with students and parents, recommended that the school explore adding: 1) additional elective classes to enrich and diversify the curriculum; 2) a daily physical education class, especially for middle school students; and 3) additional social and sports opportunities for students. In response to number 1, several new elective classes were added in the 2015-16 school year including Coding, Mandarin, Wood Shop, Seed to Table and Independent Study. In response to number 2, all students are now involved in a daily 30 minute Move It class, providing physical fitness in the form of a variety of sports and activities including but not limited to volleyball, softball, soccer, basketball, walking, four square and a variety of field games. In response to number 3, as parental involvement increases, NWP is seeing more interest in sponsoring and helping with student dances and field trips. NWP continues to tap into the students' use of their leadership skills and asking them to take the lead in planning social and sports opportunities for the student body. Finally, in

response to number 4, the process for UC course approval was re-initiated with the goal of having 2 new courses approved each year. NWP's self-study acknowledges the need to seek approval for their Integrated Math Program Courses, which are currently a part of NWP's planned curriculum and graduation requirements but are not yet on their UC approved course list. The stakeholders also acknowledge the need to provide and subsequently seek UC approvals for foreign language courses. Currently, NWP has two social studies courses, four English courses, and three math courses, and one science course a-g approved. While none of these items were specifically addressed by the school's initial action plan or SIP, NWP continues to work on all of these areas.

2. The second Critical Area focuses on English Language Learners (closing the achievement gap between ELL students and English only students and improving the number of redesignated students). As stated in NWP's self-study, one of the most powerful tools to break down language barriers in the classroom is groupwork. NWP believes that groupwork helps mitigate language barriers through consistent interaction with peers and teachers. The necessity of developing effective communication, comprehension, and literacy skills is a fundamental goal of PBL, which is at the center of their SIP's first goal. Teaching students how to interpret, synthesize, and communicate information and ideas in many different formats and modalities lies at the core of PBL methodologies. Project-Based Learning is implemented on the premise that all students have (to some degree) a need to develop their ability to: Interact and collaborate; Clearly articulate information and ideas; Speak publicly; Comprehend text; Communicate with text; Develop media literacy; Employ various media as effective communication tools. The belief is that ELL students at Northwest Prep will become more effective communicators by grappling with text from many sources and across the curriculum, by engaging in ongoing and consistent conversation with peers, project groups, staff, mentors, and students from other schools, by practicing and mastering public speaking strategies, and by developing proficiency with a wide array of digital communication tools. Project-Based Learning affords all students, including ELL students more diverse and empowering opportunities to read, speak, and listen, than traditional instruction and learning environments. The NWP staff is completely confident that their SIP's focus on developing an integrated and sequenced six-year project based curriculum will result in greater and faster redesignation of ELL students. Furthermore, the school's director reports that all teachers use ELD and SDAIE instructional strategies in their classrooms and that, this year, teachers specifically reviewed all CELDT results and brainstormed specific strategies to further students' English language acquisition. Their report notes that they have had a reduction in ELL students over the past three years, falling from 25% to 13% today. Additionally, in January of 2016, 50% of the NWP's ELL students were Reclassified from English Learner to Fluent English Proficient based on an overall score of Advanced or Early Advanced on the CELDT, teacher recommendations, other state testing where applicable, and parent approval.

3. The third Area of Critical Need regards truancy and attendance rates, specifically the need to improve attendance and reduce truancy to improve student achievement and improve the level of student engagement and involvement in the school. As with the

above Critical Area, while attendance is not directly addressed in the school's SIP, NWP believes that by implementing an integrated and sequenced project based curriculum, attendance will improve as a natural result. As explained in their report, over time the implementation of group oriented PBL requires greater buy-in and consistent participation of the students in the program. Each long-term project raises the level of expectation not only academically, but socially as well. In traditional school programs individual student's participation and performance may have little or no effect on their peer's status. At Northwest Prep individual student's participation and performance has a direct effect on the student's group's ability to accomplish its goals and complete projects successfully. Thus, there can be a tremendous amount of peer pressure on students to be present and step up with their best effort each day. Students who are not present and who do not fully participate are increasingly marginalized (which we have been observing over the course of this year). Northwest Prep students regard for their peers is evolving away from traditional norms and definitions of popularity towards recognition and appreciation of academic discipline, creativity, and overall integrity. The notion that one can be absent frequently and just catch up on individual assignments then naturally disappears. NWP reports that those students who continue to be unconcerned about their own, or their group's progress and success then have to seriously consider whether Northwest Prep is the right school for them, and that the increasing pressure from staff and peers to "get on board" becomes a growing burden on reluctant participants. Those students who habitually and consistently choose to not buy-in to the program, be on time and present, and choose not to take advantage of the many supports available to them, including RSP, early morning Study Hall, and one on one support available from teachers before classes, at lunch, and after school, eventually enroll in other schools. The Northwest Prep school community is just now experiencing the beginning of this trend and its student body is developing a newfound regard for its most conscientious, academically oriented, and creative students. It is believed that this, combined with public Academic Exhibitions, and positive word of mouth from students and parents, will bring in more invested and motivated students over time, and dramatically improve attendance, truancy and enrollment rates. There is evidence to suggest that their philosophy and approach are working, as NWP's report notes that attendance rates have consistently improved over the past six years, rising from 90% in 2010-13 to 95.71% today. Additionally, NWP reports that they have seen an improvement in student retention/enrollment. Of NWP's 10th and 11th grade classes last year, 100% of their students returned, and, rather than seeing a decrease from 8th grade to 9th grade enrollment as has been historically typical, NWP enrolled 9 new freshmen this year.

Chapter III: Self-Study Process (1 page)

Northwest Prep Leadership Skills

The Northwest Prep Leadership Skills have been adopted as the Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLRs). Students are evaluated each semester on their growth in each of the Leadership Skills. In order to graduate from NWP, students must demonstrate evidence of proficiency, and receive an assessment of "capable" or "excellent" on all Leadership Skills in their Graduation Portfolio.

NWP Leadership Skills are the foundation and backbone of the Northwest Prep program. The end goal for all of our students is not just high test scores and high GPA's. When students leave our school for post-secondary experiences they are pursuing, the Leadership Skills represent what we want each student to actually know and be able to do. If graduates are truly proficient in these skills, they will be successful no matter what direction they choose.

Personal Integrity- Students handle themselves with confidence and act with honesty and courage. They commit to their developing beliefs and are willing to assume roles as inquiring observers, active participants, and dynamic leaders. They demonstrate positive working relationships across diverse groups, accept personal responsibility for their actions, and remain open to learning from the feedback and guidance of others.

Productive Collaboration- Students develop and use the skills necessary to plan and engage in group projects. They work to resolve social and logistical conflicts and devise solutions to meet diverse needs. They collectively set goals and develop strategies to meet those goals. They evaluate the effectiveness of their approach and constructively adapt to new understandings as they arise.

Critical and Creative Thinking- Students identify problems and pursue opportunities from multiple perspectives. They locate, organize, analyze, and apply key information in inventive and imaginative ways. They design, evaluate, and employ a variety of strategies, tools, and skills to achieve innovative results. Students are independent, creative, and critical thinkers who question and connect to the world around them from both big picture and focused perspectives.

Effective Communication- Students understand and practice effective communication using verbal and nonverbal language with intent, awareness, and accuracy. They are empathetic, emotionally intelligent, persuasive, and articulate. They are skillful self-advocates who effectively communicate their needs. Students internalize and present their understandings and ideas with confidence and clarity. Employing a variety of media, they use practical, academic, and artistic abilities to convey meaning in a clear and engaging fashion.

Reflective Learning- Students excel at making critical observations about their own experiences and the experiences of others. They formulate meaningful and relevant questions that inspire and encourage further inquiry. Students consistently take charge of their education by reflecting upon and revising their own practices.

Citizenship and Global Responsibility- Students are engaged and informed citizens. They are empowered to create positive change in themselves, their communities, and the world. They are mindful and principled decision makers

who understand the long and short-term effects of their actions on others and the environment. They practice compassionate, ethical, and active citizenship in local, global, and virtual settings. Students strive to achieve balance between their own needs and the needs of others.

Resiliency and Drive- Students are adept at taking intelligent risks and view mistakes as necessary steps toward learning and growth. They consciously identify their intentions and desires. They possess the tenacity and determination to work individually and collaboratively. They are self-motivated and self-regulated. Northwest Prep students confront challenges and persevere through adversity.

Comment on the school’s self-study process with respect to the expected outcomes of the self-study.

1. The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement

It was obvious to the visiting committee that the school has made significant changes to the instructional delivery model and the focus on student achievement since the last WASC visit. All stakeholders, including parents are engaged in supporting student achievement through the systems that have been created to monitor student progress online and the focus on ensuring the school’s exhibitions are content based and cross curricular.

2. The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards (*note the selected schoolwide learner outcomes examined by the school*)

The school is very unique and does not have traditional “classes” of direct instruction, rather all learning occurs through a complex and rich project based manner. Each “project” has well defined goals and benchmarks. The learning outcomes are always the guiding tool by which students drive the work of the groups developing the learning projects. The school actually has a rubric for the learning outcomes as well as an evaluation system for assessing attainment of the Learner Outcomes.

3. The gathering and analyzing of data about students and student achievement

A significant amount of the “data” about student achievement comes in the form of completion of assignments and parts of the project assigned to each group. Additionally, teachers review all assignments and provide feedback and comments. But there are no traditional assessments except in the math courses used for diagnostic and formal assessments. There is a high level of informal assessment procedures conducted by teachers during the learning process used to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment. There was not a lot of evidence that the teachers had formally reviewed the results of the CAASP testing data to inform instruction but they are cognizant of the need for more data and metrics to demonstrate that students are learning.

4. The assessment of the entire school program and its impact on

student learning in relation to schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards and ACS WASC/CDE criteria

Staff have clearly spent a significant amount of time analyzing student learning in relation to schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards. As outlined elsewhere in this report, the school has made many changes that support the acquisition of the learner outcomes and high academic standards.

5. The alignment of a long-range action plan to the school's areas of need; the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the plan.

The school used its schoolwide improvement plan as the WASC action plan and it was not aligned with WASC criteria or the school's self determined areas of growth. They will be re-doing the action plan with support from the visiting committee following the visit.

Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

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

A1. Vision and Purpose Criterion

To what extent does the school have a clearly stated vision and mission (purpose) based on its student needs, current educational research, current educational research, the district LCAP, and the belief that all students can achieve at high academic levels?

Northwest Prep is designed as a six-year secondary program for students. **The NWP Leadership Skills** (*Personal Integrity, Productive Collaboration, Critical and Creative Thinking, Effective Communication, Reflective Learning, Citizenship and Global Responsibility, and Resiliency and Drive*) are both the long term goals and the means of assessment for all students. At Northwest Prep the personal and academic development of each individual student, their unique needs, interests, gifts, skills, passions, and attributes, are recognized and honored. NWP'S intent is to engage each student in a process of learning that results in the most productive and meaningful realization of each student's potential and success.

Northwest Prep is modeled after the San Francisco-based Envision Schools' flagship charter high school. As a small project-based charter school they are designed to implement innovative alternative teaching strategies, scheduling structures, and assessment techniques in order to better meet student's individual needs and interests, and prepare them for a rapidly changing world. Northwest Prep is designed to help students reach their academic and personal goals over a six-year period, from grades 7 through 12. Northwest Prep continues to develop as a unique model for a new generation of schools.

To what extent is the school's purpose supported by the governing board and the district LCAP and further defined by schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards?

The school has broad levels of support for the unique instructional delivery method by the Board, the community and the District. The schoolwide learner outcomes define every learning project. The school has developed a rubric for the schoolwide learner outcomes clearly defining expectations.

The school did not share an articulated mission and vision of the school, but it was clear to the visiting committee that the Governing Board and District staff had a clear understanding of the school's purpose and unique methods.

A2. To what extent does the governing board have policies and bylaws that are aligned with the school's purpose and support the achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic, college, and career standards based on data-driven instructional decisions for the school?

The Governing Board has bylaws which support the achievement of the school's learning outcomes. The Governing Board delegates operations of the school to the school staff.

The school council has approved the LCAP each year but not the School Improvement Plan. There was a gap in writing of the SIP due to staffing changes.

A3. Leadership: Continuous Planning and Monitoring Criterion

To what extent based on student achievement data, does the school leadership and staff make decisions and initiate activities that focus on all students achieving the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic, college, and career standards?

The Crossroads program (3 days a week for one hour) for all students focuses on student achievement in College and Career Standards. The Crossroads program is detailed on the website as well as mentioned in the Self Study and requires students to intern and job shadow, make a post secondary plan, apply to 4 year or JC, communicate in writing and verbally how each student shows proficiency in the Leadership Skills.

- Internship Documentation: All students are required to participate in spring internships during their junior and senior years. Students must provide artifacts/projects that document their experiences in each year's professional placement.
- Assessment of Student's Leadership Skills: Teachers will assess each senior student's proficiency level on Leadership Skills using the NWP *Leadership Skills Rubric*.

The data from CAASP showing low scores in Math prompted the Math teacher to focus activities that will enhance student academic performance in Mathematics. Leadership sees a clear need for an additional Math teacher to add to the 60%. The Director has proposed hiring a 40% Math teacher to the Superintendent and Business Manager of POUUSD.

To what extent does the school leadership and staff annually monitor and refine the single schoolwide action plan and make recommendations to modify the LCAP based on analysis of data to ensure alignment with student needs?

The school leadership monitors and refines the single schoolwide action plan by rewriting and presenting the plan to the POUUSD governing board each Spring of the school year. Modifications of the LCAP is based on analysis of data to ensure alignment with student needs. This year's plan included more focus strongly on implementing the subject strands and supporting English Language Learners as well as focusing on the Graduation Portfolio that will be required of all seniors for graduation from Northwest Prep.

The Graduation Portfolio:

1. Requires each graduating student to demonstrate what he or she knows and is able to do in an individualized format.
2. Emphasizes the importance of reflecting on one's learning (*meta-cognition*).
3. Enables a committee (*of a student's peer(s), teachers, and other community members*) to assess his or her readiness for college and work.
4. Produces meaningful indicators of student learning that inform curriculum development and teaching practice at NWP.
5. Promotes a shared understanding among students, teachers, parents, and community of the quality of work that graduates have been engaged in during their tenure at NWP.

NWP staff will help students compile appropriate work artifacts for their general portfolio, evaluate the quality of reflections, help students prepare to defend presentations for their graduation portfolio in grades 8,10 and 12, and finally, help determine whether each student passes the Oral Defense.

A4. Staff: Qualified and Professional Development Criterion

To what extent does a qualified staff facilitate achievement of the student academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes through a system of preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development?

Three of the four teachers attended the BTSA program monthly at Sonoma County Office of Education. Currently one teacher is attending her 2nd year of BTSA, supervised by her support provider, the Director of Northwest Prep. This induction program helps prepare the teacher/s to provide effective practice in the classroom and prompts reflection about student learning and teaching practice and formulation of professional goals to improve teaching practice in support of student learning. All of NWP's teachers are professionally evaluated each year or every other year with a focus on California Standards for the Teaching Profession and how each teacher:

- Engages and Supports All Students in Learning
- Creates and Maintains Effective Environments for Student Learning
- Understands and Organizes Subject Matter for Student Learning
- Plans Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for All Students
- Assesses Students for Learning
- Develops as a Professional Educator: summer inservice, workshop attendance throughout the school year

Three days each summer is set aside for a teacher inservice for project planning for the following school year as well as for focusing on the 6 year plan. This year teachers are facilitating the introduction of the Graduation Portfolio as it provides documentation that

students are meeting their academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes. Students will be required to make personal and academic connections and be able to answer the following questions:

- How are the concepts you learned to create this work artifact relevant to your personal and academic growth?
- How did the creation of this artifact affect or change the way you look at and understand yourself and the world?
- What are the essential concepts and understandings that this artifact demonstrates?
- What skills and strategies did you apply to complete this artifact?
- What challenges did you face in completing this task? What did you learn when you overcame those challenges?
- What Leadership Skills are evident in this artifact?

Performance Assessment/Deliverables

Teachers will assess each student based on the components of their Graduation Portfolio that includes:

1. A student Cover Letter and introduction to the portfolio.
2. A digital arrangement of student work: artifacts of college ready work produced in the course of interdisciplinary semester projects, that exemplify his or her strengths as a learner. Artifacts are drawn from the archives in each student's *general portfolio*.
3. Reflective Summaries: a student must choose a format and create a reflective summary that attests to the relevance of each of the work artifacts included in the portfolio that:
4. Internship Documentation: All students are required to participate in spring internships during their junior and senior years. Students must provide artifacts/projects that document their experiences in each year's professional placement.
5. Assessment of Student's Leadership Skills: Teachers will assess each senior student's proficiency level on Leadership Skills using the NWP *Leadership Skills Rubric*.
6. The Oral Defense of the Graduation Portfolio is an individualized presentation of learning during which the student reflects on his or her work, provides evidence of proficiency in NWP's Leadership Skills, and demonstrates how his or her work both meets the school's criteria for graduation and supports his or her personal and professional goals.

The Graduation Portfolio Defense:

- *Provides evidence of the student's Leadership Skills.*
- *Discusses the essential concepts, specific understandings, and task-specific skills related to the work entered in that content area.*
- *Describes the relevance of the concepts learned and application of the skills used to complete the work.*

The Oral Defense

Students will identify and present a cohesive defense of at least THREE of their work artifacts from the Graduation Portfolio. Using these artifacts as the body of evidence, the student will have an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in the NWP Leadership Skills, and demonstrate how the work artifacts both meet the school's criteria for graduation and support his or her personal and professional goals. The Oral Defense of the Graduation Portfolio will take place in the spring of a student's final year of high school. In the event that a student does not pass his or her defense, the student will have the opportunity to re-defend. This defense will take place before a panel consisting of the teachers and peers. Family members, community partners, district administrators, and internship mentors may also be encouraged to participate as members of the panel.

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

Northwest Prep's staff has built in substantial Collaborative Planning time as well as common prep periods for integrated teacher teams each week (up to 7hrs). These blocks of time are used for project curriculum planning, as ongoing staff development time, and for tasks such as goal setting and benchmark design for the SIP.

Northwest Prep has an established practice of monitoring, revising and evaluating progress on the SIP benchmarks and deliverables. Staff development needs will be addressed in-house, through external consultation, conferences, workshops, and off-site visitations.

The Northwest Prep Inquiry team of teachers will continue its collaborative development of a fully integrated and sequenced six-year project curriculum aligned to the Common Core culminating in 100% of senior students' completing the NWP Graduation Portfolio.

Students at NWP all maintain a general digital portfolio of the project work which is monitored by the teachers and used as one measure of student performance. Each student selects and includes in his or her portfolio, as part of his or her evidence of learning, artifacts of college ready work produced in the course of interdisciplinary semester projects, that exemplify his or her strengths as a learner.

The NWP Graduation Portfolio is a separate, specialized portfolio compiled from artifacts contained in each student's general Student Portfolio. The Graduation Portfolio is not a random compilation or collection of a student's best work in different subjects. It

is the deliberate and thoughtful selection of student work assembled *by* the student in a unique and compelling way to provide evidence of his or her learning at Northwest Prep Charter School.

A5. Resources Criterion

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 academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

The budget is reviewed every year by the Director, Superintendent and Business Manager in order to best support the school in meeting the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes. As a team, decisions are made as to how resources will be used to meet the needs of Northwest Prep and the student body while staying within the school budget.

A6. Resources Criterion [Charter Schools only]

Have the governing authority and the school leadership executed responsible resource planning for the future?

Is the school fiscally solvent and does it use sound and ethical accounting practices (budgeting/monitoring, internal controls, audits, fiscal health and reporting)?

The District works closely with the charter school to ensure proper allocation of resources. The school is very well supported and despite having lower enrolment the last few years, the district assists the school in meeting staffing needs and appropriate resources that support student learning. The one area of need for student performance that is based on lack of resources is field trips.

The school is supported by the District for their back office accounting AP, AR, budgeting and cash flow. They maintain strong internal controls and timely reporting as noted by the District staff and Board members.

A7. Resources Criterion [Charter Schools only]

The school has adopted all of the school's policies and procedures for internal controls and fiscal procedures. They are audited annually and have had clear audits.

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

Areas of strength for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership,

Staff, and Resources (if any):

Key issues for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership, Staff, and Resources (if any):

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

CATEGORY B. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: CURRICULUM

B1. Rigorous and Relevant Standards-Based Curriculum Criterion

To what extent do all students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-based curriculum that supports the achievement of the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

To what extent through standards-based learning (what is taught and how it is taught), are these accomplished?

Current Educational Research and Thinking: Northwest Charter Prep uses Project Based Learning and its dynamic approach to help students explore real word problems and challenges while simultaneously developing cross curriculum skills and working in small collaborative groups. Academic competencies are integrated with professional skills and guided by the Driving and Guiding questions developed by students and staff. Each project is driven by these overarching driving questions. The curriculum in all classes is scaffolded to build student's knowledge and abilities to be able to adequately and appropriately address the guiding question through a series of formative benchmarks and through a summative, high-stakes Academic Exhibition. Northwest Charter's Crossroads program guides students through multi-year college and career exploration, job shadows, and professional internships. Students are taught professional speaking skills and communication skills. There are several elective classes offered at NWP including coding, wood shop, seed to table, and independent study. Northwest Charter Prep also provides daily physical education to all students. Thirty minute Move It classes provide physical fitness in the form of a variety of sports.

Academic and College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Each Area: The school is working on sequenced plan that addresses the Academic/College and Career Readiness Standards. This area will be addressed in the action plan. Northwest Prep is also in the process of course approval for their A-G courses. Their goal is to have 2 courses approved each year through the UC system.

Congruence: Northwest Prep's ability to address the Academic and College and Career Readiness Standards through Project Based Learning was clearly evident through the digital portfolios and the student work reviewed by the visiting committee. However, there was no clear evidence on how NWP was tracking the progress and growth of the students learning outcomes.

Student Work — Engagement in Learning: The use of digital portfolios, student blogs, journals and hands on projects clearly showed that students at NWP were actively engaged in learning and had a clear understanding of the lessons being taught and the CCS that were identified in the benchmark lessons. The Project Based approach allows the students to have a much higher level of critical thinking and engagement in each

aspect of the lesson across curriculums.

Accessibility of All Students to Curriculum: The Project Based Learning Environment created at NWP provides a rigorous and relevant curriculum for the students. The teachers spend a great deal of time planning units that will touch all subject areas and allow the students to drive the instruction based on current events and interests.

Integration among Disciplines: The teaching staff at Northwest Prep has collaboration time each morning and two days a week that they spend planning Project Based Learning Units. They work as a team to ensure that their units are cohesive and align with the CCS as well as address the needs of their students. They develop units that are streamlined amongst the main subject matters, Language and Communication, Social Systems, Integrated Science. At this point, Math is a stand-alone subject.

Curricular Development, Evaluation, and Revisions: The Administration, Staff and Teachers have worked hard to create and even recreate the Project Based Learning model that is in place at Northwest Prep. Teachers have a vested interest in creating a model that works for both the students and teachers. The introduction of the Spotlight Blocks, a more “traditional” block schedule, was created this year to ensure that all subject matters were introduced into the Project Based Learning Model. When the visiting committee asked the students about this change, the students responded that this one change was the most influential change the school had made. They were excited, and it was evident in each class visited that learning was taking place. Teachers expressed that their vision was to create new PBL units each year so that students would experience new lessons and challenges throughout their schooling at NWC. It was clearly evident that the teachers spend considerable time evaluating their practices and curriculum.

Policies — Rigorous, Relevant, Coherent Curriculum: The visiting committee made several suggestions on how NWP could look at and use test data to help assess their students and track their progress on completing the A-G requirements. NWP has several means of tracking homework and grades and the visiting committee again made suggestions on how they could better represent and show student progress and flow through the curriculum.

Articulation and Follow-up Studies: Northwest Charter has a strong relationship with its chartering district. They do articulate with their feeder schools and the visiting committee spoke directly with the chartering Board of Directors about how they could increase general public's perception of the school. There is no data on graduating seniors from Northwest Prep.

B2. Access to Curriculum Criterion

To what extent do all students have equal access to the school's entire program and are provided assistance with a personal learning plan to prepare them for the pursuit of their academic, personal, and career goals?

Variety of Programs — Full Range of Choices: Northwest Prep's Crossroads program guides students through a multi year college and career exploration, job shadows, and professional internships program. All students are taught professional public speaking and communication skills on an ongoing basis. Grades 7 and 8 focus on exploring their interests, abilities, and talents. Grades 9 and 10 focus on exploration of the vast range of careers and different types of colleges and training programs that prepare students for them. Grades 11 and 12 learn how to identify and secure professional internships and develop a plan to actively contribute in their placement. The school's goal is to actively link students to all levels and fields of the professional workplace. It provide students with the opportunity to apply the many practical benefits from their Project Based Learning experience and learning of the Leadership Skills, to provide a service to their mentor and their organization, and to further develop their professional and academic skills. This guides their abilities to make informed choices for life after high school.

Student-Parent-Staff Collaboration: Northwest Prep has an online forum where students, parents and teachers can access student grades, portfolios, student blogs, etc. Parents and students reported this was an acceptable way for them to track and monitor projects and grades.

Monitoring/Changing Student Plans: The teachers have implemented a check off system, where as a project will require one or more "sign offs" along the way. This allows the teacher and the student to monitor their progress. A series of X's or O's will allow the student to either move forward in the assignment for make corrections to receive a higher mark. High stake assignments will earn a 3, 2, 1 grade (which loosely translates into A, B, C). Again, students may make corrections on assignments given a 1 to improve up to a 2. No student will receive a grade lower than a C or an incomplete.

Post High School Transitions: Northwest Prep's Crossroads program prepares students with access to professional internships, career exploration and job shadows. Many of NWC students engage in 10 week internship programs that help them learn about career choices. A handful of Northwest Prep's Junior and Senior students attend classes and Santa Rosa Junior College and receive college credit for courses in area of interests not offered at the school. There is no data about how successful NWP students are in their college and career pursuits when they leave the school.

B3. Preparation for Career and College Criterion

To what extent are students able to meet all the requirements of graduation upon completion of the high school program and be prepared for success in college,

career, and life?

Real World Applications — Curriculum: The students at Northwest Prep have a strong foundation in real word curriculum through their Project Based Learning philosophy. Northwest Prep is uniquely equipped, with its small population, blended graded levels, and cross-curricular Project-Based program, to prepare students who will understand and be able to study and manage, create, and implement new solutions and approaches to the information, communication, and thus social revolution we're in the midst of today. Their goal is to prepare its students to realize a future that they have actually worked to determine and design themselves.

Meeting Graduation Requirements: Northwest Prep continues to work on providing all students with the classes needed to meet the requirements for graduation and continuation onto a UC or CSU. However, at this point NWP does not offer the 2 year minimum foreign language requirement or the VAPA requirement needed for the A-G's. Student needs are being met through concurrent enrollment at SRJC. NWP plans to work towards getting the A-G approval for the foreign language component in the future.

CATEGORY B: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: CURRICULUM**Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum (if any):**

- Contextual, active, and authentic approach to learning.
- Project-Based Learning approach to teaching in which students explore real-world problems and challenges.
- Curriculum in all classes is carefully designed to scaffold and build on student's knowledge and abilities.
- Crossroads program guides students through multi-year college and career exploration, job shadows, and professional internships.
- Wide variety of electives: Coding, Mandarin, Wood Shop, Spanish, Seed to Table, Improvisation, Drama, Video Production and Independent Study.
- Daily Physical Education

Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum (if any):

- Increase amount of Math instruction offered by 40%
- Need to add Integrated Math 1,2,3 to A-G list of classes, Summer 2016
- Better tracking system on grades
- Continued approval on the A-G courses through the UC system
- Need higher level Math courses including Algebra 2, Trigonometry, and Calculus

CATEGORY C. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: INSTRUCTION

C1. Challenging and Relevant Learning Experiences Criterion

To what extent are all students involved in challenging and relevant learning experiences to achieve the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

All students at NWP take part in a six-year PBL curriculum. As such, NWP utilizes a unique block schedule designed to maximize its project-based curriculum. Students move through a rotational schedule, spending Monday through Thursday mornings in Spotlight Blocks (each with a different disciplinary focus such as social systems, language and communication, mathematics, etc.). In these Blocks, students work towards achieving academic schoolwide learner outcomes and state academic standards by way of project based learning and subject-specific instruction. In all, each student has each Spotlight Block two times a week. Tuesday, Thursday afternoon and Friday mornings are spent in Inquiry Team where they focus on project work, and Friday afternoons students attend Portfolio where they add work to their digital portfolios and complete reflective blog entries about their learning process as each project progresses. Additionally, students are generally blended in grades 7/8, 9/10 and 11/12, but in the course of all long-term projects, "groups" and "sections" may include grade levels 7-12.

Furthermore, all students participate in a Workplace Learning Program through their Crossroads class that allows them to interact with successful adults, develop their Leadership Skills (NWP's SLOs), apply their talents to real world challenges, and exhibit their skills and problem-solving abilities.

For further enrichment, students spend Monday and Wednesday afternoons in elective classes, and, in addition to daily break and lunch periods, students participate in organized *Move It* physical activities such as walks through the adjacent Laguna de Santa Rosa, and various team sports.

Upon graduation all NWP students are expected to have become highly proficient in all of the NWP Leadership Skills (which are a significant part of NWP's schoolwide learner outcomes), to have completed college preparatory course work via projects and completion of benchmarks, and to be well prepared for participation in college, the workplace, and their community. Beginning this year (2015-16), seniors will have to present and defend their Graduation Portfolios as evidence that they have met all NWP schoolwide learner outcomes.

Results of Student Observations and Examining Work: NWP is a small school, and as such, teachers are very familiar with individual students progress towards schoolwide learner outcomes and attainment of academic standards. Teachers regularly review student work towards project benchmarks by way of a sign off process. The process requires that every academic task assigned to students in the pursuit of attaining the various project benchmarks is signed off on by one or more teachers once the student has demonstrated the needed proficiency level. Additionally, students keep digital

portfolios of work, and all work archived on the portfolio is also reviewed by one or more teachers to assure that it adequately demonstrates attainment of the academic standards and the SLOs. These various observations allow teachers to adjust or differentiate instruction for individual students continually. Finally, beginning this year (2015-16), seniors will have to present and defend their Graduation Portfolios allowing teachers to observe whether or not students have met all NWP schoolwide learner outcomes. NWP staff also looks at state-mandated test results and is in the process of developing further internal metric systems by which they examine student progress towards standards. Through this process of reviewing state-mandated test scores, NWP staff and teachers recognize the need to increase student attainment of skills in mathematics specifically.

Student Understanding of Performance Levels: NWP students have a clear understanding of teacher expectations as dictated by the design of project benchmarks and teacher feedback. They understand that they must obtain teacher sign offs to indicate that have proficiently met the task standard. Furthermore, two of the four teachers at NWP use a 3 point system and one teacher uses a 5 point system to indicate the level of mastery on a specific task. This helps students track their own progress toward standards attainment prior to receiving a narrative report card that also includes grades at the end of each semester. However, the Visiting Committee noted the lack of a consistent point valuation system across the disciplines. Finally, students regularly complete blog entries where they reflect on their learning and progress. Student self-evaluation of performance is an important part of the NWP program.

Differentiation of Instruction: The NWP staff naturally differentiates instruction as dictated by the PBL curriculum, which is driven largely by student interest and choice. While there is an overarching driving question all students must address, there are always student choices to be made about the approach in answering the questions. Many of the choices offered to students allow for students to use multimedia and technology to complete assigned tasks, and the majority of student research is conducted by way of internet. However, it is the close and personalized nature of the teachers observations that allow really adjust or differentiate instruction for individual students continually. Students struggling to meet instructional expectations have access to an early morning Study Hall where one-on-one teacher help is available. Students who are struggling with attaining the project standards and do not take advantage of the early morning extra help available are eventually “Xed” (or placed on Project X) and asked to complete the project tasks and benchmarks individually as opposed to in a group setting where they might be a liability to the group’s overall progress. The individual project tasks and benchmarks are written in such a way that they provide more structure and scaffolding for “Xed” students. For struggling students who have been put into Project X or are the verge of being put into it, the morning Study Hall hour does become required instead of optional and parents are notified by email. .

C2. Student Engagement Criterion

To what extent do all teachers use a variety of strategies and resources, including

technology and experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom that actively engage students, emphasize higher order thinking skills, and help them succeed at high levels?

At NWP, teachers know students well and guide them towards expected outcomes by teaching them to ask good questions, and identify and solve meaningful problems. Northwest Prep features inquiry methodology, project and problem-based instruction, integrated curriculum, advanced digital tools, visual and performing arts, and project benchmarks, which necessitate actively engaged students and higher order thinking skills. NWP teachers meet twice weekly to collaborate in the development of the school's integrated PBL curriculum as well as touch base briefly with one another each morning before the beginning of Spotlight Blocks.

Additionally, staff works to regularly find opportunities for students to interact with other students and successful adults in the community and beyond. In the course of their project work, teachers require students to interact with experts in the fields that they are exploring, and with professional mentors with whom they are communicating, job shadowing, or interning with in the Crossroads program. NWP teachers also help students to communicate through email or video-conferencing with students from other states and countries in order to gain diverse perspectives on project topics and issues. Finally, also in an effort to help student succeed at high levels, Northwest Prep encourages students to take classes at Santa Rosa Junior College as well as online courses in areas that NWP can't offer due to staffing constraints.

Current Knowledge: Of the four remaining teachers at NWP, three of them have received recent training in PBL instructional strategies. Some teachers have taken part in trainings conducted Envision, the school on which their PBL model is based, and from BIE. NWP's former director who also helped to develop Envision Schools, who retired from NWP in March of 2015, served as a mentor and trainer for current NWP staff. The Visiting Committee recognizes the need for NWP teachers (especially those newer to NWP) to continue to seek out professional development aimed at PBL.

Teachers as Coaches: At NWP, teachers know students well and guide them towards expected outcomes by teaching them to ask good questions, and identify and solve meaningful problems. Northwest Prep features inquiry methodology, project and problem-based instruction, integrated curriculum, advanced digital tools, visual and performing arts, and project benchmarks, which necessitate actively engaged students and higher order thinking skills.

Examination of Student Work: Student work as evidenced in their digital portfolios and at NWP's Academic Exhibitions show that students organize, access and apply knowledge they already have acquired and have the tools to gather and create knowledge and have opportunities to use these tools to research, inquire, gather, discover, and invent knowledge on their own and communicate this. PBL is collaborative by nature so students are able to think, reason, and problem solve in group and individual activities, project, discussions, and debates and inquiries related to investigation. All projects necessitate the use of technology for research and often offer

the opportunity or necessitate the use of varying forms of technology in the delivery of project benchmarks and exhibitions.

Real World Experiences: All NWP students complete job shadowing, internships, and career exploration in the course of completing the Crossroads program. Additionally, PBL is designed to address real-world situations and, consequently, provide students with real-world experiences. The Visiting Committee recognizes that NWP can further enrich their PBL curriculum by providing additional field trips to places that would provide students with experiential learning related to project driving questions.

CATEGORY C: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: INSTRUCTION

Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction (if any):

- Teachers work collaboratively with one another to develop and deliver integrated standard- based project work.
- Teacher leaders who have had extensive experience and training in PBL models and instruction.
- New Spotlight Blocks that allow for some subject-specific instruction
- Engaging PBL activities that allow students to learn how to learn and fosters their individual interests.
- Due to the small size of the school, teachers know students as individuals and can differentiate instruction accordingly.
- Workplace learning and college and career instruction through the Crossroads programs: internships and job shadows.
- School culture where students are engaged and thoughtful about their learning.
- Morning Study Hall hour that allows for additional one-on-one teacher instruction.

Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction (if any):

- The entire NWP Math program is facilitated by one 60% Math teacher and therefore less time is allotted in Mathematics for each student.
- SBAC and CST achievement demonstrates gaps in standards acquisition.
- Minimal internal data/metrics that can be used to show effectiveness of instruction by way of student attainment of SLO's and standards.
- There is a need for additional teacher collaboration and professional development time to allow for the development of a cohesive six-year instructional plan that maps state standards acquisition.
- Spotlight Blocks only allow for two blocks of instruction weekly for each discipline.
- There is a need to facilitate additional field trips to augment PBL instruction and provide additional real-world learning in the real world.

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- School Bell Schedule
- State Test Scores
- Digital Portfolios

- Performance Benchmark Assessments
- Online Interactive Project Spreadsheet
- Teacher Developed Project Guidelines

CATEGORY D. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

D1. Using Assessment to Analyze Monitoring and Report Student Progress Criterion

To what extent does the school use a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, analyze, and report student performance data to the school staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders?

Monitoring and Reporting Student Progress: Staff make a concerted effort to ensure that each student's academic progress is visible to all stakeholders. For each project staff create and publish (in real time) a spreadsheet of data that details the status of each student, assignment by assignment, and discipline by discipline. A great effort is made to make this spreadsheet as clear understandable to the outside viewer as possible. The same spreadsheet is published to help students and stakeholders track students' progress on archiving and blogs.

In an attempt to make the curricular and student expectations clear and accessible to all stakeholders, each benchmark and formative assignment is published and clearly laid out on the Inquiry Team website. All accompanying materials (blog prompts, items to be archived, project resources, etc.) are also housed on this site.

Daily morning announcements (such as upcoming due dates, adjustments to assignments, and schedule changes) are posted on a living document called "Top of the Morning"; all students and stakeholders have access to this document via the Inquiry Team website.

Parents and other stakeholders can view student work in students' online project archives, updated weekly. Student archives feature screenshots, live links to work-in-progress documents, and photographs of hand done work. Each item has a title and is organized in chronological order to enable the juxtaposing of the archive with the comprehensive list of benchmarks and assignments. Collectively, the student archive documents that students' progress from the beginning to the end of every project. Students, parents and guardians are encouraged to keep careful track of student progress via the means outlined above. If a student falls behind on work or begins to show a pattern that is of possible concern (consistently failing to complete the weekly blog, for example) that student's parents are contacted by the basecamp teacher.

Parent/Community and Student Achievement: Parents are kept abreast of their students' academic progress in a number of ways throughout the school year. Initially, families are invited to attend an informative Back-to-School night in which the array of platforms for accessing student progress are clearly demonstrated and explained. Also at this event, teacher's outline their own curriculum and student objectives for the year.

At the close of the first quarter students engage in a substantial series of self-reflections and group reflections. These are designed to aid the students in discovering their unique strengths and areas for growth with regard to the work they have completed to date. The self-reflection culminates in a written letter to the student's parent or guardian, highlighting key findings and providing concrete examples. The letter is read to the parent or guardian at a fifteen to thirty minute parent-teacher-student conference which occurs at the close of the first quarter. The group reflection culminates in a fishbowl discussion between teachers and the student team, and is observed by an outer ring of classmates. Students come to the fishbowl discussion having each prepared key talking points. The discussion focuses on the team's performance around the Northwest Prep's 7 Leadership Skills and is guided by a simple rubric.

At the close of each semester students and their families receive a narrative grade report. This report consists of evaluative narratives written by each of the student's teachers. The narratives are discipline focused and are compiled from a wide array of assessments, embedded and otherwise, given throughout the semester. These assessments take into account both the academic standards and the School's 7 Leadership Skills. If the student has not completed enough work to warrant a grade of C- or better the student will be given an "Incomplete" and is asked to make up the work within the period of the following semester. After the narrative reports are sent home each student is provided with digital copy and is asked to reflect upon his or her progress in a writing exercise.

Monitoring of Student Growth: Narrative grade reports reveal nuanced details of a student's personal and academic growth in each discipline. Collectively, the narratives document each students' path toward meeting academic standards, college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcome.

The lowest grade given to Northwest Prep students is C-, ensuring that students do not move forward without meeting minimum requirements for achievement. Acquiring an "incomplete" grade at the end of a term indicates the student did not complete enough work for teachers to effectively assess his or her progress toward goals. Students who receive incompletes are encouraged to continue working toward completion; they have one semester in which to do so.

Competency based assessments (upheld by the sign-off process) throughout each term aid teachers in determining whether a student is ready to move to the next level. When a student continually fails to move forward, interventions are implemented to assist the student in charting a path forward. Often this entails a meeting with the teachers, the student, and parents or guardians.

Basis for Determination of Performance Levels: Criteria for a sign-off for any given milestone in a project is arrived at collaboratively by all staff. This sign-off is a core element of both students' growth and their overall performance on project tasks. Collectively, the signed off work of any given student informs that student's semester

grade and narrative report.

Use of the sign-off as the building block for student's growth, performance, and ultimately as a key pivot point informing the student's grade, has an overall positive impact on the school's academic culture. This is evidenced by the observation that strong academic performance has become a "social currency" at Northwest Prep; and likewise, poor academic performance has become a social burden.

The effectiveness of using the sign-off as the basis for student growth and academic performance is shown as student after student positions him/herself at the helm of their own learning. Students become self-directed curators of their own education; they are able to effectively pace themselves, identify and organize their own learning tasks, communicate with their teammates and teachers around targeted learning needs, and regularly reflect upon their own processes to ensure continued personal and academic growth.

D2. Using Assessment to Monitor and Modify Learning in the Classroom Criterion

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

To what extent do students and teachers use these finding to modify the learning/teaching practices to improve student 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.

Appropriate Assessment Strategies: Assessment strategies revolve around the school's system of benchmark products (examples include a video, a performance, a multidisciplinary flow chart or executive summary, etc.); the rubrics and predetermined, published criteria for student performance around these benchmark products, and ultimately around the core element of the school's assessment system, the sign-off.

Ongoing formative assessments also play a key role in determining student achievement. These range from small, in-the-moment appraisals like impromptu public speaking engagements, to more substantial appraisals like bulleted summaries of a day's lesson content.

The accessibility of the online spreadsheet keeps students and parents well informed of their standing in each class, and allows them to identify missing work or trends around declines or improvements in performance.

Finally, student performance with regard to the seven Northwest Prep Leadership Skills receives targeted attention at different intervals throughout the school year. These include students' self-assessment, which are followed up in small conference with one or more teacher, a student's team, or a meeting with a parent. Noticeable deficits in any

of the 7 Leadership Skills are addressed on an as-needed basis.

Demonstration of Student Achievement: Students' academic achievement, college- and career-readiness, and mastery of the school wide learner outcomes is demonstrated through an array of activities and products. The 8th, 10th, and 12th grade years each culminate in the curation of a selective portfolio of work and formal defense of this body of work before a panel of staff members, community members, and professionals. All students create comprehensive and ongoing student archives that document their individual paths through each project. Weekly student blogs facilitate student reflection on project work; blog prompts are designed to help students cultivate a constructive attitude toward their personal learning experiences, and to build the capacity for metacognition around their academic processes. Formative benchmark products allow for ongoing embedded assessment (for example, a student's notes on an article containing complex text allow a teacher to evaluate that student's current level of comprehension).

Curriculum-Embedded Assessments: Each assessment at Northwest Prep is designed to evaluate for an array of skills and a select body of learned content. Staff do not consider a task to be worthy of students' time unless it simultaneously teaches and assesses. Such a position requires that all teachers become diligent in-the-moment data collectors, logging information about where student deficits typically arise and where they are attaining mastery. This stance also requires teachers to become skilled analyzers, viewing data through a variety of lenses to determine root causes for learning gaps in any given student population. Staff meet twice weekly to design curricula and review its effectiveness. When assessments do not accomplish desired ends the staff collaboratively analyze and adapt the assessment.

Student Feedback: Staff make a concerted effort to monitor students' understanding of performance expectations with regard to their academic achievement, their college- and career-readiness, and their progress toward the schoolwide learner outcomes. Interactions include full classroom discussions, one-on-one conversations between student and teacher, and more formal fishbowl discussions centered on specific topics of concern. During fall semester, for example, all four teachers engaged in a formal fishbowl discussion with the 11th and 12th grade students to foster a deeper understanding around the sign-off process. The session yielded critical insights for both teachers and students. Another fruitful source of interaction between the teachers and the student body are student blogs. Teachers design the weekly blog prompts in part to "take the pulse" of the students around project related topics. Teachers are able to elicit targeted feedback from every student in a "just in time" fashion, informing the staff's design of curricula, including important assessments.

Modification of the Teaching/Learning Process: In house assessment data is collected and housed on interactive spreadsheets that incorporate each academic discipline. The spreadsheets facilitate many forms of analysis from an array of different stakeholders. For example, a parent might notice her student's work has recently tapered off dramatically in one discipline, but remains strong in all others, causing an

inquiry into the nature and scope of that downturn. A teacher, on the other hand, may notice poor student performance across the board on a particular lesson or task, causing him to explore more deeply the root causes for such performance. Trends of any nature and number are made visible by way of these master project spreadsheets. Below is a sampling of possible scenarios in which a teacher or other stakeholder may use the project spreadsheet to analyze important issues:

- a trend of low scores for a given assignment: Was there a gross misunderstanding in expectations, or a deficit in content knowledge? Was there a general disinterest in the work due to lack of relevance?
- a trend of missing assignments in a given area: Was the due date not clear? Was there significantly too little time given for the work? Was there a lack of relevance in students' eyes?
- a trend of high scores: Was the content challenging enough? Was it especially relevant? Did the tasks demand a sufficient degree of rigor?

Project spreadsheets serve as data banks for the staff. They are often employed as the basis for making key decisions around curriculum and instruction, inform the quality of lesson and benchmark design, and play a crucial role in determining student advancement.

D3. Using Assessment to Monitor and Modify the Program Schoolwide Criterion

To what extent does the school with the support of the district and community have an assessment and monitoring system to determine student progress toward achievement of the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes?

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.

Assessment and Monitoring Process: Administration and teaching staff make a concerted effort to ensure that each student's academic progress is visible to all stakeholders including the district, the governing board, students and parents as well as business and industry. For each project, staff create and publish (in real time) a spreadsheet of data that details the status of each student, assignment by assignment, and discipline by discipline. A great effort is made to make this spreadsheet as clear understandable to the outside viewer as possible. A similar spreadsheet is published to help students and stakeholders track students' progress on archiving and blogs.

The Northwest Prep Leadership Team consists of District Administration, the Director, Teachers, Parents, Students and any business and industry partners that are able to attend the meetings.

Schoolwide Modifications Based on Assessment Results: Assessment results are a

critical piece in decision-making around resource allocation at Northwest Prep. For example, in response to the poor performance of Northwest Prep students on the 2014-2015 SBAC test in mathematics, staff determined to prioritize student class time spent on math. With the increasing numbers this year, the school will be able to hire a second math teacher for the 2016-2017 school year.

CATEGORY D: STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability (if any):

- Full classroom discussions, one-on-one conversations between student and teacher, and formal fishbowl discussions centered on specific topics of concern
- Clearly defined assessment sign off process that is authentic, accessible, and highly responsive to student and stakeholder needs.
- Weekly blog prompts in part to “take the pulse” of the students around project related topics.
- Students’ academic achievement, college- and career-readiness, and mastery of the schoolwide learner outcomes is demonstrated through an array of activities and products.
- The 8th, 10th, and 12th grade years each culminate in the curation of a selective portfolio of work and formal defense of this body of work before a panel of staff members, community members, and professionals.
- A living document called “Top of the Morning” allows all students and stakeholders to have access to daily activities and requirements via the Inquiry Team website.

Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability (if any):

- Incorporate more student metacognition into daily performance around student success, asking students what are they doing that is working or not working and why?
- Engage community partners and business in assessing how we are doing to prepare students for college and career.

CATEGORY E. SCHOOL CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

E1. Parent and Community Engagement Criterion

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

E-1: Northwest Prep fosters parental and community involvement on several levels ranging from serving as community liasons, guest speakers for career talks, Leadership Team members, chaperones for field trips, presence at Academic Exhibitions, Back to School Night, email notifications between teacher and parent, online access to student portfolios to inform parents of student progress, graduation party involvement and Spanish interpreted correspondence for most information sent home.

Community organizations are regularly invited to visit NWP providing guest speakers from Santa Rosa Junior College, Sonoma County Water Agency, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Santa Rosa Health Clinics, Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, Empire College and Americorps to name a few.

E2. School Environment Criterion

To what extent is the school a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning?

Northwest Prep ensures a safe, clean and orderly campus that nurtures student learning with a consistent, organized infrastructure supported by a School Safety Plan. The students, under the direction of staff, initiated a recycling and composting program to promote a cleaner campus and increase awareness on recycling of food and yard wastes. Individual teachers ensure safe and orderly classrooms by providing clear expectations and guidelines for behavior. One instructional assistant and the administrator supervise the campus in order to maintain safe conditions during break and lunch. The Director is consistently visible on campus and in classrooms and has a positive, yet firm approach to maintaining a healthy and safe environment that is conducive to learning.

E3. Personal and Academic Support Criterion

To what extent do all students receive appropriate academic support and intervention to help ensure school, college, and career success.

The 20% School Counselor provides academic, career and social/personal counseling for all students. She meets with students regularly as needed in groups or with individuals to build an atmosphere of trust and respect and address any issues that may come up in the way of bullying or conflict among students. The counselor counsels and

assists high school seniors on FAFSA, College and Scholarship Applications, and all variety of career options for their internships which are required of all Juniors and Seniors at NWP.

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

From 8-9 in the morning, all teachers works with students during **Homeroom/Study Hall** is available to all NWP students from 8-9 am each day. Students can receive one on one support with their teachers, do project work with fellow group members, study independently, take online courses, attend meetings with teachers and parents, and participate in school clubs and activities during this hour. It is very clear that students are given ample opportunity to become leaders and pursue their interests despite being a mall school with limited after school activities that exist at traditional schools.

To what extent are these enhanced by business, industry, and the community?

All juniors and seniors are required to participate in 10 weeks of an internship. The internships provide the students with the opportunity to participate in the business community and learn about different industries.

CATEGORY E: SCHOOL CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

Areas of strength for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth (if any):

- College Tours (Sonoma State University, UC Berkeley, Expressions College, UC Davis, Santa Rosa Junior College, San Francisco State)
- Weekly College and Career Advising for 9-12 graders.
- Free English classes are offered to NWP and district Spanish speaking parents 2 nights each week in the evening. Childcare is provided.
- Homeroom/Study Hall offered each day 8-9 am.
- Personal, Academic and Career Counselor (20%)
- Service opportunities for student internships and Community Involvement fosters civic responsibility
- Updated School Safety Plan
- Santa Rosa Health Clinic provides Reproductive Health Education to all students

- IPADS and Chromebooks for student academic research.

Key issues for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth (if any):

Areas of growth:

- Increase counseling time needed as school enrollment grows
- More field trips
- Increase number of IPADS to allow for 1:1 student ratio
- Increase engagement Spanish speaking families

Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

Part B: Schoolwide Strengths and Critical Areas for Follow-up

Synthesize schoolwide areas of strengths and list numerically. *Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.*

Schoolwide Areas of Strength (list numerically)

1. Tremendously supportive authorizer and school board and District staff
2. Strong internal controls and allocation of resources
3. Incredibly dedicated and talented staff, many of whom have had extensive training in PBL
4. Strong leader focused on student achievement college readiness and supporting the staff in implementing the PBL model
5. The students all have their own IPADs and chromebooks
6. Strong PBL model
7. Carefully designed and scaffolded lessons for project learning
8. Spotlight blocks that allow for subject specific curriculum and instruction
9. Crossroads program
10. Leadership Skills learning outcomes
11. Teachers work collaboratively to develop and deliver integrated projects
12. Subject specific instruction in spotlight blocks
13. Teachers know students well and can differentiate instruction easily
14. Crossroads and internship programs / job shadows
15. Morning study hall allowing for more teacher instruction
16. Engaging PBL activities that allow students to learn how to learn and foster their interests
17. In house assessment data collection spreadsheet accessible to parents, students and teachers
18. Clearly defined and teacher signed off process for all project based units

19. Weekly blogs from all students that teachers use to monitor student learning
20. Graduation portfolios
21. Students are engaged and thoughtful about their learning
22. Strong school culture of student self motivation and self awareness
23. Students feel safe and cared for and comfortable being who they are
24. Counseling program supports students' academic and personal growth
25. Students are passionate about their learning and school
26. Woodshop

Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up

(list numerically; Include who, what, why, and the impact on student learning)

1. Staff need more professional development time in their annual calendar to support their continued improvement of PBL delivery. If there is more time for teachers to collaborate, they can more formally align the standards to projects.
2. The school staff would benefit from regular and ongoing PBL training that is meaningful and productive to support student performance on the projects.
3. The school has minimal data that can be shared externally to demonstrate student achievement.
4. Minimal data to demonstrate attainment of standards
5. Continued approval of more A-G courses
6. Need for more math instruction
7. NWP math only has 60% math teacher
8. SBAC and CST achievement demonstrates gaps in standards acquisition
9. Minimal internal metrics that can be used to show attainment of student outcomes and standards
10. Limited time to allow for teacher collaboration for a PBL 6 year instructional plan
11. Spotlight blocks only allow for two blocks of instruction weekly for each discipline
12. Utilize point and check off system of assessing individual performance consistently throughout the school
13. System wide method of measuring, documenting and reporting student achievement
14. More field trips
15. Greater parent participation / parent advisory council involvement
16. More interest based electives – possibly through online or volunteer instruction
17. Need for increased enrollment to support program

Most Significant Areas for Celebration

1. Unique program providing needed option in the community
2. Staff are engaged, dedicated, high energy
3. Students are happy beings

4. Facility and garden

Most Significant Areas for Growth

1. Increase enrollment through development of a comprehensive marketing/recruitment plan
2. Develop strategic standards aligned PBL 6 year plan
3. Address the need for increased metrics for measuring and reporting student performance and achievement
4. Develop annual calendar and weekly schedule that allows for greater levels of professional development and program improvement
5. Continue to develop and submit A-G courses
6. Ensure continued use of spotlight blocks to deliver content standards within the PBL model

Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement (1–2 pages)

- **Include a brief summary of the schoolwide action plan**

The school chose the most important areas of growth for their action plan and came up with doable and measurable steps to accomplish their goals. The staff is very competent and eager to take the program to the next level. The school has undergone many changes in the last two years and is working with a brand new director. With a small enrollment, they are stretched very thin and implementing a project based learning program like they are is very challenging. The next huge step in their progress is to develop a strong linkage between what the students create with their projects and the Common Core Standards they are learning. It was very clear to the visiting committee that the NWP students have a very deep understanding of everything they learn - possibly more so than an many other types of schools, but the breadth of their knowledge may or may not include the standards at each grade level for all courses traditionally taught, which affects their test scores.

The goals and actions in their plan are spot on to help them grapple the challenge of standards alignment and demonstrating that the students have mastered the material required in a traditional school setting in the state of CA.

- **Comments on the following school improvement issues:**

- **Adequacy of the schoolwide action plan in addressing the identified critical areas for follow-up**

The school had not created an action plan aligned to the WASC self study until after the visit. The school was very focused on the critical areas for follow up that the visiting committee deemed the most significant. The action pan steps will most definitely enhance student learning and increase test scores as they are focused on aligning the projects more closely to the Common Core Standards. The school has a highly dedicated staff and with all of the action so from the action plan being implemented, will result in a significant leap forward in student achievement that will be measurable and reportable. The school also has strong support of the district and the potential of the school to accomplish the steps in the plan is very high.