

SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FOR

ESCONDIDO CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

1868 Valley Pkwy, Escondido, CA 92027

Escondido Union High School District

February 25-27, 2013

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Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

Escondido Charter High School (ECHS) is a direct-funded charter school in its 17th year with an average student population of 900. It was founded on a mission of back-to-basics education with an emphasis on technology and the heritage of our nation. With the exception of special education services, ECHS is considered to be its own Local Education Agency (LEA), known as Escondido Charter School District. It provides all services to students separate from the Escondido Union High School District (EUHSD), their sponsoring district.

ECHS has two campuses: The main campus of seven buildings on eight-acres was completed in 2003. Based on its outstanding fiscal record, ECHS was able to sell private tax-exempt bonds for \$8.6 million to finance the purchase of the property and construction of the buildings. Phase II was completed in the fall of 2007 and includes a state-of-the-art theater which is fully scheduled with student and community activities. The satellite site is located in San Marcos, approximately 10 miles west of the main campus. Staffed with three full-time teachers and a computer lab/math lab teacher, it serves an average of 75 students per day in rented facilities.

ECHS is located in northeast San Diego County in the city of Escondido. Socioeconomic status is predominantly low to middle class. Since its last full WASC visit in 2007, there has been growth in the numbers of students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged and in the Hispanic/Latino population. Current ethnic distribution is as follows: Caucasian 70% (down 5% from 2007); Hispanic 19% (up 3% from 2007); African-American 4%; American Indian 1%; Asian 2%; Filipino 2%; Pacific Islander 0%; multiple or no response 2%. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students are 14% (up 3% from 2007). As a result, ECHS now has three significant subgroups: white, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged. There are approximately 54% female and 46% male enrolled. The school draws primarily from the Escondido area, but has students attending from as far away as Murrieta and Irvine, both at least 50 miles away.

ECHS serves its community through two separate and diverse programs – the Classroom Program and the Individualized Learning Program. Each program is comprised of divergent populations and has a unique delivery for curriculum and instruction. Both programs provide curriculum and instruction that aligns with the California Content Standards and state Frameworks. The school has begun the process of evaluating instruction and curriculum in relation to the Common Core Standards.

Classroom Program (TCP - Traditional Classroom Program)

The Classroom Program, with 357 students in the 2012-2013 school year, resembles a small, comprehensive high school where students take a variety of classes throughout the day on a bell schedule. All of these students take college prep courses, except for a few at-risk learners and special education students who are offered general level courses in their freshman year. The majority of Classroom Program students come from the feeder school, Heritage K-8 Charter School, which opened in 2003. Students attending that school have priority in the lottery system. Occasional open spots are filled with students from the Escondido area in accordance with lottery priorities. These students tend to come from conservative homes and often have been educated at home, in religious schools, or in charter elementary and middle schools. The average class size is 20 students; the maximum class size is 24.

Individualized Learning Program (ILP - Individualized Learning Program)

In September 2012 there were 471 students enrolled in Individualized Learning Program. Students in this program attend year-round and may enroll, disenroll, and graduate at any time during the year: Therefore, enrollment in this program fluctuates on a daily basis. Students meet with a credentialed Teacher of Record at least one hour each week to work on core courses in the form of packets. Teachers carry no more than 30 students. In addition, students attend computer classes, math labs, and some English classes on a college-type schedule two or three days a week. A small number of students – five in 2012 – “blend” into the Classroom Program for selected courses. Students also may earn credits by taking concurrent courses at a community college.

Over the past two years, the school has been experimenting with online learning formats in both programs. In the Individualized Learning Program, they offer online chemistry and biology classes. Students meet one day a week for four hours for lecture and lab work. The rest of the work is done online at home using a standards-aligned, A-G approved curriculum provider. Students may also take Spanish, which meets two days a week for speaking practice and tests; the rest of the work is done online.

These popular offerings help students fulfill their foreign language and lab science requirements, which are not taught in packets. College prep students in Individualized Learning also take their math requirements online with the support of math lab personnel. They may also fulfill math requirements at a community college, or in small group class called a module.

In the Classroom Program, students complete their classes in Core and Advanced Computers and Academic Writing using the online delivery of curriculum combined with classroom/lecture time. In-class time varies depending on the course, but all work is completed online and delivered through a learning management system called Moodle.

The school has an active Parent Volunteer Organization (PVO) that meets monthly. Formerly known as the Parent Advisory Board, the group has been active since the school’s inception. The PVO raises funds and sponsors events such as the progressive dinner and grad night and does fundraising for various needs such as technology improvement. The school sponsors an Open House (Back to School Night) each fall, which is attended by approximately 85% of student families. The administration also offers a series of grade-specific seminars for parents focusing on the transition from middle school to high school, the academic challenges of high school, and transitioning from high school to college. These seminars are typically attended by about 50 percent of each grade level’s population, although more heavily for freshman and sophomores than upperclassman.

In the Individualized Learning Program, student success is a direct result of the partnership between the teacher and the family. Most parents are actively involved with their student’s education, and increasing numbers have become active in extra-curricular activities as these students become more involved with sports and other activities.

ECHS has formed many beneficial and active partnerships with parents, local businesses, governmental agencies, and community organizations throughout its 17-year history.

ECHS has consciously chosen not to accept Title I, Title II, and all other federally funded title programs. This choice was made by the school’s developers in order to minimize the “strings” and administrative costs associated with federal programs.

ECHS made its federal Adequate Yearly Progress Goals (AYP) from 2009 through 2011 and had never been identified for Program Improvement. Based on their results for 2012 ECHS did not make

AYP in 2012 due to Graduation rate (Target 84.78; ECHS 81.68), Percent Proficient math (Federal target 77.4%; ECHS 71.1%), & API for Hispanic and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged subgroups. ECHS did make AYP in the following areas: Participation Rate, Percent Proficient ELA, API All students, API White subgroup. This year is the first that graduation targets and math proficiency rates were not attained, however, ECHS will not be identified for or placed into Program Improvement because it does not accept Title I funding.

Since ECHS does not receive federal funds or provide designated English Language Learner programs, incoming students must be able to read and write English at the seventh grade level or higher. Students who do not speak English generally do not seek the school. 95% of students are designated as English only, 2% Initially Fluent English (IFEP), 3% Reclassified English Proficient (R-FEP), and 0% English Learners. ECHS does not administrate the CELDT. Language fluency is not a requirement of enrollment at ECHS; however, the reality is that a non-English fluent student would likely not be successful in an Individualized Learning situation where individualized learning with curriculum at grade level is the expected performance level.

The school has no outside evaluators with the exception of the required annual audit. The school has never been subjected to a state audit and has neither corrective action nor a joint intervention agreement. There are no federally imposed deadlines.

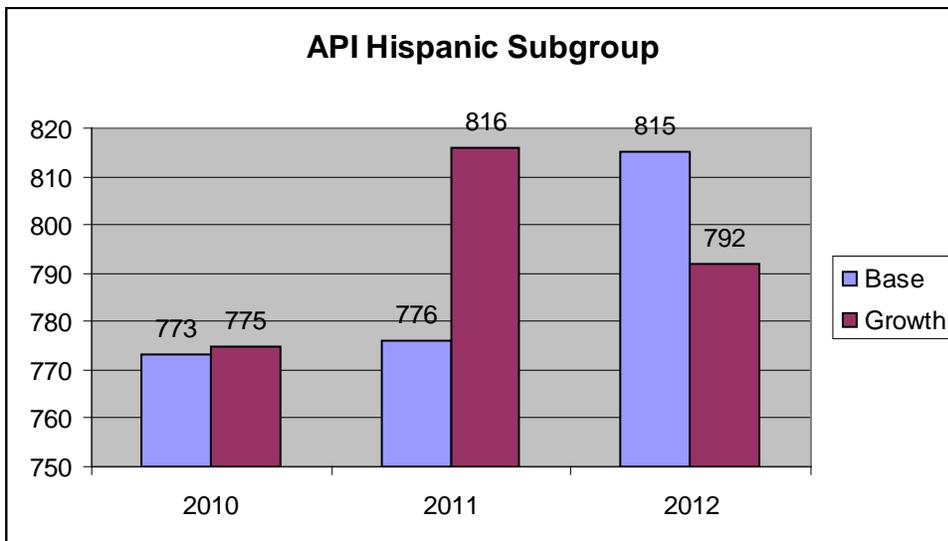
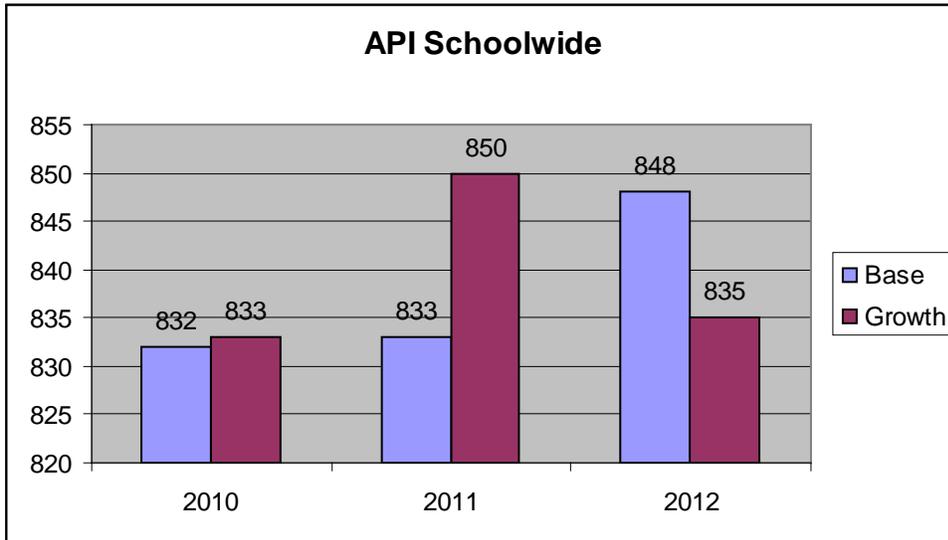
The average yearly mobility rate is about 11 percent. The Classroom Program has a stable population with only five or six students leaving each year. The Individualized Learning Program has a higher annual turnover since students are able to enroll, drop, and graduate based on individual needs and achievement. ECHS maintains an average ADA of about 95 percent.

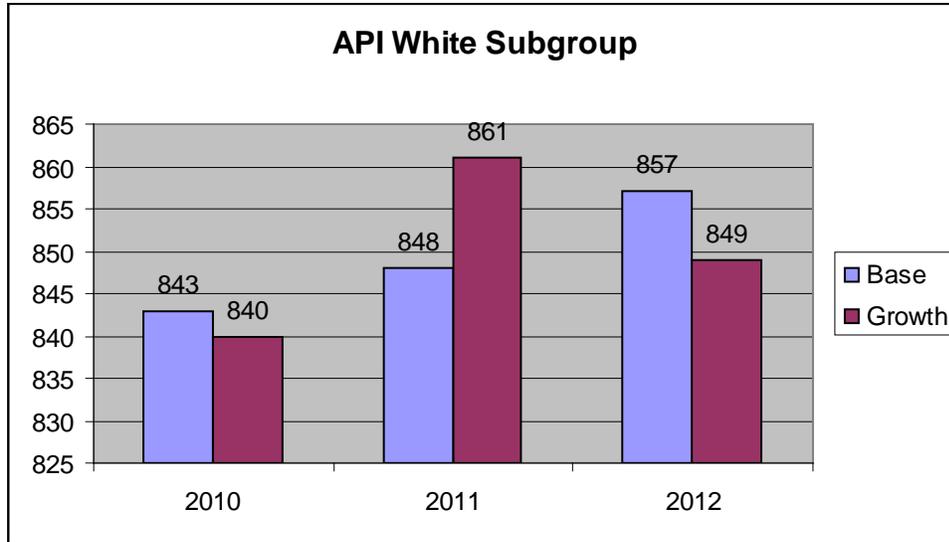
ECHS prides itself on a safe, orderly campus . All students enrolling at Escondido Charter High School and their parents must sign-off on the school's Dress Code and campus rules and regulations. Student expectations are clearly communicated through a student handbook that is disseminated to all students and reinforced in all classrooms and educational settings.

All ECHS teachers are credentialed and nearly a third have a master's degree (30%). The credentialed teaching staff is 47% female and 53% male.

Achievement Data

API





The schoolwide API has been over 800 since 2007, and it has continued to gain each year until 2012 when it dropped 13 points. There were declines in all subgroups (Hispanic -20, Economically Disadvantaged -9, White -8) The Hispanic subgroup lagged behind the other groups until 2011 when it made a significant gain of 40 points; however it did dip below 800 to 792 in 2012. This subgroup also did not make AYP in 2010, but did make AYP in 2011. ECHS attributes this increase to improved education for all students. Despite these fluctuations, the school's API remains over 800.

CAHSEE

2011 CAHSEE Results School	Tested or Passing	Subject	All Students	Special Education Students	English Learner (EL) Students	Reclassified Fluent-English Proficient (RFEP) Students	Economically Disadvantaged	Not Economically Disadvantaged
Escondido Charter High	# Tested	Math	211	4	0	8	39	170
Escondido Charter High	Passing	Math	195 (92%)	-	-	-	33 (85%)	160 (94%)
Escondido Charter High	# Tested	ELA	204	4	0	7	35	167
Escondido Charter High	Passing	ELA	200 (98%)	-	-	-	35 (100%)	163 (98%)

ECHS has an overall English-Language Arts (ELA) passage rate of 98 percent, and a math passage rate of 92 percent, well above local and state rates. They have significantly outpaced the state and the district since 2002 when the CAHSEE went into effect. The results of the March 2012 census CAHSEE showed similar results: 94 percent of all students tested passed the math portion; 96 percent of all students tested passed the ELA portion.. All students in the class of 2012 passed the CAHSEE and received their diplomas.

SAT Reasoning Test

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)	Percent tested*	Critical Reading Average	Math Average	Writing Average
Class of 2010	31%	556	550	536
Class of 2011	38%	532	538	517
Class of 2012	40%	552	547	530

SAT – Class of 2012	Critical Reading Average	Math Average	Writing Average
ECHS	552	547	530
Sponsoring District	517	528	504
California	495	512	496

Students showed gains in 2012 on each section of the SAT; 20 points in reading, nine points in math, and a 13 point gain in writing. ECHS students scored higher in every section of the SAT when compared to the sponsoring district and state average. The percentage of students taking the SAT has steadily increased since 2010.

Advanced Placement and Honors

Due to small numbers in the Classroom Program, it is not feasible for ECHS to offer a wide variety of AP courses, but they have been adding AP courses selectively over the years. However, some students in Honors classes successfully study for and ultimately pass the AP exams in various subject areas.

Chapter II: Progress Report

Since 2007, ECHS has seen an increase in its Hispanic or Latino, and Economically Disadvantaged populations which became two additional major subgroups. In 2007 the gymnasium and theater were completed which allowed for expanded opportunities for students in sports and theater arts.

In Fall 2009, career and technical education programs in Criminal Justice, Fire Technology and computer related courses of study were added. Students may enroll in these programs as articulated courses or they may take individual classes as electives. Additionally, a mandatory Academic Writing Class in addition to their literature-based 9th grade English class was added for students in the Classroom Program to address the need to improve writing skills.

In Fall 2010, ECHS implemented online education in select curricular areas. These include geography, computer science, biology, chemistry and Spanish. Each class includes a classroom component in addition to the online learning, particularly the sciences, which require labs.

Beginning in 2011, 9th and 10th grade students in the classroom program attend a mandatory tutorial in math monitored by a credentialed math teacher two or three days per week. Individualized Learning students have additional one-on-one math support with their teachers through packet courses. These measures were implemented as ECHS recognized the need for additional support for foundational skills, time on task, and targeted remediation. In addition, ECHS has created a viable web presence for the school and launched a new website and a Facebook page.

Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, ECHS accepted five foreign exchange students primarily from China. This was expanded to 25 students by the fall of 2012. These students participate in the Individualized Learning Program and also have labs, modules, and ESL support.

Like all public schools, ECHS has seen its revenues decrease during the last three years. Unlike regular public schools, charter schools receive about 30% less in basic funding. This has resulted in a moratorium on all but essential spending and a salary freeze for all personnel for the past six years.

The Leadership Team, consisting of the WASC Self-Study Coordinators, school Program Directors, Academic Counselor, and Director of Educational Services, has the primary responsibility of ensuring that the process for implementation of the Action Plan is carried out. This team is overseen by the Founder/President of the organization. The Schoolwide Action Plan, developed during the WASC process, is a mirror of the academic monitoring process that has been in place since the school began 17 years ago. That process has been expanded and formalized as data has become more readily available due to state and federal accountability measures. Each program director is given disaggregated data, which includes strand performance. This data allows further direction to the teaching staff in areas of deficiency.

Critical Area 1: Improve mathematics achievement of all students.

Self-study findings indicate a critical need to improve student achievement in mathematics at all grade levels, including the foundational skills prior to enrolling in Algebra I and higher.

Strategies implemented to improve Algebra I and Geometry include:

Year of Implementation	Strategies/Program
2007-present	Analyze testing data to identify weak standards performance; Adjusted teaching staff in 2007-2009 for Algebra II and 2010-present for Algebra I and Geometry; collaborative curriculum restructuring in order to address Algebra II standards.
2007-2009	Piloted and ultimately adopted a new standards-aligned Algebra II textbook
2008-2010	Standardized curriculum in math modules including embedding CST released questions into the curriculum.
2008-2010	Cross-referenced math lab curricula with state standards and plugged “holes”
2008-present	Improved accountability measures in the math lab including strengthening attendance policies and keeping track of the rate and number of credits earned in math labs.
2010-present	Student tutors provide additional help in Algebra II classroom. Each peer tutor works with no more than two students.
2011-present	Implemented Basic Math Review course in packets for students who test low in foundational skills upon enrollment in Individualized Learning; mandatory math tutorial period two days per week in the classroom program for freshmen and three days per week for sophomores; created and implemented Pre-Algebra

	and Algebra I packets for general level students in Individualized Learning to provide more one-on-one instruction; changed math lab online provider to a more standards-based system; students may retake any Algebra II exam up to 80% on one Saturday per semester for an improved grade.
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As a result of these various strategies, the percent of students scoring proficient or above on the CSTs are as follows:

	2007	2012	Change
Algebra I – Grade 9 Only	59%	71%	+12%
Algebra I – Grades 9 thru 11	43%	55%	+12%
Geometry - (only 27 students tested)	8%	29%	+21%
Algebra II – Grade 10 Only	22%	75%	+53%
Algebra II – Grades 9 thru 11	26%	68%	+42%

Critical Area 2: Align all curriculums to State Content Standards in order to improve student achievement:

At various stages since 2007, the Individualized Learning Program (ILP) updated course materials for Biology, World History, English 10, U.S. History, Pre-Algebra, Algebra I, Economics and American Government to more closely align with state standards. Additional strategies to achieve a more standards-based ILP curriculum include:

- Biology adopted a new text
- World History course materials enhanced with computer simulations and streaming video/audio clips were first piloted on sample student group and revised after feedback prior to releasing it to the entire Individualized Learning population.
- The English 10 course material was revised to incorporate released test questions to help ensure standards alignment.
- A step-by-step Research Paper Writing Guide was developed to assist teachers and their students in writing research papers.
- The Economics and American Government course materials were updated to incorporate on-demand writing prompts.

Critical Area 3: Develop and maintain an effective literacy improvement program for students:

In 2007-2008, all certificated teachers received a minimum of six hours of mandatory professional development in literacy by Linda A. Lee, the author of Empowered College Reading. The sessions covered topics such as Motivated Reading, Textbook Reading, and Critical Reading. The goal was to

help teachers of all subjects empower their students to become successful college readers.

All 9th grade students must complete a writing class that focuses on the basics of essay structure and response to prompts. In the classroom program, this class, Academic Writing, is taught daily during a period separate from students regular English class. In Individualized Learning, students must complete an English 9A writing module. Incoming Individualized Learning students, who need additional help with writing, may take this class as an elective. Individualized Learning students may also improve college-bound writing skills through an elective class, focusing on academic writing.

Chapter III: Self-Study Process

Mission Statement

The mission statement of the school has not changed since the submission of their original charter. It is as follows:

The Escondido Charter High School is committed to providing a safe and orderly learning environment in which teachers will be responsible for implementing a curriculum based on the fundamental skills that form the foundation of learning: reading, writing, mathematics, and computer skills. Accomplishment in academic areas will be stressed. In addition, the Escondido Charter High School will emphasize the understanding and appreciation of American civilization and United States history.

The Escondido Charter High School believes that parents and the school share a dual responsibility in developing the education plan that will provide the individual student the opportunity to succeed both as a scholar and as a citizen.

Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs)

The ESLRs were developed in 2001 during their first Self-Study process. All staff members reviewed the ESLRs in 2012. Based on staff input, changes were made to ESLR #2 to more closely reflect the changing technological world. The updated bullets are drawn from national technology standards. The ESLRs continue to be a relevant vehicle to gauge overall student achievement.

Escondido Charter High School will prepare its graduates to be:

1. Academic Achievers who:

- Meet or exceed standardized test scores of the sponsoring public school district
- Meet or exceed standards of essential knowledge as determined by standards set by Escondido Charter High School District and California

2. Technologically Capable Individuals who:

- Apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information
- Utilize digital media and digital environments to communicate and work collaboratively,

including at a distance

- Use critical thinking skills to conduct research, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources
- Practice legal and ethical behavior in the use of technology

3. Effective Citizens who:

- Will register to vote
- Have a basic understanding of the founding principles of our country as taught in our American Government class
- Research current issues in order to make informed choices
- Participate in community service activities

4. Effective Communicators who:

- Read and comprehend information including instructions, ballots, newspapers, employment or college application forms, and literary works
- Demonstrate writing skills through reports, essays, letters, and creative writing assignments
- Communicate clearly through oral presentations

5. Responsible, Self-Directed Adults who:

- Set priorities and achievable goals to create a positive future
- Exhibit self-motivation and self-discipline, and accept responsibility
- Develop knowledge and skills leading to productive employment
- Manage relationships and diversity in a positive manner
- Practice appropriate hygiene, proper nutrition, and physical fitness

The school has accomplished the five expected outcomes of the Self-Study as follows:

- 1. The involvement and collaboration of all staff and stakeholders to support student achievement:** The Visiting Committee found evidence that stakeholder groups were engaged in the self-study process. There was evidence that certificated and clerical staff members from both Classroom and Individualized Learning programs participated in the development of the school's Self-Study. Although students and parents participated in the self-study process, student participation was absent and parent participation was limited at the focus group meetings. However, both the student and parent group meetings were well attended, and all parents and students were active participants. The attitude of the teachers and staff was that this self-study process was collaborative, supportive and inclusive. It was clear and evident that student learning was the focus of the process and that the self-study process was used to address the improvement of student achievement.

- 2. The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand and be able to do through expected school wide learning results and academic standards.** ECHS has established school-wide learning results that the school refers to as ESLRs. The ESLRs include academic achievements, technology, citizenship, effective communicators, and responsible, self-directed adults. The ESLRs are consistent with State Academic Standards and are relevant to the new common core curriculum. The ESLRs were developed as a result of a school-wide process that included staff, students and parents. The WASC focus groups were used to provide the input for modification of the ESLRs.
- 3. The gathering and analyzing of data about students and student achievement.** ECHS Directors gather and provide schoolwide learning data of students. Both the TCP and ILP Directors periodically meet with teachers individually to address program and classroom needs that support student achievement. Teachers meet on as needed basis to share best practices. Both TCP and ILP curriculum areas have assessments and/or benchmark exams in place. ECHS Directors utilize CST and CAHSEE tests as schoolwide summative assessments. The school purchased Illuminate in 2013 in its efforts to expand and have a more streamlined schoolwide data management system that is available to all stakeholders.
- 4. The assessment of the entire school program and its impact on student learning in relation to expected school wide learning results, academic standards and WASC/CDE criteria.** The assessment of the entire school program and its impact on student learning was primarily done through the use of home and focus groups, parent/student surveys, and the writing of the Self-Study document. The absence of student participation and limited parent participation in the focus groups was noticeable. The school continues to develop accountability and assessment strategies to measure expected school-wide learning results, academic standards, and the WASC/CDE criteria.
- 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.** With input from the Home Groups and Focus Groups, the Leadership Team and school leaders finalized the Schoolwide Action Plan in October. The finalized plan was presented to the staff in January 2013. The school published the entire Focus on Learning Self-Study on the school website. ECHS's intends to utilize this plan, revise it when necessary, and conduct periodic formal reviews to measure its progress.

Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

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

- A1.** To what extent does the school have a clearly stated vision or purpose based on its student needs, current educational research, and the belief that all students can achieve at high levels? To what extent is the school's purpose supported by the governing board and the central administration and further by expected schoolwide learning results and the academic standards?

ECHS stakeholders often say, "Education is our business." The vision declares,

"The Escondido Charter High School is committed to providing a safe and orderly learning environment in which teachers will be responsible for implementing a curriculum based on fundamental skills that form the foundation of learning: reading, writing, mathematics, and computer skills.

Accomplishment in academic areas will be stressed. In addition, the Escondido Charter High School will emphasize the understanding and appreciation of American Civilization and United States History.

The Escondido Charter High School believes that parents and the school share a dual responsibility in developing the education plan that will provide the individual student the opportunity to succeed as both a scholar and a citizen."

During interviews parents, staff, and students demonstrated their understanding of and commitment to the high standards to which students are held, the care and attention teachers pay to students, and the back to basics approach to education at ECHS. Parents and students expressed the perception that ECHS is actively preparing students for a successful life in the "adult" or "real world." These stakeholders have a voice with the directors and founder. In 2011 the technology ESLR was changed based on input from staff as ESLR's were reviewed and revised.

- 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 expected schoolwide learning results and academic standards based on data-driven instructional decisions for the school? To what extent does the governing board have delegate implementation of these policies to the professional staff? To what extent does the governing board monitor regularly results and approve the single schoolwide action plan and its relationship to the Local Educational Agency (LEA) plan?

As verified on the website, the board meets once per month as evidenced by agendas and minutes. The current board consists of four community members, two staff members, the founder, and the business manager. This is established in the charter. Financial issues, field trips, academic achievement, and policy decisions (expulsion and suspension policy for example) have been addressed in recent board meetings. Mr. Roner and Mr. Galindo report to the board at each meeting concerning the activities and issues related to the Traditional Classroom Program (TCP) and the Individualized Learning Program (ILP). At ECHS, teaching is left to the teachers and the board deals

with “macro level policies and issues” like allocation of resources, reviewing student achievement data, and approving the annual budget. Two teachers serve on the board. As evidenced in interviews, teachers and parents have a voice with the director of their program (TCP or ILP) regarding grievances, complaints, or conflicts and with the founder if their director does not satisfactorily address the issue. Students voice concerns to their teachers or the director of their program within the classroom program and with their Teacher of Record or director within the Individualized Learning program. The staff complaint procedures appear on p. 34 of the staff handbook.

A3. 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 expected schoolwide learning results and academic standards? To what extent does the school leadership and staff annually monitor and refine the single schoolwide action plan based on analysis of data to ensure alignment with student needs?

As evidenced during interviews with the leadership team, staff planning meetings occur frequently. The Traditional Classroom and Individualized Learning programs meet monthly in separate meetings. District wide staff planning meetings occur every two months where all K-12 staff are updated on district wide planning, achievement, and the fiscal state of the district. Board meeting agendas where these macro level issues are presented are published in the weekly Charter Notes and open to parents and students. Parents stated that funds are used very efficiently and “not a dime is wasted.” Teachers stay after school for open tutorials from 3:00-4:00pm Monday through Friday. Parents, students, administration, and teachers expressed that student needs come first. COLA freezes and the tutorials are examples of prioritizing student needs in correlation with the action plan, ESLR’s, and school vision.

A4. To what extent does a qualified staff facilitate achievement of the academic standards and the expected schoolwide learning results through a system of preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development?

All teachers hold proper credentials and pass through an interview process with the founder, program director, and several teachers. The founder conducts a final interview. Staff confirms the credentials of all potential hires. The staff handbook clearly delineates recruitment and qualifications in the employee handbook. From classroom observations, teachers are assigned courses within their expertise and according to their strengths. High test scores evidence the quality of instruction and the proper assignment of teachers to courses. The employee and staff handbooks contain policies, a leadership flow chart, expectations, and responsibilities. Internal communication has improved over the last year as the leadership has realized that the growth of the district now requires articulation of the district level decisions to all staff. Teachers communicate first to the director of their program. Directors report to the founder. The founder, program directors, and teacher representatives report to the board. Students and parents communicate to teachers, a director, or the founder. The weekly newsletter “Charter Notes” is distributed through various methods (i.e electronically, in class) to all stakeholders each week and is posted in the entrance to the school.

Constant Contact is used to email parents and the founder sends out automated phone messages as well. Board agendas are posted on the website and published in the Charter Notes. On a weekly basis, teachers of record in the Individualized learning program meet with their assigned students and

email and call parents. While processes exist for including stakeholders in innovations, it is unclear when and how the effectiveness of these processes is assessed beyond an analysis of state test scores. All efforts appear to be channeled toward improvement of student learning. Again, there appears to be no formal process for assessing the effectiveness of the processes for ensuring this happens. Focusing on student learning is central to the school vision and verbalized by the school leadership, teachers, parents, and students. The founder maintains the focus on student learning.

A5. To what extent are leadership and staff involved in ongoing professional development that focuses on identified student learning needs?

Professional development is encouraged by the leadership. Teachers expressed a desire to participate in professional development to better their craft. Finances do not currently exist to fund professional development. However, teachers have found free training, the director's post articles online, and at least one teacher has sought funding through foundations. The school provides books such as *The Last Lecture* and *Teach Like a Champion*, discuss the content, and are held accountable for implementing changes through their yearly evaluations conducted by the program directors. Measuring the effectiveness of professional development is an area of growth. In the self study, ECHS claims to not have a process due to the variables involved. Teacher evaluations do serve as a measure of the effectiveness of teachers as do the state testing scores. Teachers have individual professional growth plans and goals that are reviewed and measured by the program directors.

A6. 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) to support students in accomplishing the academic standards and the expected school wide learning results?

Evidenced by board minutes, the budget, and discussions with the leadership, resource allocation is aligned with the vision and ESLR's. The founder and program directors establish the budget which is shared with stakeholders and approved by the board. Teachers do have a voice in the process through the program directors but most budget decisions seem to be made from the top down. An auditing firm reviews the school's finances twice per year. The June 2012 audit was conducted by Varinek, Trine, Day, and Co., LLP. Only the business manager and the founder write checks. Board minutes indicate that the board reviews warrants and general financial reports each month. Reimbursements and requests for funds flow from teachers to the program directors to the business manager. Based on the site visit, the facilities remain in excellent condition, provide a clean and safe environment for students, and continue to meet the school's enrollment, vision, and ESLR's. More formal processes for replacing and updating curriculum and technology are being developed. The textbook replacement plan exists but is on hold due to budget constraints. The Individualized Learning Program recently received new biology, English, US history, and civics curriculum. Technology upgrades have occurred this fall and more are planned as part of the action plan to address the need for more bandwidth and infrastructure to support the online learning component of the Individualized Learning program. Resources remain tight but adequate to maintain a qualified staff and efforts continue to be made to provide professional development at a minimal cost as the budget does not include a line item for professional development. Teachers do report feeling nurtured and encouraged in their professional growth. The founder conducts frequent macro level financial planning and annual reporting to the board. The founder reports the financial condition of the school to all staff at bi-annual district wide staff meetings. From interviews, evaluating the available resources and their

allocation appears to be a continuous endeavor led by the founder and including the program directors.

A7. Has the charter school's governing authority and the school leadership executed responsible resource planning for the future? Is the charter school solvent and does it use sound and ethical accounting practices (budgeting/monitoring, internal controls, audits, fiscal health and reporting)?
[FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS ONLY]

Under the leadership of the founder and board, long range resource allocation and budgeting is aligned to the school's vision and ESLR's. An external auditing company audits the school's finances twice per year. Financial reports and monthly reports of issued warrants are reported to the board. Internal controls effectively manage expenses and purchases. Reporting the budget and monthly financial reports to the board ensures transparency as well as communicating the financial state of the school to staff at the bi-monthly all staff meetings. School reserves exceed the state minimum requirement of 3% as required by their bond holders. While the faculty earn less than their counterparts on the local high school district's salary scale and have had their COLA's frozen in recent years, they are fairly compensated. No formal marketing strategy exists. The school relies on word of mouth and community relations with and through the founder. Stakeholders do have access to long range planning through staff meetings and board meetings. ECHS produces a School Accountability Report Card and reports it to their board and to the Escondido Union High School District, the school's sponsoring agency. It is also posted on the school's website.

A8. Has the charter school developed policies, procedures, and internal controls for managing the financial operations that meet state laws, generally accepted practices, and ethical standards?
[FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS ONLY]

Regarding internal controls, the business manager and founder issue warrants. Monthly reports detailing these warrants are presented to the board. Teachers seeking funds make requests through their program directors who then pass on requests to the business manager. An independent firm audits the school's finances twice per year. The audits are presented to the board and the firm reports the audits to the San Diego County Office of Education and to the California Department of Education. No audit exceptions or deficiencies have occurred. Only the founder or the business manager may sign contracts or release funds. Their financial actions are reported to the board monthly. As a charter school, ECHS is not required to adhere to public bidding laws.

Areas of strength for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership and Staff, and Resources (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

- Longevity of leadership and teachers
- School wide support for the vision
- Safe and well maintained facilities
- Students and staff are held to high standards
- Academic achievement is celebrated
- The school practices fiscal integrity and responsibility
- Leadership is accessible

- Leadership is proactive in responding to stakeholders

Key issues for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership and Staff, and Resources (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

- Implement formal procedures for replacing and updating curriculum, technology, salaries, and resources
- Improve and increase communication between leadership and staff members regarding the school's direction, vision, and changes in current policies, curriculum, and programs
- Communication, alignment, and articulation between programs and schools driven by the school's vision and purpose with clear end goals
- The continued implementation of the transition plan for the founder's future retirement and its continued communication to stakeholders

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

The evidence from the Self-Study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the narrative in the Self Study, interviews with stakeholders in Focus Groups, on site observations, board meeting agendas and minutes, the June 2012 audit report, employee and student handbooks, and the school's website.

- Focus Group A Meeting Notes
- NCLB/Credential binder and spreadsheet
- Candidate matrix
- State credentialing requirements
- NCLB/Credential binder and spreadsheet
- CCTC website verification of credentials
- Master teacher schedule
- Interviews with administrators and program directors
- Teacher schedules
- Program Teacher handbooks
- Employee Handbook
- CCSA Manual
- CSDC Manual
- Mentor assignments
- Test scores
- Teacher observation and evaluation forms
- Director performance surveys
- Book list for teachers
- Professional development folders, Classroom Program
- Conference attendance list
- Learning Snapshots
- Home Group agendas
- Professional Growth Plan and Record
- ECHS NING Page
- ECHS Diigo Page
- Audit reports
- CSRC Manual
- Interview with Business Manager – Notes
- Order check-in procedures
- Checkout Procedures for van and theater
- Tech Link for maintenance repairs
- Technology action plan
- Salary comparison charts
- Foundation by-laws
- COLAs awarded
- Student/teacher ratio
- Sponsoring district meeting agenda for SARC presentation
- Accounting system
- Payroll policies
- Current contracts

CATEGORY B. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: CURRICULUM

B1. To what extent do all students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-based curriculum that supports the achievement of the academic standards and the expected schoolwide learning results. To what extent are the expected schoolwide learning results accomplished through standards-based learning (i.e., what is taught and how it is taught)?

Escondido Charter High School (ECHS) as observed by the Visiting Committee demonstrated evidence of a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum accessible to all students through the use of two models: the traditional classroom model and an individualized learning model which address the needs of students as individuals and which are grounded in objectives aligned to the California Standards. ECHS incorporates several research-based strategies to drive curriculum such as the San Marcos Writing Project exemplifying college-based writing standards currently used in the UC system. In addition, Harry K. Wong's *First Days of School*, publication is used by ECHS as their teaching manual for new teachers. Other researchers such as Robert Marzano, Charlotte Danielson, and Douglas Reeves are used in professional development reading groups as well as professional learning communities that focus on guiding new teachers toward creating curriculum to improve all students' academic achievement. The written evidence from these research-based strategies supports the school-wide learning goals and informs rigorous relevant standards-based curriculum for both Traditional Classroom Program students as well as Individualized Learning Program students.

Discussions with staff from both the Individualized Learning Program (ILP) as well as Traditional Classroom Program (TCP) in focus groups provided ample evidence to support that standards based rigorous content was included in the online as well as textbook based homework packets provided to students. Addressing a schoolwide area of followup from its previous full self study visit, there was

clear evidence from all teachers and in particular ILP staff which clearly identified content standards being aligned with course content.

Posters of the ESLR's were evident in the classrooms and offices. It was clear from the Focus group discussions that students understand the values and learning goals that have become a way of ECHS school life through various instructional activities. The school's ESLR's were created to reflect the mission statement, the tenets of the schools charter, and clearly address graduation expectations, American Heritage, and technological capability, p. 117. However, according to the Staff Survey results on p. 68 of the self study, 50% of the staff believes the technology infrastructure at the school does not support the needs of all students to function in this technologically-driven 21st century global community. After teacher input from focus group discussions, grants and other sources of funding are being located to implement more up-to-date technology.

The Visiting Committee found evidence that ECHS emphasizes writing, by requiring all 9th grade students to complete a writing course which is addressed in it's action plan. p. 81. This was a result of analyzing data from results on the Early Assessment Placement (EAP) English test, which exempts students from taking a placement test for English when enrolling in state university. The Visiting Committee commends ECHS in recognizing that a discrepancy existed between their students CST achievement and the number of students scoring an exemption on the EAP even though students outperformed the state results with 45% passing.

Teachers address state standards in their lesson plans and instructional strategies in addition to the textbook assignments. Teachers, across content disciplines, addressed a significant amount of curriculum integration with these categories: Math and Science, English and History, English and Science, English with History and Music, Economics and Music/Fine Arts, English and Fire Technology, Health/Physical Education, English/Language Arts. Evidence of this alignment is confirmed by ECHS high standardized test scores, state ranking and API.

B2. To what extent do all students have access to the school's entire program and assistance with a personal learning plan to prepare them for the pursuit of their academic, personal, and school-to-career goals?

The Visiting Committee in its observations saw evidence that all students have a choice as to what path they will follow in order to graduate. Students in the Classroom Program have the option of two credit plans (230/260) which prepare students for CSU/UC's. Students in the Individualized Learning Program also have these two options in addition to a general level credit option (210) which is geared for students tracking for a community college. Students with their parents, counselor (TCP)/Teacher of Record(ILP) design and make periodic changes to the students' Personal Learning plan as they relate to the students' graduation progress. The Program Director, the counselor, or teacher-of-record create an individualized graduation plan and also a remediation plan for all freshmen who perform below a 2.0 grade point average. The TCP Program Director conduct four seminars annually to assist parents and their students with all high school transitions, community service projects, as well as college readiness and or selection requirements. College readiness assistance is provided to students as needed and often comes from ILP teachers for students in the Individualized Learning Program and academic counselors for students in the Traditional Classroom

program. A college Counselor is available for all students. The leadership team and focus groups, confirmed that one full-time counselor is on staff. Individualized Learning Program teachers serve as counselors by conducting reviews every six months for their students. Teachers in the Traditional Classroom Program are required to submit their course syllabi at the beginning of the school year to certify curriculum rigor. However, curriculum maps, backward mapping, or pacing plans are not required.

B3. To what extent are students able to meet all the requirements of graduation upon completion of the high school program?

The graduation requirements include giving students the option to choose from a 210, 230, or 260 credit option. Students receive graduation checks; data from the ECHS Registrar that give students periodic up-to-date notifications. The Classroom program has a career assessment program that includes a Senior Exhibition along with science laboratory, to address the real-life application requirement. The Individualized Learning Program uses the career technical program or other elective courses to meet the real-life application expectations for students, such as; career training in law enforcement and fire technology, etc. All sophomore students that do not pass the CAHSEE are placed for remediation. All teachers are available to tutor students in need of intervention remediation after school for an hour everyday.

Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

Escondido Charter High School has made efforts worthy of note:

- Academic flexibility for student's that need it.
- Academic structure for student's that need it
- An educational program tailored to the students' life style and needs.
- Small class sizes
- Rigorous course content
- Personalized academic program selections.

Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

- Offer students a well-organized Mathematics program in the labs, online, and onsite environments for ILP as well as TCP.
- Offer additional Advanced Placement courses as demand dictates.
- Update and revise Individualized Learning Program standards-based curriculum course offerings.
- Update technology infrastructure when possible for both programs.
- Revise and Restructure a data-driven cycle of Quality program that includes assessment, planning, implementation and re-assessment.
- Revise, update and document a more informed Professional Development teacher-training program.

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

- Writing curriculum
- New teacher in-service agendas
- Interview with program directors
- Harry Wong books and materials
- Professional reading group selections
- Professional development calendar
- Standards-based textbooks
- Daily objectives on the board in the Classroom Program
- Credit plans
- Final exams
- Classroom ESLR Posters
- School mission and charter
- Learning Snapshots
- Student work samples
- Student writing samples
- Writing rubrics
- Schoolwide Action Plan for writing
- Agendas for Home groups
- ESLRs
- Diploma plans
- A-G completion rates in the Classroom Program
- Program mobility policies
- Teacher emails describing curricular integration
- Teacher discussions
- Focus group discussion
- Student Policies and Procedures Handbook
- Classroom Program Teacher Handbook
- Individualized Learning Program Homework Policy
- NHS roster
- CSF roster
- Saxon Day video
- Senior Exhibition projects
- ECHS athletic participation policy
- Technology classes
- Elective offerings
- Community college articulation agreements
- Leadership meeting agendas
- Articulation meeting reports
- Policies and procedures articulation K-12
- Students taking Palomar EAP placement tests
- Individualized Learning courses
- Concurrent community college enrollment
- AP and Honors course lists
- Synergy parent portal
- Blue Master Agreements
- Senior Exhibition
- Classroom Program Course Selection Worksheet
- Intake test results
- Classroom Program Student Remediation Plan
- Career assessments
- Transition plans for special education students
- Scholarship bulletin board
- College acceptance letters
- Fire technology program
- Criminal justice program
- Senior Exhibition
- Lab science courses
- Technology classes
- Senior’s post-graduation plans
- Science field trips
- CAHSEE pass rates
- CAHSEE prep materials
- Tutorial schedule
- Drop slips
- Warning letters
- Transcripts
- Credit completion slips
- “Grad Checks”
- Teacher/parent communication and meetings
- English 9A writing module

CATEGORY C. STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT LEARNING: INSTRUCTION

C1. To what extent are all students are involved in challenging learning experiences to achieve the academic standards and the expected schoolwide learning results?

ECHS creates a challenging learning experience by offering a selection of individualized learning modalities from traditional classroom instruction, individualized learning through independent studies, classes which include online components along with on-site instruction, as well as small group course offerings called Modules. Parents, students, and teachers use communication modalities such as, teacher websites, email, and the Synergy Parent Portal to post grades online. Scattered evidence of teachers administering rubrics before each area of study was included in portfolios during classroom visits.

Although ECHS is a small school, they strive to offer the same caliber of challenging learning experiences found in a comprehensive high school, by offering a range of honors and AP courses. Teachers are required to have daily objectives, which are aligned to the California Content

Standards, written on the board and this was evidenced in most of the classrooms visited by members of the VC. Students understand the expected level of performance based on the standards and schoolwide learning results as evidenced by a recent student survey in which at least 91 percent of students either agreed or strongly agreed that teachers communicate clear learning objectives, have high expectations of all students, are available to help students, and care about student's success. The Visting Committee's meeting with students clearly corroborated the results of the survey and provided clear support that students were engaged in high levels of thinking in their classrooms and that they were being challenged by a rigorous curriculum.

C2. 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?

Many teachers at ECHS currently use MOODLE, a content management system, for creating blogs, online assessments, online lessons, video lectures and online peer group reviews. Small class sizes create the necessity for teachers to serve as instructional coaches. Teachers currently serve as coaches, college counselors, tutors and chaperones for both the Classroom program as well as the Independent Studies program. Although not evident in all classes, teachers did use a variety of strategies and resources, such as technology to actively engage students to help them succeed at higher levels. ECHS provides annual vacation trips to foreign countries to improve students' exposure to foreign languages, cultures, geography, and economies. p. 148. Although, there was some evidence of differentiated instruction, the primary instructional methodology observed by members of the Visting Committee during our three days on campus was direct instruction.

Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

The school uses multiple approaches towards instruction to ensure all students are engaged and learning:

- Small classes that provide crucial one-on-one attention from teachers
- Individualized Learning teachers provide significant one-on-one mentoring and accountability for underachieving students.
- School culture of high expectations in academic achievement and personal behavior for all students.
- Teachers and staff foster a school culture which allows all students to acquire an education and express themselves in a safe environment.

Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

The school has identified several areas for change and improvement and the campus visit confirmed the need for additional attention to the following issues regarding instruction:

- Update technology used by teachers to ensure they are able to generate assessments, make use of educational software, provide multimedia experiences, and have access to a reliable computer lab.

- Update computers and labs used by students to ensure that they can consistently access technology to facilitate learning.
- Provide resource for various forms of professional development activities so that teachers can remain current in their content areas.

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

- Interview with program directors
- Responses from teachers
- Writing rubrics used
- Assessments
- Master Agreement Contract for Individualized Learning
- Course Contract for Individualized Learning
- Email homework
- Teacher websites
- Teacher responses during Focus groups
- Module schedule
- Support writing and math classes
- Tutorial schedules
- Master schedule
- Individualized Learning course offerings
- IEPs and 504 plans
- Math assistance request form
- Teachers' assessments and lesson plans
- Student survey
- Learning snapshots
- Professional development activities and portfolios
- Classroom Program professional development program
- Classroom observations
- Math assistance requests along with retested material
- Individualized student remediation plans
- Student work samples
- Science composition books
- Student binders
- Classroom tutorials
- Binder checks
- MOODLE use
- Economics class portfolios
- Senior exhibition binders and observations
- College/university concurrent attendance
- Foreign travel by students
- Mock trials
- Economics stock simulation
- Volunteer hours at voting polls
- Student lab reports
- Biology research project
- Scuba certifications
- Computer class projects
- English projects
- Senior exhibition notebooks, research papers and presentations
- Color Guard
- Saxon Day event

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

D1. To what extent does the school use a professionally acceptable assessment process to collect, disaggregate, analyze and report student performance data to the parents and other shareholders of the community?

ECES uses multiple professional acceptable formative and summative assessments to collect, disaggregate, analyze and report student performance data to the parents and the other shareholders of the community. ECES uses a school data system called "Synergy" for their classroom based studies. This allows teachers to input grades, and allows the system to analyze areas of students' strengths and weaknesses which can be followed up with a plan of action for improvement for individual students. Parents of classroom students receive report cards each semester and are able to

see their students current grade online. Individualized Learning students receive a credit completion slip at the end of each course and are mailed a copy of their semester transcript with their final grades, however parents can request copies throughout the year.

ECHS constantly collects and analyzes data derived from cumulative tests, unit tests, projects, homework/packets and “oral validation of content mastery,” as well as state testing data used to understand student strengths and weaknesses. Students receive letter grades in both programs, however, for A-G classes, a C or better must be achieved. When areas of weakness are identified in students, there are various supports for students to rise to the high expectations and meet the school's standards. Ways students receive support include, but are not limited to taking part in modular classes, math lab, and tutoring.

Multiple assessments include labs, individual and group projects, essays, peer assessment, finished product (of arts), verbal presentations, research projects, demonstration of learned skills, as well as a senior project and portfolio. Assessments may be changed throughout the course of the semester/school year in order to better accommodate the needs of the students. They will also vary depending on the subject matter. For instance, the Fire Tech class assesses students on interviewing skills and Fire Academy agility tests.

Students have the opportunity to participate in group work as well as independent work in order to maximize their academics. Students are encouraged to learn technology skills in multiple forms due to ECHS's offering of classes in varying technology areas such as robotics. Researched based projects are utilized for students to become “self-directed adults.” Students are required to participate in community service to become active members in their community, students learn effective communication skills by practicing their writing skills in multiple content areas, as well as being held responsible for staying up to date with their own grades and due dates. Special needs students have the same variety of academic responsibilities but may be adapted based on their IEP.

D2. To what extent do teachers employ a variety of strategies to evaluate student learning? To what extent do students and teachers use assessment results to enhance the educational progress of every student?

ECHS implements multiple ways of embedding assessments in their English and math classes. Teaching/re-teaching is modified based on the level of mastery,” assuming individual students are at a low level of understanding. Both programs encourage students to attend tutorial or spend extra hours in the labs, depending on the class they are struggling with. Parent involvement plays a major role in helping students achieve mastery. Within the program, student performance will dictate customized lesson plans. The teachers discussed an example of this where the lowest 10% of a class of freshmen were identified, and given plans of action based on what skills they were lacking. English and math support were priority to ensure that they would have the skills necessary to be successful in their sophomore year. A common writing rubric may make assessment more consistent across similar subjects in each program..

ECHS has several ways of obtaining student feedback. These include student surveys, class discussions, Writing Weakness Logs, as well as indirect feedback from student grades. Teachers have the ability to work with students in both programs to modify assessments, to a degree, if the class either does not respond well to a previously accepted assessment. Writing logs are one form of

feedback that students can use to see their own growth within their writing skills, reinforcing the importance of ELA mastery. ILP students have the ability to re-work a particular unit if there is concern regarding comprehension of the material. The Teacher of Record may allow more time to reach mastery, or schedule additional appointments to work one-on-one with the student in order to achieve maximum comprehension. One modification that is available is subject matter remediation and math placement tests upon intake. Students are able to remediate subjects in which they have shown low achievement in, allowing them to reinforce concepts that they already know. More importantly giving them a second opportunity to learn concepts at a proficient level.

D3. 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 and the expected schoolwide learning results?

There are multiple groups of people who monitor the success of the students. The sponsoring district, the ECHS Board, ECHS Administration, staff, teachers, students and parents. Each group receives information relevant to enabling them to help determine student progress toward achievement of the academic standards and the expected schoolwide learning results. Each group has a specific purpose in their form of monitoring ranging from the SARC report and assessment data that is presented to the Board to teachers making sure parents are continually informed of their child's progress via their online grade book. By having all of these groups work together, it forms a cyclical process of continual monitoring and updating methods to improve student progress.

ECHS has multiple ways for keeping parents informed about student progress: the publication of the SARC report, a presentation by the Founder to their Board, and progress reports to the parents (in the form of three progress reports per semester as well as a final semester report card, and the real-time online Synergy parent portal which parents can check online.)

D4. To what extent does the assessment of student achievement in relation to the academic standards and the expected schoolwide learning results drive the school's program, its regular evaluation and improvement and usage of resources?

ECHS is a "Goals driven school," which takes the data that has been collected and analyzed and redirects programs based on need. Examples include a restructuring of the math program due to low scores in the subject of algebra, as well as updated assessment rubrics and an intermediary writing class to ensure adequate progress will be made in the ELA field.

ECHS uses assessment results to make changes in the school program and to allocate resources related to teaching and learning before other allocations are considered. Recent examples of this include using the 2011 math results to completely restructure the independent study math program. In the Individualized Learning Program, standardized and individual student assessment in English composition resulted in the creation of English 9A as a writing module. ECHS disaggregates the results from STAR testing by subject and program and presents the data to all off the staff members each fall as well as sharing it with all stakeholders through the SARC. Throughout the course of the year the ECHS Board of Directors has monthly meetings during which they receive reports on

student progress from each program's director and the school's founder. This assures that data is used to monitor the schools progress towards achieving its goals.

Areas of strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

- Parent and student portals, along with Synergy, are great tools for all to use within the TCP, it allows parents and students to be continually updated so that there is no question as to where the student stands in their classes.
- Teachers are allowed to change their terms of assessments based on the needs of the students, or mastery levels, allowing students to express their comprehension in various modalities.
- Escondido Charter High School uses assessment results to develop and modify curriculum on a school wide level.

Key issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

- Accountability: There is a need for a better accountability in the math lab regarding attendance, student progress, and teacher
- Currently, ILP parents do not have online access to their students current grades or classes, bearing in mind that the grading and input systems are vastly different from the TCP classes, it would benefit all parties for parents to have a way to continuously monitor their child's grades without the need to call or email the TOR, which could potentially take time away from another students individual appointments.
- Writing Assessment: There is a need for consistent way to measure student writing achievement in the Individualized Learning Program and while being consistent with the TCP programs expectations.

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

During the visit to ECHS, there was evidence to support both the strengths of the school, as well as areas of concern. The parents and students from the TCP portion of the program both expressed that students rise to the challenges of the rigorous courses implemented within their traditional classroom program. Likewise, the ILP parents and students from the Individualized Learning program appreciated the freedom for students to work at their own pace, while simultaneously having the opportunity to work, intern, or complete college credits while finishing their high school credits. Areas of concern regarding accountability and assessment were limited to a school wide rubric for essays, in order to achieve success on the EAP, as well as a more immediate way for ILP parents to access student grades and current credit count.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| • Academic Writing class | • All-staff PowerPoint presentations | performance by grade, subject, and strand |
| • Additional modules in the Individualized Learning Program | • Annual binder showing disaggregated STAR | • Board Minutes |
| | | • Board minutes and packets |

- Board of Trustee Minutes – sponsoring district board
- CAHSEE results
- CDE website
- Credit slips
- ECHS budget
- ECHS website
- Email homework
- Emails/letters to parents
- Focus Group discussions
- Great Schools website
- Home Group discussions
- Home Group notes
- IEP meetings
- Individualized Learning packets
- Individualized Student Remediation Plan form
- Leadership meeting agendas
- Letters to parents
- Math support classes in the Classroom Program
- Meeting agendas
- New math courses in Individualized Learning
- New online provider in math center
- Newspaper articles
- Newspaper articles listing scores
- Online access to grades for parents through Synergy portal
- Presentations to parents
- Presentations to Staff
- Progress reports
- Report cards and progress reports
- Rubrics used in the classroom
- SARC
- Senior Exhibition memorandum/criteria
- Senior Exhibition schedule
- Senior portfolios
- Staff meetings as a whole and by program
- STAR results
- Student folders
- Student survey results
- Student work
- Synergy grade book system
- Synergy grading system and parent portal
- Synergy parent portal
- Teacher assessments
- Transcripts
- Writing weakness logs
- Written grading policy

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

E1. To what extent does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to encourage parental and community involvement, especially with the teaching/learning process?

The school has several occasions that invite parents to become involved with their students' academic life such as the White Tiger Awards, back to school nights, and the Parent Volunteer Organization; however parent participation in focus groups were lacking attendance. Charter Notes is another way for parents to know what events are going on in the school. Parents in the TCP program receive daily email notifications regarding teacher homework assignments, and both programs allow parents to monitor student grades by contact with the teachers. There is no mention of non-English speaking parent involvement, this may be due to the fact that very few students are ELL classified. However, the staff has several members who are fluent in Spanish and are available to translate as needed.

The community plays an active role in the school. Walk on coaches come from the community, businesses recruit students for jobs and/or community service projects, and members from the Armed Forces and local law enforcement organizations teach electives and provide exposure to their fields for students and parents alike. There is a wall with the pictures of the students who have joined the service, indicating that it is not only an alternative to immediate entrance into college, but an honor to be a part of the Armed Services.

Parents are constantly informed of their child's achievements via progress reports, class completion slips, and mailed transcripts. After speaking with the parents, it would appear that any questions that may arise regarding their child's progress can be directly asked of the teacher/teachers by emailing, calling, or even stopping by the school.

Another way that the community is involved with student success is the Criminal Justice and Fire Tech classes. These classes are offered twice a week, initially intended for the ILP students, they are taught by active professionals from their respective fields. These classes offer students a career option and put them ahead of their peers for job opportunities in these fields, and in return, may serve the community they belong to.

E2. To what extent is the school a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning? To what extent is the culture of the school characterized by trust, professionalism, high expectations for all students, and a focus on continuous school improvement?

According to the surveys, students and parents believe that the school is a safe place to be. Upon observation, students are respectful of one another, and self-regulate against bullies and gossips; cases that reach teachers or administration attentions are far and few between. Teachers, administration, and even the founder may stand at the gate welcoming students as they come into campus daily. All visitors must check in at the office prior to being allowed onto campus, and must wear a visible badge so that they can be immediately identified. Within this environment, students can focus on learning rather than issues that may arise on traditional campuses. The campus is free of graffiti and trash, and the maintenance staff successfully oversees and takes pride in the upkeep of school grounds and facilities.

All students must maintain a minimum 2.5 GPA to participate in athletics, which is higher than the 2.0 requirement established by CIF. Additionally, teachers use direct communication with parents when their child is noticeably underachieving. This communication contains an action plan, which will vary from student to student, but will likely involve mandatory tutorials, parent/student work at home, and additional assignments to master comprehension. The school also offers Honors and AP courses for students to push beyond the minimum requirements of a high school diploma, as well as 3 different paths to graduation, all dependent on where the student plans to go after high school.

Mutual respect between teachers and students and the establishment of relationships is fostered through one-on-one appointments in the Individualized Learning Program and small class sizes in the Classroom Program. Students in the Classroom Program are known by name by the Director, Assistant Director, and many teachers. Parents and students are known as “customers,” and all staff members treat them with courtesy and respect. This was a consistent theme in both the parent and student groups interviewed by the Visiting Committee. One student quoted, “Teachers teach to you, not the lesson,” which is evident in the relationships fostered between students and teachers.

E3. To what extent do all students receive appropriate support along with an individualized learning plan to help ensure academic success?

The Student Services Coordinator, centrally located in the library, provides academic, college, and career counseling services. ECHS emphasizes post-secondary education planning by administering the PSAT, advertising the district and county college fairs, and hosting college representatives and military recruiters for campus visits.

Resources and personnel are allocated to provide the services as described in the previous prompt. It varies from student to student and what their specific needs are. Special Ed is partnered with EUHSD in order to provide the correct services for students with IEP's. Student counselors are readily available to discuss options for students post high school activities.

ECHS provides two academic programs, the Classroom Program and the Individualized Learning Program, designed to meet the needs of a diverse student population with varied learning needs. Escondido Charter High School (ECHS) offers three diploma plans for students to meet graduation requirements. Teachers and administrators determine the most appropriate diploma plan based on the post-graduation needs and ability level of the student. One of the integrations that has been made for the ILP students is the use of hybrid or blended classes. These classes allow ILP students the opportunity to receive direct instruction, lab time, and extra help as needed by the student.

The ILP program is specific to the needs of a flexible schedule for students. By allowing students to customize their own schedules, they have the opportunity to take college courses, be an active participant in the community, or even take on more responsibilities in their homes. Students in this program are enrolled year round, and can complete courses at a faster pace, allowing them to graduate ahead of time.

E4. To what extent do students have access to a system of personal support services, activities and opportunities at the school and within the community?

Most activities are linked with some concept of academic standards. These include: Academic Achievers, Academic League, The National Honor Society, Robotics, Marine Science Club, California Scholarship Federation, Mock Trial, Civil Air Patrol, Key Club, Youth in Government, Operation Home Front and internships with local political officials. The foreign language and science departments sponsor opportunities for students to travel abroad. Teachers encourage and facilitate entry in community art, photography, and dance competitions. Students are required to maintain a 2.5 GPA, compared to the CIF required 2.0 GPA, in order to participate in school sponsored athletics.

Student involvement has increased, but it is not stated by what percentage. Students who are not involved or engaged are identified and encouraged to participate in an ECA, however, the parents discussed how students in the ILP program often do not want to participate in the regular high school activities.

Students complete an annual student survey containing several questions pertaining to student services, however their presence was lacking in the WASC focus groups. Administrators review and evaluate the survey results and adjust services accordingly, budget permitting. All ECHS administrators interact and converse with students on a regular basis informally in the entry archway and commons and in more formal meetings in offices.

Areas of strength for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

The school has created a very positive and productive environment for students and staff. Among the specific areas of accomplishment are:

- The school has a back to basics attitude, emphasizing American Heritage and Values, creating a culture of mutual respect for staff/students/parents, as well as respect for the school itself.
- Community involvement is present in multiple aspects and contributes highly to the betterment of the school and its stakeholders.
- Each students' future is taken into account when placing them in either programs or classes; their goals reflect the path they may take to complete their high school degree. This allows students to either be on a high achieving path for four year college acceptance, or a skills based job with little to no college needed for economic and personal success.

Key issues for School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

- Student and parent presence was lacking in the focus groups, a voice of these stakeholders should be given a key role due to what potential outcomes can be for students from both programs.

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

Evidence found from site observation reflects that the school's culture is well developed and maintained. Students, staff, and stakeholders are mutually respectful of one another, and the property itself. The concept of "family" and community are reinforced, providing a safe and adaptive school environment for both programs. The only information that could have been of use was the verbal input from students and parents within the focus groups.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic Writing class• Academic Writing handbook• Additional modules in the Individualized Learning Program• Athletic eligibility policy• Athletic Team Rosters• Attendance policy• Board policies• CAHSEE results• Club Officer Rosters• Coaching rosters• College Bound seminar presentations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community service record form• Computer use agreement• Course overviews for applied technologies electives• Credit evaluation forms• Diploma Plans• Dress code policy• ECHS budget• Facebook page• General Math packets• Individualized Student Remediation Plan• Job postings | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key Club Facebook page• List of clubs and organizations• Maintenance schedule• Master schedule• Math Remediation Form• Math support classes in the Classroom Program• Mission Statement• New math courses in Individualized Learning• New online provider in math center• Parent survey |
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- Professional Development Memorandum
- Professional development website
- School website
- Senior Exhibition panelists
- Special events notices
- STAR results
- Student survey
- Student, parent, staff surveys
- Suspension/expulsion policy
- Syllabus with grade weighting
- Synergy parent portal
- Transcripts
- Walkthrough of campus

Part B: Synthesis of Schoolwide Areas of Strength and Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-up

General Comments:

The administration, faculty, and staff are to be commended for their participation in the preparation of the Focus on Learning document, however there were no students and only one non-staff parent present in the Focus Groups during the visit. The staff, students, parents, and administration have a shared vision of making ECHS an environment that is dedicated to excellence. The parents, students, staff and administration assisted the Visiting Committee in the collection and clarification of data that was needed in order to analyze the existing status of the school. The Visiting Committee found that the students were extremely friendly and appreciative of the efforts made to improve the quality of educational opportunities available to them.

The Visiting Committee gathered all school-wide areas of strength and critical areas for follow-up from the entire Visiting Committee Report. These were analyzed and synthesized so that those similar in content or intent were combined. These synthesized strengths and critical areas for follow-up are the most concise thoughts of the Visiting Committee as a result of the site visit.

Schoolwide Areas of Strength (list numerically)

1. Schoolwide support for the MISSION
 2. Safe and well maintained facilities
 3. Students and staff are held to high standards
 4. Small class sizes
 5. Rigorous course content, curriculum, and expectations
 6. Teachers and staff foster a school culture which allows all students to acquire an education and express themselves in a safe environment
 7. Parent and student portals, which allow parents and students to be continually updated so that there is no question as to where students stand in their classes
 8. Collegiality between and amongst all stakeholders
- Synthesize schoolwide critical areas for follow-up and list numerically. *Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.*
 - ✓ Areas already identified by the school in the action plan sections

- ✓ Areas to be strengthened within the already identified areas
- ✓ Additional areas identified by the Visiting Committee. *This includes areas related to student achievement and other profile data, the school program and operation, and the action plan.*

Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up (list numerically)

1. Update technology infrastructure when possible for both programs to support the schools mission to foster technologically literate individuals
2. Implement formal procedures for replacing and updating curriculum, technology, salaries, and resources
3. Continue to improve the mathematics labs, online, and onsite environments for ILP and TCP students
4. Implementation of a comprehensive writing curriculum and rubric for all students that is articulated from grades 9 through 12.
5. Need for consistent way to measure student writing achievement in Individualized Learning Program while being consistent with the TCP programs expectations

Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

The current Action Plan for 2013 centers around Escondido Charter High School goals which include: 1) Mathematics Achievement, in particular foundational skills and algebra; 2) Writing Achievement, in particular an emphasis on non-fiction writing; and 3) Improving Technology Infrastructure.

The plan is linked to specific ESLR's, outlines the rationale for each goal, identifies specific growth targets and ways of assessing student achievement. It also has a timeline for when items are to be completed and provides who is responsible to monitor and evaluate the progress of each Action Plan item.

Comments on the above mentioned school improvement issues:

The Visiting Committee believes that Escondido Charter High School staff under the direction of its leadership team has targeted critical needs of the school in its action plan. We are convinced that the teachers and administrators are truly committed to continual self-analysis and improvement, as this plan proposes. The school's mission permeates the culture at Escondido Charter and the Action Plan is reasonable in terms of scope and time as Escondido Charter continues to seek additional ways to address the areas of Math, Writing and Technology.

The Visiting Committee is sure that pursuit of the plan to focus on Mathematics and Writing achievement will prove useful to students. This part of the plan does not require substantial financial resources, but rather it is highly dependent on human resources, the time and energy of teachers and administrators. The staff is very enthusiastic, collegial, and committed to helping students both individually and collectively, so we are confident in their willingness to follow through with this portion of the action plan. With regards to the goal of improving Technology Infrastructure, the Committee recognizes the schools challenges in a difficult fiscal environment for schools, but based on its record of "not wasting a dollar" the Committee is confident that the school will maximize its effort to achieve the goals it has set out with regards to technology.

The follow-up process for monitoring the progress of the action plan is specific and all-inclusive of all stakeholders. The Leadership Team takes on the biggest role, but all stakeholders need to be involved in many of the steps. The plan involves sequential actions, with one leading naturally to the next. Based on previous accreditation visits and discussions with the Leadership Team, the school has repeatedly shown the Visiting Committee that they are committed to and actively focused on the continual improvement of instruction and student learning as well as to their own professional growth.

In summary, the school is making major changes in the lives of the families and children in the community. Escondido Charter High School's commitment to its mission and the caring attention given to students and parents by all staff will continue to lead to high student achievement and one that continually evolves and embraces self-examination.