

**PALO ALTO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**  
**PROGRESS REPORT**  
**SINGLE PLAN FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT (SPSA)**  
**2011-2012**

*EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

During the 2008-2009 school year, Palo Alto High School participated in the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) self-study accreditation process. Below you will see key highlights of our work from the 2011-2012 school year. More information can be found in our full report.

**WASC SCHOOL GOALS**

**GOAL 1: HORIZONTAL & VERTICAL CURRICULAR ALIGNMENT** – *The goal that teachers work together in the best interest of each and every student at Paly.*

- Clarify course titles in English and Science in a clear and obvious way, instead of the previous labeling that was unclear and often had a negative connotation associated with it.
- Guidance created, reviewed, and refined Advisory lesson plans based on students' feedback regarding the College Application process.
- English did major work on aligning their courses so each student, regardless of instructor, will have the same expectations and outcomes.
- Spanish teachers created a scope and sequence for Spanish 1.
- Science and Math worked to reduce overlap and spread out assessment and projects in courses that share students.
- History/SS developed curriculum maps for World History and Governments and common assessments.
- Over 2500 hours of professional development for Paly staff this past summer to align their assessments and adjust their pacing, homework, and curriculum.

**GOAL 2: COLLEGE READINESS & POST-SECONDARY PLANNING** – *The goal that we prepare each and every student for college and that each and every student graduates from Paly with a robust and individual plan for his or her education after high school.*

- Career Technical Education worked on creating an Engineering and Computer Science Pathway that we hope to start in the next year or two.
- Visual and Performing Arts expanded their Artist in Residence Program, exposing students to more industry professionals.

- Special Education significantly enhanced their transition planning to include field trips to colleges and industry leaders to support post-secondary goals for students.
- The Summer Bridge program ran for the first time this past summer to help students who might otherwise struggle to get a preview of high school. A college and career component is being developed for students and parents for next summer's program. More about this program in the next section.
- Enhanced and increased our College Essay Writing Workshops for students.
- Added Community College Multivariable Calculus Honors course on our campus for our students who completed BC Calculus before senior year.

**GOAL 3: SUPPORT FOR ALL STUDENTS** – *The goal that each and every student is supported in his or her personal and academic work.*

- “Restart” classes for English, Math, History/Social Science, and Science using blended learning.
- Conceptual Physics added in Science - D Lab designation.
- Extraordinary collaboration between Special Education and all departments on campus.
- Co-Teaching in 10 classes to advance inclusion for all students.
- Outreach Specialist to provide additional direct support to our underrepresented population.
- Analyze grades across campus and create intervention plans for students in need of assistance.
- Collaboration and Tutorial centered on our underperforming students - Saturday Tutorial, Testing Center, Library during Finals.

#### AREAS FOR CONTINUED GROWTH

- Curriculum Alignment in English and History/ Social Science.
- Supporting underserved students.
- Expand our support programs.

## WASC SCHOOL GOALS

**GOAL 1: HORIZONTAL & VERTICAL ALIGNMENT** – *The goal that teachers work together in the best interest of each and every student at Paly.*

**GOAL 2: COLLEGE READINESS & POST SECONDARY PLANNING** – *The goal that we prepare each and every student for college and that each and every student graduates from Paly with a robust and individual plan for his or her education after high school.*

**GOAL 3: SUPPORT FOR ALL STUDENTS** – *The goal that each and every student is supported in his or her personal and academic work.*

Palo Alto High School has established a deeply collaborative, team-oriented culture with our students' needs being at the center. We use our WASC goals and data to help guide and adjust our work to meet students where they are academically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually.

As professionals, our continued growth is critical in our pursuit to ensure every student is successful at Paly. We have established two structures which aid us in our growth. First, we have weekly collaboration meetings wherein departments focus on their identified WASC goals and meet with colleagues from other departments. Second, we have established a practice of using the summer to enhance our skills and dive deeper into our school-wide goals. Paly staff have found major success in using the summer for professional development; staff has logged more than 4500 hours of collaboration focused on students!

Feedback is also critical when serving students at Paly. We use feedback to inform our conversations, be reflective about our work, and most importantly, make refinements in our practices. Our report details many areas where we have used student and staff feedback, coupled with data to improve student success.

# WASC GOAL 1 – HORIZONTAL & VERTICAL CURRICULAR ALIGNMENT

The goal that teachers work together in the best interest of each and every student at Paly.

## SCHOOLWIDE PROGRESS

### ENGLISH

With the change in calendar beginning Fall 2012, the Paly English Department spent time during collaborations and during the summer professional development days adjusting and aligning curriculum. Through our focus on writing instruction alignment, it became clear that alignment was a major area of growth, since disparities within grade levels were much larger than first imagined.

The English Department revisited the names of each course to increase clarity and transparency. The department made the following refinements to the course titles to reflect merely the level (Example: English 9, English 10, American Literature 11) in a clear and obvious way, instead of the previous labeling that was unclear and often had a negative connotation associated with it.

In addition, the English Department revisited book lists, and in an effort to relieve teachers of the multiple text requirements, the teachers determined which texts would be taught at each grade level. They also believed it was a great opportunity to introduce some modern texts that might be more attractive to our diverse student body. Making this adjustment allowed teachers to adjust the curriculum to better serve the students. Examples of required texts include: 9th grade, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Of Mice and Men*; 10th grade, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Macbeth*; 11th grade (semester), *The Great Gatsby*; 12th grade (semester), *Hamlet*.

Providing flexibility to teachers also serves students better, since, in many cases, the stress of moving through the semester too quickly in order to "get through" a certain number of texts is minimized.

English teachers spent their summer professional development days working toward horizontal alignment.

### NINTH GRADE ALIGNMENT

- A. Discussion of Writing
  - a. 1st Semester: 2 Formal multi-paragraph pieces for revision and grading.
  - b. 4 Formal multi-paragraph pieces for revision and grading.
- B. Discussion of Grading Rubrics
  - a. We agreed to use the same rubric *Six Traits of Good Writing*.
  - b. Agreed to use a Portfolio approach to writing.
- C. Discussion of Mythology Unit (Background of it) (Character Development Hero Journey)
  - a. Introduce Greek/Roman God names.
  - b. Focus on the Hero Journey.
  - c. 3 stories to teach
    - i. Theseus
    - ii. Hercules
    - iii. Perseus
  - d. The Edith Hamilton work is complex.

- e. Each student picks a God/Goddess and the story about and does a presentation about it.
- f. Write a narrative piece.
- D. Discussion of a Short Story Unit Plot development
- E. Discussed the Writing Goal for the End of the 1st Semester
  - a. By the end of the 1st semester, a student needs to be able produce a properly formatted, well-organized, unified multi-paragraph paper. Format is more important than quality of content 1st semester.
- F. Discuss Common Formative Assessment and a Pull-out Day for Grading
  - a. 1st Semester Use a common formative assessment on 10/1/12.
  - b. 2nd Semester Use a common formative assessment on 12/3/12.
- G. Future Goals for Planning
  - a. Discussion of essay point values and how those values differ between semesters.
  - b. Develop a pacing guide.
  - a. Discuss portfolio approach to writing.
  - b. Align presentations to standards.

## TENTH GRADE ALIGNMENT

Common number of essays and types of essays

- 2 per semester for formal writing assignments
- One semester: literary analysis + informative/explanatory
- One semester: literary analysis + narrative
- Essay: multi-paragraph writing sample
- Process papers vs. in-class writing
- 6 novels (3 per semester)

### Writing Standards

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Topic #1: Punctuation

- Clauses and phrases
- Pronoun agreement
- Denise every Wed. for 30 minutes (English workshop)
- Grammar power half hour
- For graded essays, have students go through and write the rule next to each error
- Lucy website: Grammar Bytes

Topic #2: Grammar Focus

- Sentence fragments and run-ons
- Parts of speech (make a flipbook)

Topic #3: Critical Reading

- More nonfiction
- Start homework reading in class (15 minutes at end of class) only for 10B

- Give reading notes that will guide them to analysis
- Projects need to be about the students
- Games with reading from homework, especially focusing on direct quotes
- SSR with independent library books (first 15-20 minutes of every block period) or alternate with grammar instruction time. Novels or nonfiction (no magazines).
- Only for 10B
- Take notes during class discussions (add to homework notes)
- Use reading quizzes in 10B

## ELEVENTH GRADE ALIGNMENT

### Topic #1: Essays

- All literary analysis
- 3-4 pages in length
- 4-6 essays per semester
- 2 essays for Gatsby
- No prompts
- Number of paragraphs should reflect argument (minimum 4)
- Intro/Conclusion should be 4-5 sentences
- Argument has to apply to the whole text
- Can give students topics to focus on
- Length of time to write essay: 1 week
- Check thesis and outlines in advance
- Quote blending: around 3 per paragraph
- Focus on teaching transitions

### Topic #2: Diagnostic Writing Exam

- Short story or poem The Story of an Hour, by Kate Chopin
- Write an analytical paragraph in response
- Help students determine if they are appropriately placed

### Topic #3: Vocabulary

- Make vocab cumulative
- Choose some words from texts

## TWELFTH GRADE

Met with colleagues to solidify alignment among World Literature teachers, specifically in assignments given, gradebook structure and percentages.

### Electives

Journalism: The group of teachers worked to re-craft the journalism program to align it with a Media Arts Pathway consistent with the CTE program proposal for the \$2.7 million state CTE grant for the Media Arts Center. They expanded that project to incorporate the work of our other media arts colleagues in photography and video production, working out student pathway options for the new building and sketching out units that could cross over between various pathways. This is an exercise in both horizontal and vertical alignment in the media arts, with some elements of the new program to be piloted in Fall 2012 and the entire program to be polished through the year for implementation with the move to the new building in Fall 2013."

## HISTORY / SOCIAL SCIENCE

Our History/Social Science Department continues its strong collaborative culture with the other secondary schools and within the department. As a result of their ongoing collaboration, they have produced a scope and sequence for research standards.

Teachers continue to devote collaboration and professional development time to integrate and implement the Common Core State Standards in History/Social Science.

### NINTH GRADE

- A. Developed and refined the curricular map for our World History (WH) classes.
- B. Created a new “review unit” for all WH classes.
- C. Outlined goals for all students to: understand the basic concept of research (locating sources to answer a question); familiarize students with library resources and database collections; and understand the various themes and events that were central to a historical era (Middle Ages, Renaissance, etc.).
- D. Collaborated with our teacher librarian to create a common assessment and delineated early research skills for all 9th grade students.
- E. Created an additional research based assessment for second semester.

### TENTH GRADE

- A. Developed and refined a curricular map for Government classes; the first update in more than five years.
- B. Agreed to create a common assessment, using the Election Project, which builds on research skills taught in the 9th grade, is part of the integration of Common Core State Standards, and our State Content Standards in History/Social Science.

Our AP teachers, US History and Economics[1], participated in summer workshops. All AP courses continue to be open enrollment and students are encouraged to reach for personal success.

Professional Development collaboration to discuss both writing and research between all secondary History/Social Science schools began[2] in early 2012, and will continue through 2013. The department gathered evidence from each grade level, identified the research skills they teach, and the assignments/lessons used to teach those skills. Each teacher provided specific examples of projects and lessons to other teachers in the District. Teachers are committed to taking the next steps toward streamlining research skills from middle school to high school.

## MATHEMATICS

The Paly Math Department continues its strong communication with colleagues at Gunn, comparing curricula, textbooks and teaching methodologies, and learning from each other. This year, staff will evaluate the Algebra 2 textbook that Gunn recently adopted, and consider it as a replacement for Paly’s. Paly teachers are piloting the use of *IXL*, a supplemental online tool, in Algebra 1 classes.

The Math Department, like others, spent a considerable amount of time collaborating over the summer. Teachers met in teams to create new pacing guides so all courses fit the new school calendar, with final exams before the winter break. They used this opportunity to revisit course content and to ensure that the levels of difficulty of assignments and assessments in the different lanes are appropriate.

In addition, they have begun a series of collaboration sessions with the Paly Science Department, to refine pace and sequence in both Science and Math courses so that students have the mathematical tools they need to be successful in the Science courses they take. Moreover, both departments have been collaborating to minimize heavy testing days for shared students.

## SCIENCE

The Science Department continues its focus on collaboration within the department and across campus. By strategically increasing their communication with other departments, they have enhanced their focus on supporting all students. The department has taken full advantage of our weekly collaboration and coordinated collaborations with other departments, namely Special Education and Math.

In August, science teachers met with the Special Education Department. This collaboration allowed the Science Department to meet the new Resource Teachers, as well as know where to find each teacher, should questions arise during the year. In addition, each science teacher was able to have a conversation with specific Resource Teachers about each Special Education student in their class. We believe this type of basic, yet complicated to coordinate, communication is key to all students' success.

In addition to the collaboration with the Special Education Department, Science staff is also collaborating with Mathematics. Teachers who have common students in math and science have had conversations about when certain math topics are taught and how math and science classes could better align and support each other. AP Physics and BC Calculus teachers met in September, and the following subject matter teachers met to discuss alignment of math and science topics in late October:

<b>Math Class</b>	<b>Science Class</b>
Algebra 1, 1.1 and 1.2	Conceptual Physics
Geometry 1 and 1A	Chemistry
Algebra 2 & Alg2/TrigA	Physics

Science teachers continue to collaborate in core subject matter teams.

Biology teachers maintain a focus on aligning curriculum among teachers, and ensuring curriculum is differentiated so that it appropriately meets the needs of students in Biology and Biology H. Biology teachers are refining how they offer retake exams, so that students who are poor test takers have a second chance to learn the material and feel more successful.

Chemistry teachers are continuing to develop and adjust benchmark quizzes, which are based on the California state standards. These benchmarks have greatly helped students who struggle by providing them with multiple opportunities to retake the quiz until they fully understand the key concept.

Physics teachers continue to better align homework policies, practices, and projects. Teachers are discussing and refining how to offer, a previously used, semester and yearlong projects so that students will still have the chance to apply and demonstrate their physics knowledge through project based experiences. In addition, physics teachers continue to offer retake exams for students who performed poorly on their first try. They use a unique protocol. Students review the material with a peer and then retake the exam. The benefit is twofold, with the peers having a chance to strengthen their physics knowledge, and the student retaking the exam having a second opportunity to prove they understand the material.

## WORLD LANGUAGE

Teachers of like languages used collaboration extensively during weekly department and school-wide time. Some teachers (i.e., Chinese, Japanese, and American Sign Language) do not have colleagues who teach the same languages with whom to meet during collaboration time, so they have set up regular after school and weekend meetings with colleagues from Gunn High School.

Japanese 1 began using a new textbook series, which will also be used in levels 2 and 3 in the next two years. Paly's Japanese teacher has been collaborating with her counterpart at Gunn and also with her colleague at the middle school to ensure a smooth transition using the new textbook series and to exchange ideas for best practices.

Similarly in Chinese, Paly's two Chinese teachers have collaborated with each other and with Gunn's Chinese teacher, since the levels taught by both are staggered to complete the full sequence of classes from Level 1 to AP Chinese Language and Culture.

In French, both teachers have worked together to use the new French textbook series in Levels 1, 2 and 3. Additionally, the French 1 teacher has joined her colleagues at the middle school by creating a group on Schoology, to share lessons and assessments.

Spanish teachers, in every level, have worked together during collaboration and at other times to make sure students are experiencing similar levels of homework, projects and assessments.

Several Spanish 1 teachers used the summer planning time to create a scope and sequence for both semesters of Spanish 1. Spanish AP Language teachers have collaborated similarly and plan on working on revising course descriptions, as the Spanish AP Language curriculum undergoes revisions and changes per College Board recommendations. Spanish 2 teachers have revised the scope and sequence of the material taught from the Level 2 textbook, added supplemental materials for review at the beginning of the school year, and now give common assessments.

## CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Home Economics and Computer Applications teachers have met with middle school teachers to vertically align curricula. The goal is to enable students to pick up from where they left off in middle school without having to take a prerequisite in high school.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS (VAPA)

Our VAPA teachers have created subgoals A and B below:

### **A. *Develop curricula to meet student needs and strategic plan of department (for development of new courses based on student needs and interests).***

#### *Film*

Using student feedback, collaboration with post secondary colleges, and professional standards, both Video/Digital Filmmaking I and Advanced Video/Digital Filmmaking II have undergone revisions.

#### *Choir*

The Beginning Choir and Advanced Vocal syllabus have been revised to include units on composition, digital music, commercial singing, jazz and pop. Working through the Steering Committee, students now have access to Career Technical Education credit in advanced vocals.

Staff are also differentiating in Concert Choir by splitting the students into two levels, moderate and advanced. After trying out this model in November and early December 2012, staff will discuss the possibility of expanding the class into two different sections. The[3] goal is to create a more intimate experience, while meeting students at their level of music competency. The AP Music Theory class, teachers are working on expanding the method of delivery, and will add blended learning to curriculum in Fall of 2013. Classes will be taught online days of the week, and one day of in-class instruction.

### *Band*

Our Band teachers worked to revise the syllabus in Jazz, Symphonic Band and Orchestra. They have added units on leadership, conducting, and commercial performance to meet the interest of students. In addition, the courses are aligned with state Career Technical Educational standards. Qualifying students now have the choice of Career Technical Educational units in Symphonic Band, Jazz Band and Orchestra.

### *Theatre*

During the summer, we developed and have begun implementing (Fall 2012) TV, Film and Multimedia units in Theatre 1 and 2 classes. We have also clarified theatre arts pathway (Theatre 1, Theatre 2, 3, and Theatre 4 Honors), especially[4] for new students. Furthermore, we adjusted Theatre 4 Honors curriculum to include additional Honors projects (seven more this year than last year) through in-class student leadership and instructional opportunities.

### *Painting and Drawing*

Painting and drawing teachers realigned and correlated the Advanced Painting and Drawing class to meet the Career Technical Education State Standards and Pathways. The correlations shaped new curriculum for the 2012 school year. The class has now officially been approved for Career Technical credit, allowing more students to take four years of art.

Staff also refined an advanced curriculum unit to include traditional spatial representation, so that students applying to art schools would have an advanced, and personally creative work, which reflects their understanding of representational 3D space.

A huge accomplishment was the rebirth of the Graphic Design class. Through the leadership of the teacher, the class was rebuilt and offered to interested students. The vision is to have an alternative class for those who struggle with the traditional art curriculum.

### *Ceramics*

Our new teacher has made revisions to the Intermediate Ceramic curriculum and Advanced Sculpture curriculum, based on the experience of advanced students and the previous teacher.

### *Photo*

All Photography classes were revised to include current technologies: cell phone apps, digital software applications for video and slideshows, and exporting applications for Internet file sharing. The additions were based on student feedback, professional photographers, and updated national VAPA and Technology professional standards. We also collaborated on revisions with Jennifer Hogan, Gunn High School's Photo teacher.

## **B. Align curriculum and instruction to meet current best practices.**

### *Film*

Staff conducted a review of current journals and books on: arts pedagogy, multiple intelligences theory, constructivism, and project based learning. Based on the review, they revised units in courses to include current uses of technology: photo, 2D art—digital media, theatre, and digital filmmaking.

### *Choir*

Teachers reviewed best practices in certain Beginning Choir reading and music comprehension areas. Based on their review, they introduced Orff (things children like to do: sing, chant rhymes, clap, dance, and keep a beat on anything near at hand. These instincts are directed into learning music by hearing and making music first, then reading and writing it later. This is the same way we all learned our language.) Orff Schulwerk happens in a non-competitive atmosphere where one of the rewards is the pleasure of making good music with others. When the children want to write down what they have composed, reading and writing find their moment and Kodaly (geared more to older learners and advanced musicians. Studies have shown that the Kodály Method improves intonation, rhythm skills, music literacy, and the ability to sing in increasingly complex parts (DeVries 2001:24). Outside of music, it has been shown to improve perceptual functioning, concept formation, motor skills, and performance in other academic areas such as reading and math (25), practices at the beginning of the year and work into literature. They also integrated current technology for assessment, including: Sonicfit, Karajan Pro, and Tenuto on the iPad. Finally, we introduced Google Voice to test student musicianship and comprehension.

### *Band*

After review of best practices, staff have implemented a consistent and rigorous basics program in band classes. In addition, with the combination of both teachers' cumulative experience and network associates, they refined the existing curriculum.

### *Theatre*

After a revision of the curriculum, instructors refined and made the Anticipatory Set and Closure explicit in each day's instruction. Also, they increased opportunities to incorporate technology into the classroom and productions, including iPod and iPad apps related to theater, based on best practices and a desire to be innovative.

### *Painting and Drawing*

In 2011-2012, painting and drawing teachers worked with the sculpture and photography programs to ensure that the first-year foundation/introductory class was based on sequential curriculum, providing a strong foundation for the needs of the sculpture and photography programs, with emphasis on the elements of art and principles of design. Also, a nine-week clay unit was added. The course syllabus was sent to the feeder middle school programs to ensure that the program expanded upon the material currently taught in those programs.

### *Art Spectrum*

Teachers developed a new color theory unit in order to provide more challenge to first-year students in terms of painting, design, and color theory.

### *Art History*

The Art History teacher spent time this summer revising period outlines for the first semester to use on Schoology, so that all students have access to general notes from each period, which encapsulate style and important elements of historical context from the major periods of first semester. Additionally, she

simplified introductory parts of her notes to post online for students to use to study for tests. This is especially helpful to students who struggle with taking notes.

#### *Ceramics*

Using feedback from students and the previous teacher, we revised the Intermediate Ceramic curriculum and Advanced Sculpture curriculum. The revisions included curriculum and reorganization of studio and equipment in terms of efficiency and safety, with regard to California and District standards.

#### *Photo*

The teacher reviewed current practices in photography and technology from the Internet, art magazines, books and online publications. The goal was to be able to integrate best practices from arts pedagogy, multiple intelligences, project based learning, digital software, and cell phone technology into students' experiences at Paly. She also attended a College Board workshop for AP Studio Art to collect examples of best practices to share with students. In addition to the AP conference, she collaborated at a NYC conference with 16 teachers from around the country for Humanities integration in the Arts.

#### *Ceramics*

Our new teacher has made revisions to the Intermediate Ceramic curriculum and Advanced Sculpture curriculum, based on the experience of advanced students and the previous teacher.

#### *Photo*

All Photography classes were revised to include current technologies: cell phone apps, digital software applications for video and slideshows, and exporting applications for Internet file sharing. The additions were based on student feedback, professional photographers, and updated national VAPA and Technology professional standards. We also collaborated on revisions with Jennifer Hogan, Gunn High School's Photo teacher.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Special Education Department is in its second year of the new service-delivery model. In the 2011-2012 school year, the department moved to a more inclusive model, which included co-teaching in Social Science, Math, Science, and English. The specialists worked (and continue to work) collaboratively to enhance the curriculum to meet the needs of all students. For example, one of the specialists participated in a summer professional development planning session and assisted the Government teachers in aligning the content to the Common Core Standards.

During their professional development time this summer the department created a week-by-week calendar, which the entire academic support team follows. This calendar includes the scope and sequence for the units and lessons the team uses. The same lesson is taught every Monday throughout all the academic support classes. On block days case managers meet with students for the first ten minutes of class, and then students, using a planning sheet, rotate to one of four subject area support classes. The academic support team is working very much in alignment.

This year we opened another level of therapeutic support for students with an Individualized Education Plan. The program is called Therapeutic Elective Component and it serves students who are struggling to access their education due to an emotional disturbance. The teacher and therapist from this program are working closely with the Gunn High School team to ensure alignment between the two programs.

The Special Education Department also opened a program to serve students on the Autism Spectrum. The program, Academic Communication, is also being taught at Gunn. The two Paly and Gunn teachers worked together for a total of six days this summer and meet weekly during the school year to ensure alignment and share best practices.

## LIBRARY

Our teacher-librarian has done an outstanding job of expanding the resources available to students and staff. We have a robust resource collection that includes over 11,000 books, 20 online databases and over 600 downloadable audio books and digital books. Her summer work included:

- Building online database tutorials attached to research LibGuides, which enable students to learn how to use database products on their own time.
- Creating video tutorials attached to research LibGuides for common research tasks, such as annotating bibliographies. (Tutorials can be viewed by a variety of classes and connected to various assignments when needed for introduction of concepts or review.)
- Collaborating with the Social Studies teachers to create Social Studies LibGuides.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

Physical Education teachers are meeting more frequently, both during the year and summer, to share best practices. We are proud of this effort, because they have not historically been a department that shared instructional strategies. They have also created department-wide standards for students for a variety of exercises. In addition to the standards, they created a department-wide assessment for the fitness unit. In creating the standards for every student, they have definitive goals that every student is expected to meet. All students will be encouraged to meet every standard before they complete their Physical Education four-semester requirement. In addition, the department has significantly improved our Self-Defense unit by bringing in an expert in the field to speak with all of our students.

## GUIDANCE

Focus continues to be on the Teacher Advisor Curriculum. Lessons that were developed in summer 2011 for the three junior advisories on the college application process included a pre and post assessment. Staff partnered with the AP Statistics classes to analyze the data. The data showed that students had learned and mastered the material, making the lessons a success! Building on the work done, two counselors, a college advisor, and the TA co-coordinator used summer 2012 professional development sessions to develop three new lessons pertaining to college application preparedness. More specific examples include:

- Review sample work resumés and how they are used for careers and activities for college applications (10th and 11th grades).
- Review a sample School Form; clarification of what goes into a TA letter and how to ask others for letters of recommendation (11th grade).
- Review a sample college essay and discuss how to craft one (12th grade in 2013).

Teachers continue to use feedback to help make refinements that benefit students. To that end, we gathered information from the end of the year using student surveys/evaluations and created a growth plan. Based on last year's feedback, it was determined that both students and teacher advisors wanted more one on one time. The Advisory Calendar was adjusted to provide that time.

Staff also examined lessons that might be outdated and others that would be good to include or develop, and made adjustments accordingly. In addition to curricular refinements, work is being done on finding a better way to match students with TAs. The teacher advisor selection process was also identified as an area in need of improvement. It may be possible to create a better matching protocol using a computer model. We are fortunate to have Elaine Sigal of Stizzil offer the services of her programmer to help us with the development of the model, and are currently working on the criteria to be used in the matching of students to teacher advisors.

## WASC GOAL 2 – COLLEGE READINESS & POST-SECONDARY PLANNING

The goal that we prepare each and every student for college and that each and every student graduates from Paly with a robust and individual plan for his or her education after high school.

Using 21st Century Skills as our foundation, [data\[5\]](#) collected from the graduate survey, our departments continue to implement a variety of instructional strategies designed to address the learning styles of all students.

### ENGLISH

In 2011-2012, the Paly English Department held multiple discussions about how to better serve students. There had been growing evidence that the division of courses at the freshman level tended to prepare some students for college better than others. To address this inequity, we discussed turning the 9th grade English classes into heterogeneous classes, ensuring that every student will receive the same high quality college preparatory curriculum. Furthermore, as part of our WASC Midterm Report in 2011-2012, the visiting committee was clear about the need to create heterogeneous 9th grade English to address the inequities. Therefore, the English Department determined that, beginning Fall 2013, all incoming freshmen will take English 9, the college prep English course. We have also integrated a “restart” class to help students recover credits when they have not succeeded previously.

### HISTORY / SOCIAL SCIENCE

The History/Social Science Department has integrated technology to help students recover credits in its “restart” class. This blended credit recovery course program is intended for students to retake the course if they earned a D or F. We will reevaluate the course, as well as the program itself, at the semester, and decide whether or not our credit recovery course will extend to the 10th grade. We have since moved to K12 - Aventa and Compass, from PLATO for our Blended Learning Restart Classes.

The Department continues to host special guest lecturers from the Palo Alto community and beyond. Students from all grade levels are given the opportunity to listen and ask questions from some of the greatest political scientists, historians, economists, and political activists of our time, including David Kennedy, Harry Edwards, Pam Karlan, Dan Rather, and Congressman John Lewis. Connecting students with individuals making a difference in Social Science is an ongoing.

### MATHEMATICS

The Mathematics Department continues their effort to increase the number of students taking math courses at Paly. This year a record number of students (1847) are enrolled in math, taking a total of 1991 math classes. We are constantly tweaking the scope and sequence of our courses to maximize the number of students who can successfully take at least three years of math.

Last year, 95.3% of juniors took at least one math course. This year, 450 out of 466, or 96.5%, do. Last year, 83.16% of seniors took at least one course in math. This year, 393 out of 461, or 85.25%, do.

We continue to see an increase in the number of students successfully taking AP courses in mathematics in high school. We also have record numbers of students in our advanced lane this year, as a consequence of our concerted effort to support our students to reach their maximum potential. Algebra 2/Trig A increased from five sections in 2008 to seven this year. Introduction to Analysis and Calculus from four to seven sections, and AB Calculus from three to four sections.

For the first time, we have three sections of BC Calculus. Also a first this year, is a community college Multivariable Calculus Honors course on our campus for students who completed BC Calculus prior to their senior year.

The number of students enrolled in math and computer science AP courses has been increasing steadily over the years. In 2007 students took a total of 180 AP math or computer science exams. This year, our enrollment in the AP courses presently stands at a record 303. At the same time, the average score increased from 4.41 in 2007 to 4.54 in 2012.

## SCIENCE

The Science Department's elective program continues to offer a rich number of options. This year we saw an increase in the number of students interested in taking elective science courses. These increases were seen in classes such as Astronomy, AP Chemistry and AP Biology. In its second year, Marine Biology continues to be strong, providing a non-AP avenue for students interested in a second year biology class. Furthermore, we will be looking at other ways to expand elective offerings over the next two years. Such offerings might include biochemistry or organic chemistry, and partnering with Foothill Junior College to offer Nanotechnology and Green Energy Courses.

In addition, Biology Honors teachers are working with the librarians to educate students on how to use Paly databases to search for academic journal articles. Students are learning how to read and summarize academic journal articles, and how to cite them as sources in their research papers.

## WORLD LANGUAGE

The freshman class (Class of 2016) is the first class in the District that will have a graduation requirement of two years of World Language studies. Completion of two years of study of the same World Language will fulfill the basic entry requirement for UC/CSU eligibility. This requirement will mean that more students will be taking World Language classes than previously did so. Prior to the increase in graduation requirements, approximately 90% of all freshmen and 89% of all sophomores were enrolled in a World Language class. The increase in numbers will mean that teachers will need to help all students become successful in order to fulfill the graduation requirement. (See WASC Goal 3.)

The Department wants to continue to search for resources to help students, parents and community members understand the value of world language studies, not only in terms of college entrance requirements, but also as a skill in the post secondary job market. Many employers are searching for bilingual and multilingual workers. Part of our job is to share that information with students and the community to highlight the practical applications and multiple benefits of becoming bilingual and multilingual.

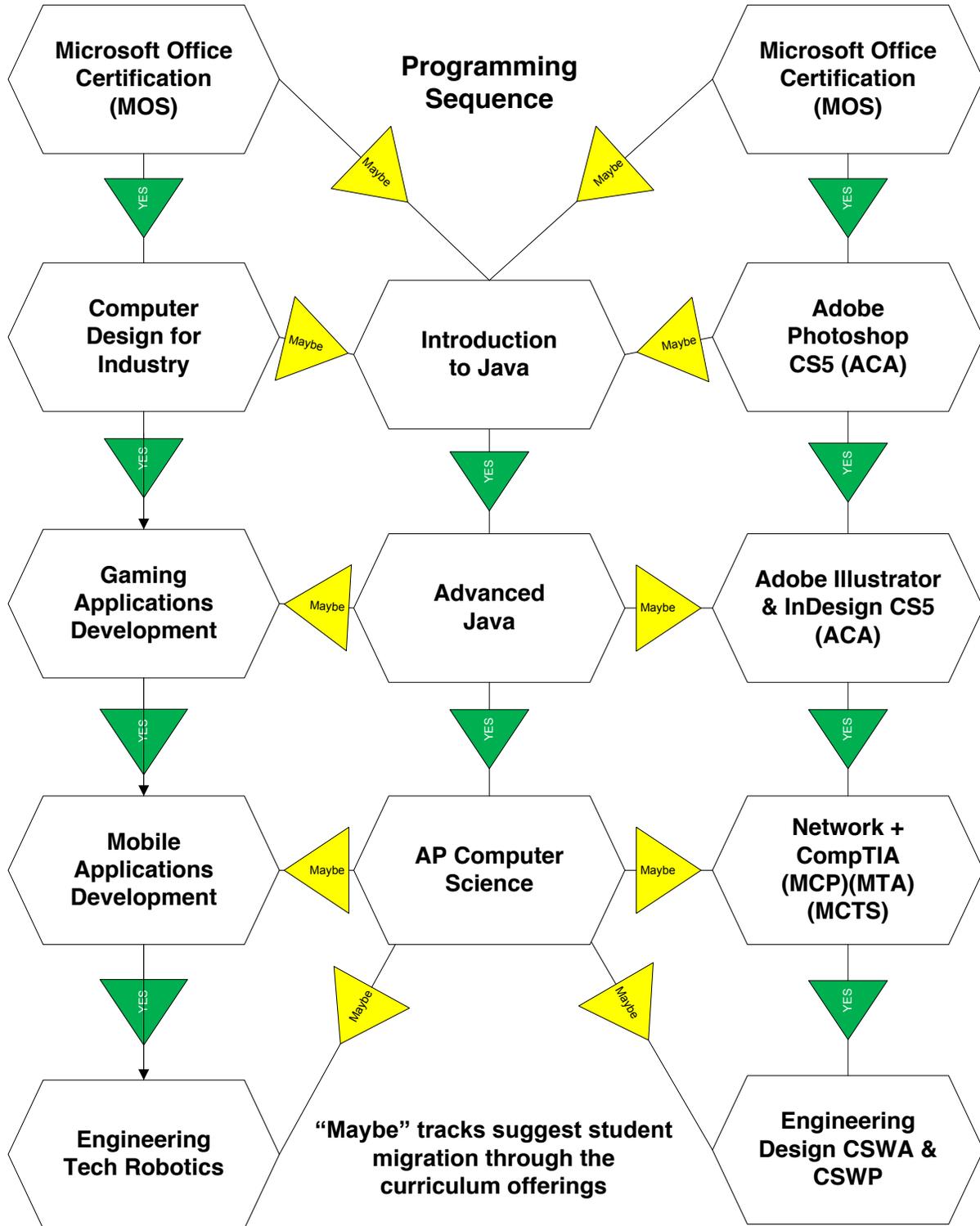
## CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

A new set of course sequences in the areas of Computer Science and Engineering has been drafted at Paly. The courses are current and attractive to students and many include industry certifications that lead to jobs, but without programming or high level math, whereby all students can succeed. These courses also prepare students for further study at the college level in Engineering and Computer Science. Our vision is that the classes would be University of California approved for both Mathematics and Career Technical Education.

**Palo Alto High School  
CTE Course Sequencing  
including Adult Ed  
Certifications**

**Palo Alto High School  
CTE Course Sequence  
UC Approval pending**

**Palo Alto Adult School  
Industry Approved  
Certification courses**



**Note: there is a programming component in the Eng Tech, Gaming & Mobile Apps courses**

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS (VAPA)

Paly has expanded opportunities for students to work with guest artists, clinicians and other art professionals throughout the entire department. The expansion allows students to work with professionals in their field of interest.

Highlights include:

### FILM

- Invite guest artists to work with students in fall semester.
- Continue to use professional panels for evaluation of student work in digital filmmaking.

### CHOIR

- Invite Joseph Huszti, William Dehning, Chanticleer, among others.
- Continue recording of CD's at major studios.
- Include Grammy week for AP Music Theory.
- Commission work from US Composer Shawn Crouch – Composer will work with students in composition in AP Theory and Choir, resulting in a large work for choir and orchestra to be presented Spring 2013.

### BAND

- Include guest artists from Stanford, San Jose State and professional alumni.

### THEATRE

- Incorporate professional guest artists in areas such as playwriting, tech theatre, stage combat, and dialect coaching.
- Invite Paly graduates and other professionals working in the fields of theatre, TV, film and entertainment to speak with students about college and beyond.

Theater curriculum schedules specific Career Technical Education guest artist presentations, including tech work in industrials and stage management workshop. A career research project is included in Theatre 3,4, and 4 Honors curriculums.

Stage Management Workshop is scheduled for Stage Tech this academic year. Stage Tech students will also be required to submit portfolios of their work. Career research projects will be part of the Theatre 3, 4, and 4 Honors curriculum.

### PAINTING AND DRAWING

In Fall 2011, the painting and drawing instructor aligned the third year painting and drawing class with the state Career Technical Education standards, with the intention of getting the third year portfolio development class certified for Career Technical Education credit. A number of students would like to take four years of art, with the intention of pursuing art as a professional career path, but are unable to fit the fourth year into their schedule. We also aligned the class to Career Technical Education standards involving correlating the goals, projects and outcomes of the class to eleven Foundation Strands and approximately fifty pathway strands. We are hoping to have the class reviewed by our Career Technical Education Steering Committee early in 2012.

### CERAMICS

The artist in residence and guest artist programs continue, including Randy Strong, a nationally acclaimed glass artist, Cassandra Straubing, Mildred Howard, and Anthony Alfaro. In addition, we formalized the weekend glassblowing workshops where students work with professional glass artists.

One guest artist will include a presentation on Potters for Peace. Also planned are presentations by California College of Arts in Oakland and Academy of Art.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Our Photography program continues to host an annual PhotoJournalism Forum with international photographer & writers who share professional practices with students. Staff also host yearbook workshops outside of school day with professional graphic designers & publication experts. They are also committed to expanding presentations and linkages within the curriculum to career paths.

Career Technical Education speakers and trainers present and work with yearbook staff in graphic design.

The teacher took her classes to visit the Palo Alto Art Center. She also discussed the student photography exhibition contributions to The Palo Alto Forest with Angela Filo, the artist coordinating the exhibition as guest artist/ class speaker. In addition, staff collaborated with two Australian art teachers for intersections in US Australian CAPA/VAPA programs. The result of our collaboration will be posted and shared online in Australia.

## MUSIC

Career Technical Education pathways in instrumental music, music, and CTE for advanced vocals were added.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

Transition is a focus goal for Special Education Districtwide. Integrated into the roles of Special Education teachers, is completion of an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) for each student. This year, staff dedicated two academic support units to helping students discover what they are interested in doing after high school, and then backward planning their high school career choices with them to ensure they meet their post-secondary goals.

In collaboration with Gunn and the Post-Secondary Department at the District Office, students are also taking a field trip a month to local junior colleges and other post-secondary institutions, giving students a hands-on experience with their post-secondary options, be it trade school, a two-year university, or a four-year college. Staff is working on bridging seniors to the local junior college of their choice. While taking courses at Paly, they also take a course at the local junior college. Three students are already doing this.

Our goal is to have every student meet a meaningful post-secondary goal. Last year, and again this year, we will hold transition meetings for each incoming freshman student. Each team consists of the eighth-grade Resource Specialist, student, parent, site administrator, and a high school Resource Specialist. The team discusses each student's strengths and weaknesses, accommodations, and schedule. Together with the student we create the best possible plan for the incoming student.

## LIBRARY

The library's 36-station drop-in computer lab is available all day for students to explore Naviance, work on college applications and explore college choices. In addition to the computer stations, the library subscribes to online databases that students will be exposed to in college, such as EBSCOhost and JSTOR, and library staff work with teachers to make sure that all students receive instruction in how to use these complex tools.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

The PE Department has created a cross-fit unit for all Physical Education Students. This unit provides an opportunity to teach each student a variety of skills and techniques. Students will be able to utilize these skills and techniques to stay physically fit for life. Furthermore, we have created two "0" period PE sections, which

allow students more freedom with their class schedules. Starting with the 2012-2013 school year, all fitness scores will be mailed home.

## GUIDANCE

This year, PAUSD adopted new graduation requirements, to begin with the class of 2016. The graduation requirements were increased to include the CSU/UC A-G college entrance requirements. Paly has been working on plans so that all students can meet these new requirements, and the Guidance Department has been identifying students who will benefit from extra support to meet the new requirements.

We have made an overt effort to ensure that the 3-Tiered Guidance System (Teacher Advisors, Guidance Counselors, and College Advisors) has been presented at parent nights and to students in advisory, so that all constituents are informed as to the primary responsibilities of each tier. It also helps everyone understand how the three tiers overlap and work together to provide guidance services.

The Guidance Counselors and College Advisors developed lessons over the summer in the use of Naviance. These lessons are designed to help students use all that Naviance has to offer, from keeping a record of activities and awards, to taking a career interest survey, to using the college test prep module, to exploring possible colleges and programs. The lessons are being presented to the students by the teacher advisors.

Based on student feedback from last year, we were able to grow our senior workshop options on College Awareness Day. We offered each workshop twice during the day, including college essay writing workshops, which were led by Teacher Advisors from the History/Social Science Department. Approximately 300 seniors attended the workshops.

Building on the success of the College Essay Workshops that we offered last year, we have been able to offer more this year, holding them twice a week on Tuesdays and Saturdays from October through November. These workshops were led by two Paly English teachers/teacher advisors.

College advisors have refined workshops that included College Visits and UC Case Studies. In addition, working directly with students, the college advisors held a college application school forms workshop on September 27th. This new addition elicited a very positive response from the, approximately 80, students and parents who attended.

All three tiers of the Guidance Department have been working with the Special Education Department to ensure that the needs of students receiving services are being met in terms of college readiness and post-secondary planning.

Teacher Advisors are working collaboratively with case managers to ensure that the students have the support they need in order to achieve their post high school goals. Guidance counselors follow up with any concerns, and the college advisors have trained Special Education staff in transition planning and are working more collaboratively with case managers in meeting the needs of our Special Education students. The college advisors plan to present information regarding the college search and support programs for students with learning challenges to the Parent Network.

The Summer Bridge program ran for the first time this past summer to help students, who might otherwise struggle, get a preview of high school. A college and career component is being developed for students and parents for next summer's program. (See more about this program in the next section.)

The community college and career advisor continues to run a very robust and growing Career Month speaker series in March, with over 1500 students participating. This year, in addition to the Community College Forum, there will be a specialty program fair to highlight vocational options.

Other highlights from Guidance this year[6]:

- New College and Career Senior Facebook page with 92 members and growing, in addition to the existing College and Career Facebook page.
- Christine VandeVelde, author of *College Admission: From Application to Acceptance, Step by Step*, spent an evening presenting her expertise on the college application process and then led a senior workshop during tutorial on essay writing.
- Go Ask Alice college table available for students to ask questions and pick up college swag; monthly during lunch.

## WASC GOAL 3 – SUPPORT FOR ALL STUDENTS

The goal that each and every student is supported  
in his or her personal and academic work.

### ENGLISH

The English Department supports all students by focusing on alignment. (Please refer to Goal 1.) The Department is also co-teaching a number of English sections with Special Education to meet students' needs in each classroom. A "restart" class is run for students who, regardless of the reason, did not find success in an English class. The focus is on freshman and sophomore students. In addition, staff helped start our new Bridge program for underperforming students.

### HISTORY/SOCIAL SCIENCE

The department continues to collaborate with the Special Education Department. During the 2011-2012 school year, the co-teaching program included one World History class and one US History class. Both departments pooled resources to identify the skills and content every student needed to be successful. This year, the department expanded the co-teaching model to include two World History classes, three Government/Contemporary World History classes, and one US History class.

Reading and writing skills are fundamental for student success in History/Social Science, and the department continues to find new strategies for struggling students. They have been using collaboration time to learn new approaches from a reading specialist, and together they will provide students with "tools" to use in the classroom; i.e., developing a schema to teach all students new words, while deepening their comprehension; encouraging text to self and text to text connections; and helping students study the big idea concepts in Social Science. These tools are specific to History/Social Science and to reading both primary and secondary sources.

History/Social Science continues to work on better tutorial organization to support all learners. Last year, the 9th grade piloted a themed tutorial focused on the second semester research papers. Student assessments and feedback proved the approach successful. This year, staff have extended and refined what they learned to include the tenth grade, so these students have a place[7] to focus on the election project. Teachers have already collaborated to design classrooms designated for these vital reading interventions and research skills. In some cases, two to three teachers will be assigned to one classroom. This step is to ensure a low student to instructor ratio, which is necessary to accommodate this program.

The department is running a restart[8] class for students who, regardless of the reason, did not find success in World History class. The focus is on freshman and sophomore students. As resources allow, we will consider expanding it to other classes.

### MATHEMATICS

The department now offers 20 different Math courses and has record number of 34 students in Problem Solving this year. We continue to co-teach in Algebra 1.1, Algebra 1.2, and some of the Algebra 1 and Geometry classes. In addition to co-teaching, we are offering "restart" classes in Algebra 1 and Geometry for students that did not find success during first semester. The department continues to investigate different approaches to teaching mathematics, namely blended learning options. In addition, the department is also providing a "restart" for students in Algebra and Geometry.

This summer, we offered two sections of Bridge to Alg1/Geo A, because of increased course popularity over the last couple of years.

All of our math teachers continue to be available for one-on-one help during their preps, at lunch, and before and after school. Students can go to either their classroom teacher, or a “course specialist” assigned to a particular room during tutorial. Teacher locations are posted widely. In addition to being available during the school day, Math is the only department that has a dedicated teacher Monday through Thursday available for free tutoring/ homework assistance in Room 710. In addition, a math teacher is staffing each scheduled free Saturday tutorial for students and help in the library every day during the extended Finals Week hours.

## SCIEMCE

In order to support the District Goal of helping all students obtain University of California (UC) eligibility, the Science Department spent the Spring and Summer 2012 Professional Development time formalizing the Conceptual Physics (CP) class. This course was approved in the summer of 2012 as a UC “d” lab science course. As a result, all core science classes are recognized by the UC as “d” lab science courses, helping to ensure that all graduating students have the opportunity to become UC eligible in science. The addition of this class primarily affects students who previously enrolled in Integrated Science or Foundations to Chemistry and Physics, both of which were UC “g” elective courses, and thus did not meet the UC “d” lab science requirement. The department, resource wise, has named this class as a priority. We have four sections of 20 or fewer students, two sections are co-taught with a Resource Teacher and the other two sections have an instructional aide. In addition, a student who successfully takes CP, Biology and Chemistry qualifies to take most of our electives by senior year, including three of the four AP classes.

The Science Department is dedicated in other ways to further help all students obtain two years of UC “d” lab science credit. Summer of 2012 was the first time the District offered Biology, Chemistry and Physics in Summer School. Three Paly teachers taught the courses.

The Science Department is also piloting a “restart” class during this school year for students who have not met UC eligibility in their previous Chemistry or Biology classes. This class incorporates online learning programs with in- class labs. As a department, they will evaluate the effectiveness of this class in the spring and determine how best to move forward in order to support our most struggling students meet UC requirements. We have since moved to K12 - Aventa and Compass, from PLATO, for our Blended Learning “restart” Classes.

## WORLD LANGUAGE

This goal is related to Goal 2 because all students, needing to complete Level 2 of a World Language successfully for graduation, will need support from teachers and the department as a whole. The department realizes the need for more interactive lessons and experiences for students, increased use of technology (including online resources), and more support for struggling students. The department’s teachers continue, as do all other departments, to use the “D/F” lists to target struggling students and to find multiple ways to support them.

Since Spanish is the language with the greatest number of students, Spanish teachers, in particular, need to develop strategies to help struggling students. Spanish teachers have begun exploring alternative programs for “restart” students (that is, students who did not earn a passing grade in Spanish 1 and have not yet acquired enough language proficiency to continue successfully in Spanish 2), through the use of online programs and resources. This will be an ongoing goal over the next several years.

Teachers of all languages recognize the need to work more closely with colleagues in the Special Education Department. World Language teachers and Special Education teachers will collaborate together to identify

support strategies and mechanisms for Special Education students, though all students could doubtless benefit from such strategies. Ideally the co-teaching model used by the Social Studies Department and Special Education could also be used in Spanish, provided there were a bilingual Special Education teacher capable of co-teaching in Spanish.

All teachers in the department have begun analyzing the amount, type and effectiveness of homework given to World Language students this year. Hopefully, some of the following key questions can be answered in order to support all students learn in World Language classes more effectively.

- What kinds of homework activities are most effective to reinforce World Language studies?
- How much time (depending on level) does an average World Language homework assignment take to complete?
- What are the challenges preventing completion of homework assignments in World Language for struggling students?
- How will these challenges be eliminated?

## CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

*See Goal 2*

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS (VAPA)

Like all of our departments, VAPA is committed to determining, then removing, obstacles to enrolling in arts courses in order to increase enrollment of underrepresented minority students in advanced classes.

### FILM

In collaboration with WestEd, we reviewed best practices in promoting achievement by academically underrepresented minority students. Paly's Guidance staff, Academic Support teachers, Special Ed Teachers, Avid/FOS staff, and TAs joined to encourage underrepresented minority students to enroll in advanced courses. Individual success plans were developed for students to more directly address their interests and needs.

### CHOIR

Current offerings of Men's Chorus, pop, rock, jazz and musical theater groups that meet outside of the curriculum, were reviewed and adjusted. Enrollment of underrepresented minorities has increased by 20% over last year. Advanced Vocals enrollment of underrepresented minorities is consistent with previous years at 10% of class.

Staff has revised the late homework policy, particularly in AP Music Theory. They allow make-up work in all choirs, especially in absence of a performance, and have moved to base grades on achievement only, as suggested by American Choral Director's Association, California Music Educator's Association, and the National Association for Music Education (NAMFE, formerly Music Educators National Conference MENC.).

### BAND

The Paly Band remains involved in school support capacities. The Pep Band is integral at football games!

Band teachers continue the collaboration with outside instrument coaches, bringing them in to work with students to ensure access to specific help on their instruments. Deadlines were clarified for musical mastery and allow another chance so that all students have the opportunity master the material. In addition, teachers provide alternative opportunities for students to complete assignments, while maintaining close communication with the student and parents to ensure academic success.

## THEATRE

Our theatre teacher communicates with students individually to encourage initial enrolment, or continued enrollment, in Theatre Arts classes. She also planned and implemented specific outreach activities with Paly English classes and Jordan Middle School. Additionally, she collaborated with English teacher, Lucy Filppu, Librarian, Rachel Kellerman, and Palo Alto Children's Theatre to work on the Big Read project, which focuses on Hispanic students and their experiences.

## ART HISTORY

Art History teachers spent time this summer revising period outlines for the first semester to use on Schoology, so that all students have access to general notes. The notes focused on important elements related to the historical context from the major periods of first semester. As part of an effort to collaborate with the Special Education Department, staff simplified introductory parts of the notes to post online for students to use in studying for tests.

## CERAMICS

Ceramics staff continue to work 1:1 with students who need accommodations or have special needs. The ceramics studio is now open on weekends and evenings to help support struggling students and encourage advanced students.

New routines have been designed and implemented to foster a more self-sufficient environment, which allows more one-on-one time with struggling students. Assignments were created that are tiered in both complexity and difficulty, to ensure every student is appropriately challenged and stimulated.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

The photo teacher collaborated with Special Education teachers to increase access in Photo/Yearbook classes.

The photo teacher created multiple opportunities for students to make up work or revise assignments and/or do extra credit assignments to raise their grades. She also provides in-class opportunities to complete all photography assignments.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

As special educators, support for all students is at the center of our work.

Through co-teaching, we are reaching students who are not traditionally served through Special Education in general education classrooms. For example, as part of their work with World History we are creating alternative tests that are accommodated for learning differences, but still meet the Common Core Standards. These tests are being used with all struggling students and they are experiencing success. We are currently co-teaching the following courses:

- World History
- Government
- Contemporary World
- US History
- Conceptual Physics
- Algebra 1.1
- Algebra 1.2
- Geometry
- English 9
- English 10

Two years ago staff also instituted a student note-taker program in which students scan and send their notes to a central hub, where they are posted online for all students at: <http://libguides.pausd.org/>.

This year we also opened up the testing center to include all students.

Looking to the future we hope to find a way to combine the Focus on Success classes with our resource support classes in order to benefit all struggling learners.

## LIBRARY

The library is the hallmark of supporting all students, and the “go to” place on campus for students. We now share a growing digital download book collection, hosted by Overdrive, with Gunn High School, in an effort to support student reading for pleasure. We purchased Kindles with a grant from Palo Alto Partners in Education to introduce digital reading to all interested students. Students can check a Kindle out and have their English novel downloaded to help with reading and comprehension. Overdrive brought a giant truck onto campus to promote digital reading to the entire school. In addition to the resources the library has for students, individual academic support is offered throughout the school day and during extended hours. Additionally, students receive an emotional uplift through contact with a supportive and caring library staff who gets to know students throughout their four-year journey at Palo Alto High School.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

We have added additional sections of 7th period PE so athletes who participate on school teams will miss minimal class time.

## GUIDANCE

We continue trying new strategies to help all of students succeed and be college ready. Since we now have four full time guidance counselors who loop with their students, we have been able to improve transition planning for students entering Paly. The counselor for the incoming class worked closely with middle school counselors to create transition plans for students who need more support before entering high school. We have been able to get critical information to staff sooner and develop support networks earlier than before.

Looking at best practices for improving academic success in other districts, we initiated a Summer Bridge program for students who had scored basic or below on the California Standards Tests (CST). The program was an intensive five weeks, with a focus on English, Mathematics, and Guidance. It included Gunn students and the math section was taught by a Gunn math teacher. The English and Guidance sections were taught by Paly staff. These students are seen as a special cohort and we will be providing wrap-around services. This group will be directly supported by an Outreach Specialist, Guidance Counselor, School Psychologist, Social Worker, Administrator, and the student’s Teacher Advisor.

We are tracking the success of the Bridge students this year to help evaluate and refine the program for next summer. Regular meetings are held with the students as a group, and will begin a parent education series this year to be used this coming summer.

To enhance student success, for the first time, intentional scheduling was done this summer/fall for Focus on Success students, Bridge students, athletes, and Special Education students. We continue, when possible, to put students in their Teacher Advisor’s class.

In continuing efforts to use data, we generate a detailed list of students with Ds and/or F’s after each grading period. That data is shared with staff and analyzed at our All School Collaboration meetings. We have taken the conversations to a more formal level by having the guidance counselor and administrator who support each grade level take notes and generate an intervention plan for each student.

Last spring, we piloted an Algebra 1 “restart” class, so that students could stay on track for A-G requirements. Success was mixed. After analyzing the outcomes and student and staff feedback, we have made adjustments and expanded the blended learning model into Biology/Chemistry, World History, and English “restart” classes. We have begun conversations with the World Languages Department on how we might use blended learning and the “restart” model for students not experiencing success. There is a wonderful opportunity to flip the current numerical sequence of classes and have students work year-round on a language.

As a way to help build community for our new students, in collaboration with the Associated Student Body (ASB), we have hosted two new student lunches – one for 9th-grade students new to the District and one for 10th-12th grade students. Students from ASB and Link Crew were available to meet the new students and give them tips on Paly life.

Paly hired a new full-time, bilingual Outreach Specialist who provides additional support for our underrepresented minority students and first generation college bound and Bridge students. She is also involved in a newly formed support group called Las Latinas. The group consists of Latina students from across campus. The group functions as a support network and reading club and serves students in grades 9-12. They meet twice a month and share lunch together while discussing a book. They are currently reading *Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez. The older girls serve as mentors for the younger students and discussions have ranged from how to work effectively with teachers to the importance of friendships. Las Latinas is also planning some field trips to culturally relevant places chosen by the students.

Additional frontline support for students comes from our partners at Adolescent Counseling Services (ACS). At the end of last year, we met with ACS and shared an idea we learned about while visiting New Trier High School in Winnetka, IL, about adding social work interns to our campus in addition to increasing the number of hours the therapists are on campus. We now have the addition of two social work interns to add another layer of support for our students and their families. Both ACS and the Outreach Specialist are working collaboratively with the guidance counselors and are considered to be a part of the guidance team.

Based on student and staff feedback we have been finding creative ways for our Teacher Advisors (TAs) and their Advisees to enhance their already strong relationships. We held our first annual (we hope) 10th-grade advisory team building day on August 27th. In advisory groups, teams competed against other advisory groups through a series of obstacles and team building activities. The feedback we received from students, TAs and parents was very positive. We will be making adjustments and refining the experience for students and hope to extend it to 11th-grade next year.

Again, based on student feedback, we have begun discussing consistent protocol for students to provide feedback about their experiences in class. The goal is to use student feedback as part of our professional growth and to help us grow as adult learners and educators. In addition, we have also been working on a matrix that will contain courses and the average weekly homework. In creating the matrix, staff will also analyze the amount, type and effectiveness of homework given to students this year. We hope this will be a tool for students as they choose their classes.

To better serve students, refinements to Tutorial are ongoing. Freshmen (approximately 35) who have two or more D/F's as of their last progress report, are assigned to a specific tutorial as a formal intervention. There is an administrator, freshman guidance counselor, and teacher advisor to support the students with whatever they need. Also, teachers representing Math, Spanish, and Science are there to support the students. In addition to staff, there are also two to three student tutors available. This is to give the students more individual attention to meet their educational needs.

Looking at best practices across the county, we created a Saturday tutorial to replace the past practice of Saturday school for attendance and other issues that impact students' ability to succeed. Students come to the

library for three to four hours, where teachers from the English, Social Science, Science, Math, and World Language Departments are present to support students. Students who had one or more D/F as of their last progress report were specifically invited. Guidance counselors, case managers, teacher advisors, and staff have also personally invited students to attend. Approximately 40-70 students attend Saturday tutorials.

As a campus we have taken on using Schoology. Our teachers committed to using Schoology to post assignments, notes, and any material from class. We believe using this tool will enable us to communicate more efficiently and be clear about expectations for all students. Furthermore, we want students and parents to have a single spot to find classroom related information and believe the partnership between Schoology and Infinite Campus (IC) will allow this to happen. Currently, all grades are posted on IC, however there is serious conversation about integrating the two systems.

In addition to using Schoology, we've also increased the frequency in which teachers update their grades through IC. Every student and parent is now able to view progress in ALL of their classes every 4-5 weeks (depending on the holiday schedule). Prior to this, parents and students were not formally notified of their academic standing in class until the quarter report cards, or nine-week mark. This improved formal communication practice has led to increased transparency and quicker intervention regarding academic performance.

We are proud of our student-centered growth and will continue to challenge ourselves by using data, feedback, and reflective practices.

A special "Thank You" to Ed. Council, PTSA, Site Council, PiE, our teachers, and the entire Paly community.

# APPENDIX

## *PALO ALTO HIGH SCHOOL WASC REPORT: ASSOCIATED STUDENT BODY*

Aligns with WASC goal of “Supporting All Students” and “College and Career Preparedness” (develops leadership skills for ASB students).

ASB’s theme this year is “Integration and Inclusion.” Our main goals this year are a) increase ASB’s involvement in all student activities and b) ensure that the student body always knows what ASB is doing. We hope to achieve these goals by boosting publicity and making it more effective. We want to strengthen the communication with the student body and enact more ASB events and activities on campus geared towards improving student life.

### PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- *Leadership Class Readjustment*

Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, the Associated Student Body reduced its class size from 28 to 20 elected and appointed positions. The decrease in students has significantly increased the class’s efficiency and has delegated greater duties and responsibilities to each position.

- *Fiscal Oversight Improvement*

Due to the ASB budget surplus, we have evaluated our spending habits and have worked on reducing the excess funds while still making judicious expenditures. We are careful to consider the value of each of our expenses and only invest in ventures that would be most beneficial to the student body.

- *Prom 2012*

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Palo Alto High School held its Junior/Senior Prom at the Galleria at the San Francisco Design Center. The event was a great success and the music and venue were well received. There were also many comments that Prom 2012 was a significant improvement from the year before.

- *Improving Dance Attendance*

This past year, we have been working on revising Paly’s negative preconception formed around dances and have been steadily increasing dance attendance numbers with new incentives and ideas. The Back-to-School dances, which take place outdoors on the quad, have once again risen to popularity. We provided free admission to our Homecoming dance in 2011 and then again in 2012, which dramatically increased attendance. Homecoming 2012 was also an innovation of its own, for we hired S.O.S. entertainment to provide a new kind of atmosphere with high-tech lighting and electronic dance music. In order to reflect this new change, we titled our homecoming dance “Big Electronic Dance” (B.E.D).

- *Publicity*

One of the most crucial aspects of student government is communication, which means ensuring that the general student body is informed about all ASB activities. We have increased the effectiveness of our publicity becoming more efficient and beginning to inform students earlier and at a higher volume. We have generated countless flyers, posters, Facebook pages, an ASB website, and other online resources in order to update the student body about the upcoming ASB events. Our online presence has improved especially over the last year with increased followers on our Palo Alto High School ASB Facebook page and constant updates on our official ASB website. This also aligns with our general goal for the year of “inclusion” and “integration”.

- *ASB Post*

As part of the 2011-2012 goal to increase ASB Transparency, we have been updating the student body on ASB’s undertakings in the school’s newspaper, *The Campanile*. We provide a page-long description in

every other issue that details the past and future student body events that have been organized or sponsored by ASB.

- *Post-Finals Cookies and Cocoa*

In effort to reduce academic stress, Paly ASB held its first annual Post-Finals Cookies and Cocoa event at the end of the first semester of the 2011-2012 school year. After the last final exam, free chocolate chip cookies and hot chocolate were available to students on the quad to reward their hard work during the finals week and celebrate the end of the first semester. Due to the popularity of this event, we are hosting this event again this year.

- *Blue Lawn Chairs:*

In the spring of 2012, ASB purchased 100 blue plastic lawn chairs for the students to use on the quad. These chairs were extremely well received and many students have used them when eating lunch or talking with their friends.

- *African Drum and Dance Troupe:*

Another responsibility of ASB is to promote diversity and acceptance within the Paly community. In November of 2012, we invited the African Drum and Dance Troupe from Senegal to perform during lunch for our students. We received much positive feedback from students who enjoyed the show and are looking into inviting more similar groups to perform at Paly.

- *Club Day (and Club Day 2):*

Palo Alto High School currently has over 50 student clubs that are sponsored by ASB. Club Day was held in late September, in which all of the club presidents ran booths to showcase their clubs and recruit new members during an extended lunch period. In February of 2012, we hosted the first ever Club Day 2 at Paly so that students who were not able to charter their club during first semester would have the opportunity to do so during second semester. This also gave the pre-existing clubs a chance to advertise their clubs once again and gain new members.

- *Spirit Week 2012:*

The Palo Alto High School Spirit Week of 2012 was one of the most significant weeks in the recent history of Spirit Week. During this week, each grade battled against one another in order to gain the most points and emerge as the winner. Classes could earn points during lunchtime rally games, homecoming floats, spirit dances, and class cheers. After years of “rigging” so that the seniors would always win Spirit Week, this year’s ASB decided that Spirit Week of 2012 would be a fair game and that any grade could have an equal chance of winning. By announcing this, students became more determined for their respective classes to win and led to a more intense competition. Overall, the week was extremely successful.

- *Mascot:*

Sports games have also benefited from ASB’s efforts. In the fall of 2012, ASB purchased a Viking mascot costume and held tryouts for a mascot to perform with the cheerleaders during games. Our mascot is now being used for football and basketball games.

- *Little Big Game T-shirts*

The Paly vs. Gunn football games (also known as the “Little Big Game” to imitate the Stanford vs. Cal games) have always had a high attendance between both crosstown rivals. This year’s game was hosted by Paly and to encourage game attendance, the ASB Sports Commissioners designed and sold t-shirts for Paly students to wear to the game. These t-shirts were sold out almost immediately and were still worn even weeks after the game.

- *Link Crew Orientation*

Link Crew, sponsored by ASB, is Paly’s freshman orientation organization of about 100 juniors and seniors who help the incoming freshman adjust to life in high school at the beginning of the school year. Each year we have been gaining more members and have been steadily improving the content of the program.

- *New Student Luncheon*  
ASB also sponsored the New Student Luncheon for students who were new to the Palo Alto Unified School District by providing free pizza and lots of advice about Paly's academic and social life. All of the ASB officers were present at each of the luncheons to explain how to get involved in student organizations and supply commentary about their favorite school events.
- *Picture Day*  
Another responsibility of ASB is to help with Picture Day each year, which takes place before the start of school. Each officer committed about two hours of his or her time to helping the photographers organize students into lines, passing out student identification cards, and collecting paperwork. This year's picture day ran more smoothly than ever and each student took his or her school picture in an efficient manner.
- *Paly Service Day*  
The community service opportunities and resources at Paly are some of the school's most beneficial programs for students. In May of 2012, ASB funded free reusable water bottles to all students who participated in the annual Paly Service Day in which students dedicated either half or an entire day to working on a community service project in the area or at Paly.
- *Lowering Parking Permit Prices*  
One of the most important fiscal decisions that ASB made this year was to reduce parking permit prices from \$100 per semester to \$40 per semester. Though this excised a significant portion of our revenue, we felt that the former price was too high for students to afford and that this change would benefit more students in the long run.

## FUTURE PLANS

- *Multicultural Blog*  
The current ASB Multicultural Commissioner is working on setting up a blog for the Paly community to enjoy. The blog will include posts by students of different ethnicities to promote diversity and awareness of different cultures at Paly.
- *Bands at Lunch*  
Traditionally, ASB has played music on the quad almost every Friday during lunch for students to enjoy. This year, we decided to take this activity one step further by inviting live bands to play for students. In January of 2013, we will be hosting Social Studies, an indie-pop band from San Francisco as well as Goodnight Argent, a pop/rock cover band. In addition, we opened up the opportunity for students to perform as bands or DJs during lunch on various Fridays. All of these acts will take place during second semester.
- *Paly/Gunn Dodgeball Tournament*  
After hearing about Gunn High School's annual school-wide dodgeball tournament, we decided to bring this event to Paly students as well. In early spring, we will be having the first ever Palo Alto High School Dodgeball tournament. Students can create their own teams and play against other teams for the championship, which will be against Gunn's own dodgeball champions.
- *New Student Center*  
In effort to reduce the crowding and noise in the library, ASB is working with the administration to design a new student center in the former Social Studies Resource Center. This will be a place for students to spend time with friends in between classes and relax throughout the day. The designs are currently in the works and we hope to see the student center up and running early in second semester.
- *Middle School Summit*  
In addition to Link Crew, ASB is working on helping 8<sup>th</sup> graders transition to high school as freshmen. In early spring, when 8<sup>th</sup> graders are choosing their 9<sup>th</sup> grade courses, ASB is planning to visit middle schools in the PAUSD district in order to answer any questions the students may have or quell any anxieties.