

Major Areas of Strength

1. The Palo Alto High School stakeholders have created an environment of commitment and support for the success of all students.
2. The rigor of the curriculum promotes a college bound mentality.
3. The faculty demonstrates an awareness of and the desire to improve their knowledge of curriculum and assessment to support student learning objectives.
4. Palo Alto High School demonstrates a strong commitment to the use of technology within their curriculum.
5. Palo Alto High School offers a variety of curricular and extra-curricular choices in and outside of the school day, allowing students to create an experience that is specific to their passions and interests.

Critical Areas for Follow-up

1. Increase the opportunities for under-represented sub-groups to access the rigorous curriculum and provide academic support to assure success.
2. Develop a professional development plan that outlines specific training needs that would increase knowledge and implementation of anchor standards across content areas.
3. Strategies and programs need to be developed to address the academic achievement gap that persists for underrepresented minorities and at-risk students in all classes.
4. Develop a consistent schoolwide philosophy around assessment and a consistent use of both formative and summative assessments within all departments.

CATEGORY A

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

- ❖ There is strong interest and enthusiasm to create a new shared vision and mission statement.
- ❖ Paly is strongly committed to continue to build transparency and open communication with the Superintendent and the district.
- ❖ Highly valued Professional development opportunities are supported by district and site administration.
- ❖ There is continued work on the re-structuring of the academic honesty policy, which utilizes the Restorative Justice philosophy.
- ❖ Site council, PiE and Paly PTSA budgets directly support the SLO's (Single Plan for Student Achievement) based on multiple data results such as CST's EAP scores, CASHEE, AP Scores, ACT and SAT, and attendance data. The SPSA aligns with the District Plan and Focused Goals.
- ❖ Commitment of the community to Paly offers outstanding support both in the way of budget and volunteer time to continue to provide the academic atmosphere to promote success for all students.
- ❖ The implementation of the (IS) Instructional Supervisors and TOSA's (key teacher leaders on campus) demonstrates shared responsibility and leadership in decision-making processes supporting school goals.

Key Issues for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership and Staff, and Resources that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

- ◇ Complete new vision and mission statement.
- ◇ Continue to improve communication with district, site administration, faculty and staff, parents and community stakeholders.
- ◇ Develop common assessments and other forms of assessments that can be used to drive student learning.
- ◇ Prioritize Professional Development time for interpretation, analysis and implementation of data.
- ◇ Provide collaboration time to Professional Learning Communities to disaggregate data to align with SLO's.

CATEGORY B

Areas of Strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

- ❖ Block schedule supports students by creating an advisory time and a tutorial time for students to receive support and guidance.
- ❖ The availability of elective courses allows students the opportunity to explore their many talents and skills.
- ❖ The enrollment of all 9th grade students in an English 9 advanced course and exploring the instructional shifts necessary to meet the needs of all students is a step in the right direction to make rigorous curriculum accessible to all students.
- ❖ AP course offerings allow students the opportunity to challenge themselves.
- ❖ Alignment of grading policies and curriculum across some departments is a strength of the school.
- ❖ The rigor of the curriculum promotes a college bound mentality.
- ❖ PAHS is providing students with more career/vocational awareness and opportunities.

Key Issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Curriculum that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

- ◇ Increase the opportunities of minorities to access the rigorous curriculum available at PAHS (Honors and AP courses).
- ◇ Increase knowledge and implementation of anchor standards across content areas.
- ◇ Align course curriculums across departments that reflect essential standards.
- ◇ Develop a professional development plan that outlines specific training needs (time, content) of each department in order to expose all students to a rigorous curriculum.
- ◇ Explore additional supports for students that do not have access to resources beyond the school day (i.e. tutoring, technology, etc.).
- ◇ Provide students and parents with specific homework and study time expectations for each class offered.
- ◇ Work with students and parents to determine college/career goals that guide students to take a reasonable number of AP courses that does not create an excessive amount of stress for students.

CATEGORY C

Areas of Strength for Standards-Based Learning: Instruction that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

- ❖ Teachers are passionate experts in their respective content areas.
- ❖ There is an awareness of the need to differentiate instruction.
- ❖ Staff realizes they should try new techniques/methods to improve instruction.
- ❖ Some teachers have embraced blended learning and are seeing great results.
- ❖ Alumni report having been academically well prepared for college.
- ❖ Availability of technology for instruction
- ❖ Rigorous course content, pacing, and expectations
- ❖ A variety of instructional strategies in some classes
- ❖ Block schedule and collaboration time to discuss instructional practices
- ❖ Project based learning in many departments

Key Issues for Standards-Based Student Learning: Instruction that needs to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

- ◇ Differentiated instructional strategies need to be developed to address the learning needs of all students.
- ◇ Develop instructional strategies for best practices that are research based.
- ◇ Collaboration time needs to be expanded.
- ◇ Professional Development around the use of technology with instruction.
- ◇ Develop Professional Learning Communities that will allow in-depth discussions of instructional practice, student learning styles, Blended Learning and collaboration on the Action Plan implementation.
- ◇ Co-teaching needs to be increased and implemented for Special Education students.

CATEGORY D

Areas of Strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

- ❖ Support networks for students include teachers, Teacher-Advisors, coaches, campus supervisors, guidance office, administrators, and classified staff.
- ❖ Tutorial allows for individual time with teachers.
- ❖ The Testing Center provides a smaller testing environment and additional support for students.
- ❖ There is departmental alignment on assessments in Math and English. Other departments are developing alignments.
- ❖ Some teachers use formative and many use summative assessments to guide teaching practice.
- ❖ Teachers are interested in learning more about formative assessments and using them more frequently.
- ❖ There is a desire among teachers to learn more about best practices in grading.

Key Issues of Strength for Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

- ◇ Address the disparity between a-g compliant students (80%) and those who score College Ready on the EAP (Math 52%, ELA 63% - 2013).
- ◇ Develop horizontal and vertical alignment throughout the school.
- ◇ Develop essential learning and summative assessments in all courses.
- ◇ Develop strategies to reteach or modify instruction based on assessment data.
- ◇ Discussion, investigation, and implementation of best practices around grading policies: (1) how to best measure what students have learned; (2) the role of homework; (3) coming to a shared understanding of the what a grade means; (4) the use of zeros in grading and equity issues.
- ◇ Develop Professional learning around formative and summative assessments and Smarter Balanced results.
- ◇ Reduce “strategic cutting” on test days.
- ◇ Work to increase clear communication with parents, students and other teachers with regard to scheduled assignments and assessments, including follow-ups on grades.
- ◇ Investigate opportunities for students of lower socio-economic levels for outside academic support.
- ◇ Allow for anonymous parent feedback on surveys

CATEGORY E

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

- ❖ Palo Alto HS has support from the community: financial (PiE, PTSA, Boosters), parent volunteers, classroom and schoolwide speakers, and local business support and connections.
- ❖ Community members expressed that Palo Alto HS has many caring and concerned teachers who make an effort to connect with students and who have an in-depth knowledge of the content they teach.
- ❖ Alumni report that they feel academically well prepared for post-high school education.
- ❖ Palo Alto HS strives to help students make more personal connections on campus.
- ❖ Teacher Advisors help to make student-teacher connections, while Link Crew helps to create more positive student-student connections, especially for new students.
- ❖ The Outreach Counselor has made positive connections with many students and parents from our under-represented groups.
- ❖ Palo Alto HS offers a variety of curricular and extra-curricular choices in and outside of the school day, allowing students to create an experience that is specific to their passions and interests.
- ❖ Students in Focus Groups have stated they feel supported and challenged by their teachers, who are available continuously throughout the school day.
- ❖ Palo Alto HS is a safe and orderly school.

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

- ◇ Consistency in alignment needs to be developed electronic record keeping, grading policies and homework.
- ◇ Strategies and programs need to be developed to address the academic achievement gap that persists for underrepresented minorities and at-risk students in honors and AP classes.
- ◇ Strategies and programs need to be developed to address the development of the students emotionally and socially.
- ◇ Provide transportation for students who commute from East Palo Alto needs to be address.