

VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS

ELISE P. BUCKINGHAM CHARTER MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL

Vacaville Unified School District

Vacaville, California

April 17-20, 2005

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

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CHAPTER I

Student/Community Profile
Elise P. Buckingham Charter Magnet High School

Elise P. Buckingham Charter Magnet High School (BCMHS) is a small high school, reflective of the city in which it is located, Vacaville, California. Its students are a close-knit community primarily from Vacaville, but also coming from Fairfield, Suisun, Cordelia, and Vallejo. The city is family-oriented with quality schools, youth activities, community events, and affordable housing (February 2004 median price was \$320,000).

BCMHS was originally chartered in September of 1994 as a voluntary K-12 independent study school of 250 students, known as Buckingham Charter School. It proved to be a phenomenally successful alternative educational platform, at one point growing to an enrollment of over 1,100 students. Buckingham evolved into a “blended” academic program, offering a wide selection of site-based courses to supplement the independent study program. In 1999, Buckingham was able to stop leasing space and acquired its current site – three buildings spread out in a small industrial park.

The current enrollment of BCMHS is 304 with a slightly higher percentage of female than male students. The distribution is even amongst grades 9-11; however, the senior class is approximately half the size of the other classes. BCMHS currently serves 18 students on 504 plans and 6 special education students. (Special Education services are contracted through Vacaville Unified School District.) Only 4.25% of current enrollment is eligible for “Free or Reduced Lunch”. There is one English Learner and six students with a home language other than English in the 2004-2005 school year. The ethnic diversity of BCMHS closely reflects the diversity within the city of Vacaville.

Table 1 Ethnic distribution of BCMHS and Vacaville Unified School District.

Ethnic Group	BCMHS (Percent of total)	Vacaville Unified School District (Percent of Total)
Caucasian	67	58
African American	13	9
Hispanic/Latino	11	24
American Indian	2	1
Asian	2	3
Filipino	1	2
Pacific Islander	1	1
Declined to state	3	Unknown

The teaching staff of BCMHS averages almost ten years in the profession. Fifty-eight percent have full credentials or vocational education credentials in their subject area. Several of the credentialed staff members have CLAD or SDAIE certification. The passage of SB 740 sparked a substantial change in the structure of BCMHS. The previously independent study, K-12 program was granted a material revision to its charter and became a site-based, 9-12 small high school. BCMHS now offers parents and students a performance-based education, including

block scheduling and emphasizing a college preparatory program, visual media arts, and information technology. With the current educational configuration, the existing site is inadequate. Though the site has a capacity of 400 students, it is expected that Buckingham will experience growth as its reputation for success is spread.

With the change to a site-based high school came a commitment that BCMHS would be “no ordinary high school”. The foundation of this intent is that BCMHS would remain small, 400-800 students. BCMHS emphasizes a college preparatory curriculum, in which students do sustained academic work that is rigorous, authentic and engages each student at the highest level of his or her capabilities. The offered course of study meets the “A-G” requirements for admission to the University of California, and all core subjects have been aligned with the Content Standards for California Public Schools as well as the *Standards for Success* of the Association of American Universities. Students are required to pass each course with at least seventy percent in order to receive credit, and all seniors complete a graduation portfolio. BCMHS currently offers 21 AP classes in on-line format.

In addition to its college preparatory programs, Buckingham offers two magnet programs – visual and media arts, and information technology. Upon graduation, many students in the IT program choose to take certification exams in a specialty area. Several students in the Visual and Media Arts program have had internships while still enrolled, and/or found employment in the industry upon graduation.

Buckingham also offers the option of the Buckingham Charter Applied Learner program to a limited number of students. This program is primarily offered to students with special circumstances and includes a combination of some independent study coursework along with site-based courses.

Student Performance – Academic Achievement

BCMHS has risen from being the lowest performing high school in the Vacaville Unified School District in 1999, to the highest performing in 2004 according to API scores. It is among the top five performing high schools in Solano County. Test scores indicate ELA performance is a particular area of strength; however, math is a critical area of need. Only 46% of economically disadvantaged students passed the math portion of the CAHSEE compared to 74% of students who are not considered economically disadvantaged.

Enrollment in AP courses has risen steadily over the past several years. Buckingham scores on the PSAT improved in the 2004-2005 school year, along with an increase in the number of students taking the PSAT. Ten seniors in the 2004 graduating class took the SAT I exam, three additional seniors took the SAT II exam, and a few others took the ACT exam. Scores were comparable to the district.

Approximately 68% of the first graduating class of BCMHS is enrolled in community college, a UC, a visual and performing arts school, or a private four-year college.

Attendance was slightly under 94% in 2003-2004. Satisfactory attendance, behavior, and

academic standing are required for continued enrollment in Buckingham Charter Magnet High School. An action process is in place for working with and documenting the status of students who become non-compliant with this policy. Academic performance accounts for the overwhelming majority of non-compliant students.

Student Support Services

The staff of BCMHS provides a number of support services for its students and parents.

- College and Career Center
- College Night
- Financial Aid Night
- Senior Studies Class
- Math Tutorial
- PSAT Preparation
- CAHSEE Intervention Class
- Writing Across the Curriculum
- Computer Availability
- Teacher Office Hours
- Friday availability of teachers for student achievement
- Numerous award recognition ceremonies and scholarships
- After School Clubs
- BCMHS has developed a network of support with parents and community members that increase the educational opportunities available to its students.
- Special Education services are provided by Vacaville Unified School District
- Work Experience
- Computer Tech and Repair class rebuilds and repairs computers, which are then donated to families in the community who cannot afford to purchase computers
- Service Learning integrates the student's curricular background or interests with community service
- Solano Community College extends classes to BCMHS often at no cost to the student
- Young Image Makers Foundation supports the efforts of students in the Visual and Media Arts Program through its status as a non-profit fund-raising organization
- Parent Advisory Council supports the students and staff with input on school functioning as well as through fund-raising efforts
- Vacaville Unified School District provides opportunities for BCMHS students to work at the elementary schools serving as Technology Assistants
- Comcast Communications is negotiating a contract with the city of Vacaville that may result in the building of a studio on campus
- Donations of money and services have been received from many local establishments
- Student Leadership – Fundraisers, statewide conferences
- Gotcha – Chamber of commerce encouragement and recognition for student successes

CHAPTER II
Expected Schoolwide Learning Results
Elise P. Buckingham Charter Magnet High School

Critical Academic Needs

In 2004, data was reviewed including CAT6, CST's, CAHSEE, student tests, authentic assessments, and other classroom assessments in order to determine Buckingham's critical areas of need. The staff and leadership team identified two areas – improving writing in all curricular areas, and improving mathematics test scores.

Evolution of the ESLRs

Buckingham Charter School (BCS) began in September 1992 as an alternative educational program for parents and students of Vacaville Unified School District. At that time, five “Learner Goals” were established. In 2001, Buckingham's Administrative Cabinet, consisting of administrators, teachers, and classified staff; revised the goals to include technology. The six objectives were for all students to become:

- A Self-directed learner, who can see a job and do it on his/her own.
- A Collaborative worker, who can work constructively with others.
- A Complex thinker, who can determine how to get from point A to point B.
- A Community contributor, who will become a productive member of society.
- A Quality producer, who can produce work of which he/she will be proud.
- A Technology Integrator, who ethically implements technology skills and resources to create appropriate products for specific purposes.

Senate Bill 740 brought about large-scale changes for BCS as it metamorphosed into BCMHS. The previous K-12 independent study program was transferred to the Vacaville Unified School District, and Vacaville residents of that program were not eligible to take classes at BCMHS.

Early in 2002, the Administrative Cabinet reviewed various school documents to assure they clearly corresponded to the revised charter. Additionally, this group created ESLRs to replace the previous Learner Goals. A set of ESLRs was created and communicated to stakeholders. However, after attending a Focus on Learning training seminar, the team decided to rewrite the ESLRs to include indicators that are measurable. The revised ESLRs were presented to staff and home groups for suggestions, and ultimately finalized and adopted in 2004. The new goals were communicated to stakeholders and are now posted in all classrooms, taught to students at the beginning of the year, and integrated into the curriculum.

Buckingham Charter Magnet High School Expected School-wide Learning Results
Through performance-based educational choices, Buckingham Charter Magnet High School is committed to developing life long independent learners, who value themselves; who contribute to their community; and who are equipped to succeed in a changing world.

BCMHS Mission Statement

1. Buckingham students will be prepared for academic success in post-secondary education.

Students may demonstrate this by (including but not limited to)

- Critically reading and responding to informational and literary text.
- Communicating ideas in an organized manner.
- Analyzing and developing a solution(s) to a problem.
- Synthesizing multiple sources of information.
- Understanding and implementing instructions.
- Utilizing technology to enhance learning or presentation of assignment.

2. Buckingham students will demonstrate proficiency with computer skills necessary in the 21st century.

Students may demonstrate this by (including but not limited to)

- Demonstrating information literacy
- Sending electronic mail.
- Creating assignments using a word processing program.
- Publishing in an electronic format.
- Developing spreadsheets to display information.

3. Buckingham students will demonstrate proficiency in the content areas through the use of visual and media arts.

Students may demonstrate this by (including but not limited to)

- Creating visual displays.
- Critiquing, writing, directing or producing film, videos or digital imaging projects.
- Producing audio or musical projects.
- Analyzing and performing dramatic art.

4. Buckingham students will be responsible citizens and possess a solid foundation for life long learning.

Students may demonstrate this by (including but not limited to)

- Attending school daily and arriving punctually.
- Being prepared to work individually and collaboratively.
- Respecting themselves and others.
- Contributing to their community.
- Demonstrating ethical usage of technology.

CHAPTER III
Progress Report
Elise P. Buckingham Charter Magnet High School

Buckingham Charter Magnet High School entered the candidacy phase of the WASC process in 2002. At that time the school was Buckingham Charter School, a K-12 independent study program. Subsequently, a substantial shift was made to become BCMHS, a 9-12 college preparatory school with Information Technology and Visual Media Arts magnet programs. Due to this change, a second WASC team visitation was conducted at which time it was determined that the original four recommendations were still valid.

Recommendation 1: Continue efforts of aligning curriculum more closely with the state content performance standards including an instructional plan for implementation.

Teachers conducted a curriculum and textbook review process. In the spring of 2004, standards-based curriculum from Prentice Hall was chosen in English, biology, and social science. Math teachers are aligning current materials to state standards and new textbooks have been purchased and will be distributed the 2005-2006 school year.

The alignment process is supported by the introduction of Friday professional development time from 8:00-10:00. This time is used by staff to work within departments, grade levels, and across grade levels to plan curriculum for the year in addition to other professional growth opportunities. Changes implemented this year include:

- California content standards are posted and taught to students in all core areas.
- Some teachers post standards on lesson plans and discuss them through the lesson.
- ESLRs are posted and taught.
- Ninth and tenth grade English teachers are focusing on introducing and practicing each of the five writing application strands on the CAHSEE. These efforts are supported through Writing Across the Curriculum.
- Ninth and tenth grade English teachers identified power strands using information gained through research.
- Mathematics has been identified as an area of critical need.
- Microsoft Project manager facilitates planning of long-term curriculum development.

Recommendation 2: Participate in staff development activities that focus on improvement of student academic performance.

Friday mornings from 8:00-10:00 are designated specifically for professional development. Professional development includes; writing across the curriculum, best practices models, peer to peer technology sharing, public health training, 504 and IEP issues, and community arts representative addresses. The majority of time in the first semester of 2004-2005 has been used for the FOL/WASC process. In Fall 2005, Buckingham will begin planning curriculum pacing guides and selecting power standards in core curricular areas. The school-wide grading rubric

will also be expanded to the department level.

Friday mornings are also utilized for faculty and community member presentations focusing on best practices and ways core teachers can incorporate the skills students are learning in the elective classes into their curriculum.

The “August Institute” was implemented in 2003 to focus professional development toward improvement of student academic performance. The two-day seminar approach is used to introduce content and strategies that will be reinforced throughout the year in other professional development settings.

Writing Across the Curriculum is used to support enhancement of student’s overall writing skills. Planning is underway to implement a class for students who do not pass the Early Assessment Program (EAP) testing in the eleventh grade year. Teachers attended a reading strategies training in Spring 2004. This year ninth grade English teachers and the tenth grade World History teacher utilize those strategies. Part of the school’s professional development goal is for all English and social science teachers to develop this program further and then train other core teachers in 2007.

Recommendation 3: Regularly examine student performance data in order to identify state content and performance standards that need more emphasis and/or additional instruction.

CAT6 and CST testing results have been reviewed using AERIES database to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses. Whole staff and departments have considered these results along with classroom assessments to guide curriculum instruction and practice. Power strands will be tested in English nine and ten using the Prentice Hall Assessment material provided with the curriculum. Teachers are familiarizing themselves and students with the school-wide grading rubric this year. Beginning in September 2006, freshman students will be given a writing assessment to establish a baseline. Annual assessment will continue each February to track student improvement in writing.

Recommendation 4: Involve all stakeholders from the school community in development of the school ESLRs and the plan for participating in the full Focus on Learning self-study process.

The shift from BCS to BCMHS necessitated a significant revision of the school’s previous learning goals. To facilitate this process, parents, community members, and students were recruited to provide input. Informative Town Hall meetings were held in 2002 and 2003 to introduce the FOL process. The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) recommended parents. The Young Image Makers Foundation served as a recruitment pool for community members. Teacher recommendation and student interviews resulted in the selection of students to participate in the process. Faculty members either have or are serving on WASC visiting teams. Student and parent surveys and interviews over the past two years have provided input. Overall, the results of both surveys were very positive. A majority of students and parents felt students are being prepared for college and students and parents felt respected by teachers and other staff. All stakeholders are updated via the web page and newsletters.

CHAPTER IV
Standards-based Student Learning: Curriculum and Instruction
Elise P. Buckingham Charter Magnet High School

A. Curriculum & Instruction

A-1 All students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-based curriculum that supports the achievement of the academic standards and the ESLRs.

Evidence:

- State of the School Report
- Student Survey (Spring 2004)
- Parent Survey (Spring 2004)
- Focus on Learning Teacher Observation
- BCMHS Course Catalog (2004-2005)
- BCMHS Program Handbook (2004-2005)
- Academic Performance Index (API)
- CAHSEE Passage Results (Spring 2004)
- Student Work Samples (Spring 2004)

All students at BCMHS have access to a challenging and meaningful academic foundation that is aligned with district, state, and national standards and state frameworks. All students have access to a path of educational choices that simulate creativity and desire to learn. They have elective choices on every Friday. Staff also uses this day for meetings to discuss issues and generate ideas to generate student learning on a school-wide basis. Departments meet regularly to create ways for learning to occur across the curriculum. Continuous efforts have been implemented to have staff attend workshops that enhance their curricular strengths.

A-2 All students have access to the school's entire program and assistance with a personal learning plan to prepare them for the pursuit of their academic, personal, and school-to-career goals.

Evidence:

- Student Survey (Spring 2004)
- Parent Survey (Spring 2004)
- BCMHS Course Catalog (2004-2005)
- BCMHS Program Handbook (2004-2005)
- Counselor Interview
- Career Center Coordinator Interview

Buckingham students have access to all courses offered. The counselor meets with all ninth grade and new incoming students in an orientation process that includes parents or guardians. Parents and students have an opportunity to make informed decisions whether the standards and the curriculum is an appropriate placement for their student. Twelfth grade students are kept informed about scholarship opportunities and college opportunities as well as guidance in completing their senior portfolio, and meeting graduation requirements.

Students are offered tutorial support on Friday from 10:00AM to 12:00 AM. The CSHSEE class supports the twenty-five lower-performing eleventh graders and retained tenth graders.

APEX advanced placement classes are available on line in several subject areas and continue to expand as the need arises.

College preparatory night classes are provided for seniors and their parents in the areas of financial aid, community college class availability, and college night.

A-3 To what extent are students able to meet all of the requirements of graduation upon completion of the high school program?

Evidence:

- BCMHS Course Catalog (2004-2005)
- Student Survey (Spring 2004)
- Parent Survey (Spring 2004)
- Counselor
- CAHSEE Results
- UC/CSU “A-G” courses list
- AP online courses
- AERIES Database
- BCMHS handbook

There are three stands that govern the student’s graduation path. They follow college preparatory, information technology, and visual and media arts. Students are able to complete a-g requirements for the UC/CSU system. Upon enrollment the ninth grade student schedules are implemented by the counselor. This allows students to review their course selections and to schedule an appointment with the counselor to review them. Students have access to additional support classes on Friday, math tutorial, a senior studies class, and a CAHSEE math class for students who failed the math portion.

A-4 Are all students involved in challenging learning experiences to achieve the academic standards and the expected school-wide learning results?

Evidence:

- Student Survey (Spring 2004)
- Parent Survey (Spring 2004)

- STAR 2004
- SAT 2004
- PSAT 2004
- API 2004
- CAHSEE 2004
- Advance Placement Courses
- Teacher Demographics 2004

Findings:

Students at BCMHS score near or better on the state mandated tests than district and state averages. After the substantive change, sixty-eight percent of the prior years **graduates** enrolled in community college or a four year college. Many students complete the A+ certification and have been employed locally. AP classes are offered through APEX and UCCP. BCMHS staff is experienced, knowledgeable and dedicated to the vision of the school.

Areas of Strength

- Based upon the following findings, BCMHS claims to have engaged all students in a challenging and meaningful academic foundation that is aligned with district, state and national standards and state frameworks. The courses offered at BCMHS are said to be consistent with the ESLRs. Buckingham Charter Magnet High School is a small (~300 students) site based high school environment that provides a four-day block schedule of core classes and elective classes with a fifth day of elective classes and tutorials.
- Some of the evidence cited which supported Criterion A-2 include counselor support, support for IEP and 504 students, career center coordination, principal support, teacher support, tutoring support, CAHSEE class support, Senior Studies, AP Classes, After School Computer Access, College Night, Financial Aid Night, Solano Community College partnership and additional support services such as college prep, academic, personal and school-to-career goals.
- The parent committee and involvement was increasing and funds were being established to support many student interests such as sports, music, etc. It is also hoped that more can be done to help students apply more effectively and knowledgably for scholarships. Many tests are being implemented in order to help students more with college preparatory readiness.
- Further evidence which shows support for student learning is the careful scheduling and organization implemented by the counselor and support staff each year. Student information is maintained in Aeries so that many people have access to updated correct and relevant information regarding the student. Aeries also allows schools to disaggregate data in many ways to observe data based educational trends. This year, the school implemented a CAHSEE math class to help struggling students meet the requirements to pass this standardized test. The results for the CAHSEE came in during the WASC visit and more than 80% of students had passed which was a significant improvement over last year. Special accommodations are also made for IEP and 504 plans. UC/CSU a-g courses are carefully tracked and AP classes are available online to help students prepare for college.

- Other pieces of evidence which the visiting team observed that supported criterion A-2 were the film festival, Monday morning broadcast, and portfolios maintained within some classes and as Jr./Sr. projects. Many classes offered at BCMHS also showed authentic assessments. Those assessments characterize a significant portion of student projects and work samples. Some of the course offerings that provided for this were A+ Certification, CISCO Networking, Evaluation & advanced Web Design, Digital Yearbook Production, Film 1 & 2, On Camera Acting and Directing, Theatre Arts Courses (as they move to produce plays and films), Student Leadership, English 10 (reading soliloquy's, recording, editing), world history (making PowerPoint presentations to present in class), and other items which are obviously going on beyond scope of direct WASC observation.
- There is also a technology base at BCMHS which encourages authentic assessment because students are enabled to integrate the curriculum in with the technology in creative ways.
- Overall, many observations were collected, substantiating the challenging learning experiences which are taking place and supporting the state standards and the ESLRs. One item which was not specifically a Buckingham production was the Campus Star Newspaper which was entirely designed and written by local students and featured many Buckingham students.

Areas for Growth and Improvement

Some areas of concern in curriculum and instruction are the following:

- Relationship with the local school district
- High percentage of part time positions
- Credentialing Issues

There seems to be a sense of threat by the local school district in response to the success and growth of BCMHS even though teachers from both Buckingham and other district schools all belong to the same teacher's union. It appears that the district is discouraging Buckingham from expanding even though potential grants and student interest would tend to warrant the inevitability of this trend. This is unfortunate for Buckingham because there are so many staff, resources, and opportunities to collaborate which would benefit the curriculum and instruction of both schools, which are not being realized.

Out of 25 staff positions, only 10 are contractually full-time positions, 4 are full-time without contract and the remaining 11 positions are part-time only. From a curriculum and instruction point of view, this is a low percentage. The visiting committee would recommend that BCMHS hire and support more full-time positions to help with the stability and continuity of the program. The full-time teachers that are here work to support the part time teachers through a system of peer mentoring. Only 65% of teachers are credentialed and

teaching in their subject areas. This low percentage is destined to bring up problematic issues for No Child Left Behind.

B. Standards-Based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability

B-5 To what extent do teachers employ a variety of strategies to evaluate student learning?

To what extent do students and teachers use assessment results to enhance the educational progress of every student?

Evidence:

- Assessment and Accountability teacher survey (Fall 2004)
- Student Interviews (Fall 2004)
- Home Group Reports (2003 – 2004)
- Parent Survey (Spring 2004)
- Student Survey (Spring 2004)
- Buckingham Charter Magnet HS Charter–2003

Findings:

The BCMHS community values assessment and is using multiple measures to assess student learning, achievement, and growth. Of these multiple measures, the most notable are the assessments of daily work, tests, and authentic assessments. Authentic assessments replicate or simulate real life contexts and require real life applications. There is good evidence of both authentic assessment and a general methodology that incorporates the use of technology, student portfolios, readiness tests, and other performance based assessments. The school has made significant progress in developing a comprehensive, school-wide, standards-based assessment system. A school-wide grading rubric is being developed using the language of the CST quintile band terminology to help students understand how their ongoing portfolios and assessments relate to standards achievement.

BCMHS has aligned their graduation requirements with their ESLRs through requiring senior projects and proven academic success in all coursework. Reportedly teachers analyze standardized test results and align their instruction to standards in core curricular areas. The use of standardized test scores like the STAR and CAHSEE are being used to determine student proficiency levels. Further use of the SAT, PSAT, and AP exams is planned as soon as there is enough data for reporting. Also noted is the focus on student portfolios and Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and for longitudinal data collection.

Based on standardized test results and individual teacher assessments, one of Buckingham's most critical academic needs is to increase student achievement in mathematics. Goals have been set to increase student achievement in mathematics by meeting the demand for additional support in math, having discussions on expansion alternatives, peer tutoring, extended math

tutorial times, and considering intervention models. Evidence was seen in CAHSEE math remediation classes, various Algebra 1 class formats, and Algebra readiness tests.

In alignment with the Buckingham mission statement and ESLRs, teachers in all departments integrate technology and performance-based assessments through their monthly authentic assessments, daily work, and other projects. Administration and staff meet within departments or across curricular areas, to share ideas and expertise to ensure a quality education is being provided to all students. To maintain consistency and high standards school-wide, Buckingham administration and staff created school-wide rubrics for grading, writing, and PowerPoint presentations.

Reportedly, the teacher and school attempt to provide various means of communication to ensure all parents have the opportunity to be involved. Teachers communicate with parents on a regular basis. Teachers are required to send a Red Alert home monthly to parents whose students are failing their course. Most teachers also send progress reports home with the students monthly. Many give computer generated printouts that indicate the students missing assignments as well as their current grade. Every Buckingham teacher has a web page, and most have student grades, missing assignments, and homework posted for parents to view. In addition to teachers' monthly progress reports, the school sends four formal reports home to parents; 1st and 3rd quarter progress reports and 2 semester grade reports. Also most months, unless there is a formal report being sent home, the school sends action plans or academic letters of non-compliance (based on teacher generated Red Alerts) home to parents if their student is failing two or more classes. Administration and counselor will meet with students immediately when they begin to fail two or more classes to collaboratively create an action plan and identify some strategies to help the student be successful. Administration and counselor will frequently conference with parents following action plans or academic letters of non-compliance and are available regularly for parents and students to listen, share expertise and resources.

Students are also expected to play an integral role in their achievement. In many courses students evaluate each other's assignments and participate in peer-editing exercises. They are often expected to revise essays after reading teacher commentary or evaluate peers' performances or projects. Teachers note on the board, or on the assignment sheet the content standard and ESLR being addressed. Students know the objectives of the lessons and the teachers and schools academic performance expectations. Students who are struggling must take the initiative to seek help from teachers before and after school, on Fridays, or attend the math tutorial. The focus on academic content standards has provided the students with defined expectations and objectives that are attainable and measurable. The benefits of this are evident in student performance on standardized tests, and classroom assessments.

B-6 To what extent does the school, district, and community regularly review student progress toward achievement of the academic standards and the expected school-wide learning results and report to the parents and other stakeholders of the community?

Evidence Examined:

- Buckingham Newsletter
- Buckingham web page
- *The Reporter* Vacaville Newspaper

- Standardized test results
- Parent Survey (Spring 2004)
- School Accountability Report Card
- School-wide Vision Plan
- State of the Schools Report (Fall 2004)

Findings:

The parents, school, district, community, and other stakeholders regularly review student progress toward achievement of the academic content standards and expected school wide learning results. After each exam administration parents are mailed individual student STAR and CAHSEE reports. Eighty-seven percent of parents surveyed in spring 2004, said they are informed yearly of their student’s performance on the STAR test. Overall school performance on the STAR and CAHSEE exams, passage rates, API, AYP, and School Accountability Report Card are posted on the school’s website, in our school newsletter, and in the local paper, *The Reporter*. In addition, the district’s Testing Coordinator makes presentations to the school board on student performance throughout the district and at each school site. These board meetings are televised on the local cable access channel throughout Vacaville.

Administration is required to give a State of the Schools report to the Vacaville Unified School Board every two years. This report includes data and performance on state tests, as well as enrollment, demographic, and program information. The principal makes a presentation at a local school board meeting and then there is a question and answer session. These board meetings are televised on the local cable access channel for the entire Vacaville community. Administration also plans to prepare reports for staff on individual student progress on standardized test results so staff may support individual students with their areas of weakness. The leadership team is also currently researching intervention models and will use the results of standardized tests as one assessment tool for placement. Buckingham also holds several events throughout the year that community members, district personnel and parents are invited to attend to view student work and talk with staff about student progress. Back-to-School Night in the fall, Open House in the spring, parent-teacher conferences twice a year, city photo contests, Festival of Trees, and student performances. Community members and parents can also read about student progress at Buckingham from the local newspaper. *The Reporter* visits Buckingham regularly and has written several articles about our school program, offerings, as well as featured students, their work products, and successes.

Teachers inform parents and students of the academic content standards for their course and the expected school-wide learning results. Standards are posted on the walls, boards, in syllabi, on teacher web pages, on the assignment sheet, or often required to be kept in a student notebook. Expected school-wide learning results are also posted in every classroom and discussed how they relate to the lesson. Within each department, staff has analyzed the alignment of the content standards for their courses with the ESLRs. Teachers communicate academic standards, ESLRs, and student progress through their web pages, parent conferences, phone calls, emails, red alerts, and progress reports.

Grades are disseminated to parents four times a year, two quarter report cards and two semester report cards. Parents also receive red alerts and letters of non-compliance if students are failing

two or more classes each month. Teachers will also send red alerts, email, or phone parents if students are in danger of failing. The large number of non-compliance letters and dismissals within the first year was found to be related to an influx of students unaware of the academic standards, a programmatic change from Independent Study to a completely on-site program, and other typical offenses. The number has significantly changed, signifying an informed and motivated student population. Most teachers give students monthly grade printouts, post grades on their teacher web page, or require students track their own progress. Teachers are available to meet with parents and students during their office hours, Fridays, or by appointment. Several students get weekly progress reports to monitor their own progress. Progress report forms are available from the office upon student or parent request.

The counseling department and other school support services, such as the resource specialist and the district's bilingual coordinator, assess student progress and communicate with parents. The counselor is available to meet with students and parents upon request to discuss student progress toward the academic standards and ESLRs. The counselor also coordinates Student Study Teams if interventions or additional support is necessary for a student. The resource specialist works with special education students and tracks student progress through the Individualized Education Plans (IEP). Vacaville's district bilingual coordinator assesses students' English fluency by administering the CELDT test to eligible students in October.

B-7 To what extent does the assessment of student achievement in relation to the academic standards and the expected school-wide learning results drive the schools program and resource allocation and use? To what extent are the human, material, physical, and financial resources sufficient and utilized effectively to support students in accomplishing the academic standards and expected school-wide learning results?

Evidence Examined:

School Budget

Home Group Reports

Findings:

The assessment of student achievement and a focus on academic content standards and the expected school-wide learning results are a major driving force behind the development of Buckingham's school program. All fiscal decisions are assessed and must be in alignment with our school-wide vision plan parameters and support vision plan objectives. Fiscal resources, charter legislation, and facilities challenges have posed difficulties, but available resources have been utilized as effectively as possible to provide students with a quality learning environment.

As a result of analyzing standardized test scores, academic content standards, CAHSEE blueprints, and student grades Buckingham has modified its educational program accordingly. The school master schedule is built around student course needs. AP course offerings have increased, sections of keyboarding and word processing are scheduled to ensure all ninth and

tenth grade students fulfill the graduation requirement, and new courses such as chemistry and trigonometry were added this year. For students who are struggling to pass the CAHSEE, a CAHSEE math class was offered this spring as an intervention and additional support. Along with acquiring Candidacy Accreditation, Buckingham has steadily increased its AP course offerings and enrollment and after the conversion to an on-site high school, continued to offer block scheduling to support students wanting to take classes at Solano Community College. The Leadership team, with support from administration and faculty, recommended implementing an AVID class. The class will become part of the schedule beginning in fall of 2005.

Reportedly, significant amounts of fiscal resources and personnel have been dedicated to professional development. Buckingham plans to continue this commitment to our staff and students. Every Friday morning, two hours of professional development is scheduled for all teaching staff. Staff will receive training on data analysis, best practices, instructional strategies, safety, time to work within their department and across curricular areas. Financial resources are limited and pose difficulty in adequately meeting Buckingham student and staff needs. With the majority of Buckingham's budget going to facilities, staffing, equipment, and supplies are a challenge. With the conversion to an on-site high school, Buckingham lost a great deal of ADA revenue dropping student enrollment to approximately three hundred.

Dedicated to providing a standards-based curriculum, Buckingham has recently adopted textbooks aligned with the CA content standards in English, social science, and chemistry. The school believes that career and college support services are important on campus to support Buckingham ESLRs and student achievement. Buckingham also opened a career center this school year and it is staffed on a part time basis.

Areas of Strength

- The school has implemented schoolwide focus assessments in the areas of mathematics and English Language Arts (WAC). Math textbooks are currently being previewed and a committee will select and purchase new textbooks for the entire math department for use next school year.
- Benchmark assessments, which are used to monitor student mastery of the content standards and guide instruction, have been developed and implemented in most core classes.
- Time and due process given to students previous to dismissal, and petition process in place to assure accurate ultimate placement.
- Good evidence of performance based authentic assessment and methodology in place in most areas.
- Students are aware of the academic content standards, expected school-wide learning results, and objective that lessons are addressing.
- Buckingham communicates student progress in a variety of ways.
- Expected School-wide Learning results are posted in every classroom and most staff discuss them with students.
- Community members are informed of student progress.
- Parents reported they are aware of the academic content standards, ESLRs, and their student's progress.

- The school has annually disaggregated student data by subgroups to ensure that all students are being appropriately served.

Key Issues

- The school needs to continue the development and implementation of the school-wide assessment system to include periodic benchmark assessment tools, and common end of semester exams in all curricular areas and courses.
- Increased longitudinal assessment per individual student in mathematic areas using standards-based adaptive measurement (SAM).
- Training for elective teachers on how to incorporate core curricular content standards and how to utilize standardized test results to support core curricular areas in their curriculum.

C-8 To what extent do all students receive appropriate support to help ensure academic success?

Evidence:

- Student Survey (Spring 2004)
- Parent Survey (Spring 2004)
- Assessment Survey
- Course Offerings on Master Schedule
- BCMHS Course Catalog (2004-2005)
- BCMHS Student Handbook (2004-2005)
- Buckingham Newsletter
- Buckingham Web Site
- Scholarship Group E-mail
- PAC Meetings and E-mail
- Daily Bulletin
- Senior Portfolio
- Resource Specialist
- Secondary Library/Media Tech

Findings:

The counselor supports the incoming students with an outline of the future course planning. Students have access to UC/CSU preparatory courses. Parents are able to access assignments on the schools web site. There is strong communication between parents and students. Most parents interviewed said they access their students' progress through the internet on the Buckingham's web page.

C-9 To what extent do all students have access to a system of personal support services, activities and opportunities at the school and within the community?

Evidence:

- Student Survey (Spring 2004)
- Parent Survey (Spring 2004)
- Daily and Monthly Counselor Appointment Schedule
- Counselor and Parent Contact Logs
- Graduation Ceremony
- Club Membership Lists
- Orientation Schedules
- Math Tutorial Schedule
- Graduation Clearance Form
- Buckingham Parent/Student Newsletter
- Buckingham Web Site
- Teacher e-mail and voice mail
- Special Motivational Speakers
- Daily Bulletin
- Monday Broadcast News
- School Assemblies
- High Honors List and Ceremony
- Senior Brunch
- Scholarship Recipient Lists (Graduation Ceremony)
- Nurse Interview

Areas of Strength

There is much to indicate that students are growing both personally and academically throughout the school at this time.

Buckingham has a commitment to prepare students for college acceptance. To do so, all core classes and a number of the visual and performing electives are UC “a-g” approved. Students are encouraged and guided to enroll in classes required for college admission. Students may also take AP classes on-site or classes at Solano Community College. Plans are being made to offer additional classes in visual and performing arts that satisfy the UC “f” requirement.

Investigated areas include teacher support, counselor support, parent support, parent and student notification of academic progress, after-school computer access, tutorials, AP classes, special education, CAHSEE testing, senior portfolio, senior studies, Solano Community College partnership, technology requirement for graduation, careers, EMC, college night, financial aid night, and GOTCHA. Local businesses have gotten together to prepare scholarships and academic recognition for Buckingham students.

Areas for Growth and Improvement

Getting students involved in very substantive and rewarding activities is obviously the greatest strength of this school. These students are being validated for who they are and what they are able to do. The rewards are intrinsic to the program and a sense of comfortable well being is

pervasive throughout the hallways and byways of the school. One hope being aired was that more would be done to help students find scholarships and college preparation support. Perhaps the parent committee may be able to start supporting and generating more options for students during the junior and senior years.

D. School Culture

D-10 To what extent is the school a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning?

To what extent is the culture of the school characterized by trust, professionalism, high expectations for all students, and a focus on continuous school improvement?

Evidence:

- School Accountability Report 2003-2004 for the Buckingham Charter Magnet School
- Student Survey (September 2004) with 250 respondents
- Staff Survey (October 2004) with 22 respondents
- Buckingham Student Handbook
- Buckingham Staff Handbook
- 2004 CBEDS
- 2004-2005 attendance statistics
- Non-compliance statistics
- Personal Interviews: Principal, Assistant Principal, Campus Supervisor, Custodian, Teachers, Students, Parents

Findings:

Although Buckingham Charter Magnet School is located in a commercial business park, it is a safe, clean and orderly campus. The following support this finding:

- In the 2004 staff survey (**see Appendix B**), 100 percent of Buckingham staff said they felt safe on campus.
- In the 2004 student survey, 89 percent of Buckingham students said they felt safe on campus while only 11 percent said they did not.
- Campus Supervisor, Ron Perkins, who is on the campus daily from 7:00AM until 5:00 PM reports that in his ten years on the job, Buckingham has only has three issues with physical altercations. The students are well-behaved; and any sign of something being unsafe is taken care of in an orderly fashion. Administrators agree and support this statement and are often

visible during passing and lunchtime.

Set in the middle of a business park, Buckingham Charter Magnet School faces unique obstacles. The Administration and members of the teaching staff closely supervise the students at all times, as well as maintaining close contacts with the local business concerns in order to ensure that students are well-behaved and not loitering in inappropriate places.

In the last year Buckingham has made significant upgrades for both safety and security. Additional speed bumps, marked by yellow warning signs and visible to motorists, have lowered the speed of traffic, while the new crosswalks have allowed for safer student crossing of the campus. Traffic flow has also been changed to create safer exit and entry from the parking lot.

Each day, the lunch area is marked by the custodian and the Campus Supervisor with removable yellow security tape. During lunch, Campus Security, an administrator, and teachers monitor all exits and entrances to and from the school and the area where students have lunch. A system for identifying students who have unscheduled afternoons and lunch passes has been implemented. In case an incident arises the supervisory team and front office staff now have improved communications due to the purchase of better quality two-way radios. The Buckingham Broadcast News reinforces safety and security announcements during weekly broadcasts, and the daily bulletin is also used to communicate areas of concern or growing laxity.

Seventy-seven percent of the teachers surveyed said they always intervene when inappropriate behavior occurs outside their classrooms. Eighty-six percent of the students surveyed said they felt that the teachers always intervened. Ninety-two percent of the students and seventy-seven percent of the teachers surveyed said the teachers establish classroom rules and follow through with appropriate consequences. With a strong staff presence inside and outside of the classroom, students feel safe and are able to focus on their education.

A Program Handbook, revised annually, is given to each student upon registration.

The handbook contains information about faculty, student support services and graduation requirements. It outlines school rules, dress code and behavioral expectations. It also includes an explanation of the grounds for suspension and expulsion. The handbook is available online at the school website: www.BuckinghamCharterHigh.org. Only thirty-four percent of student surveyed said that they have read the handbook, therefore the Administration, staff and students are considering two proposals to encourage all students to read and understand the handbook: 1. to thoroughly review the Handbook with all staff during the August Institute, and 2. spend a portion of the first week of school reviewing the Handbook with students.

One hundred percent of the classrooms at BCMHS are equipped with a telephone and a laptop computer, which is linked to the school's intranet. Each classroom also has posted emergency numbers and evacuation plans. If an incident should arise the teachers have the necessary resources to contact the front office, administration or emergency services.

Buckingham Charter Magnet High School' current campus was opened in October of 1999 with two new buildings added in September 2002. Since BCMHS opened. The school has worked hard to maintain a clean, attractive campus in order to foster a nurturing environment for work

and study. The following information from surveys supports these statements:

- Once hundred percent of BCMHS staff participating in the WASC survey said they thought the campus was clean and free of litter.
- Ninety-six percent of students surveyed in 2004 thought the campus was clean, while only four percent thought litter and graffiti were issues.
- Ninety-two percent of students surveyed thought that the custodial staff works hard to ensure a clean campus.
- One hundred percent of the staff felt that the school's cleanliness and appearance were important.
- One hundred percent of the staff responded that the restrooms were clean and well maintained.
- Eighty-four percent of the students and one hundred percent of the staff stated that the custodial staff is responsive and available when needed.
- BCMHS received a Safety Award from the North Bay School Insurance Authority.

Visible and hard working, the Buckingham custodians consistently maintain the classrooms and clean up the litter on campus. The daytime staff provides a clean environment for the school by ensuring that lunchtime litter does not become a problem.

Graffiti rarely becomes a problem. When it does, it is immediately removed by the custodians and the Campus Supervisor. The Service Learning Class implemented a recycling program, placing recycling bins throughout the campus. A campus free of litter and graffiti is a vital key to creating an environment which nurtures student learning.

Areas of Strength:

- BCMHS is considered a safe and orderly campus by staff, students, parents and community which provides a nurturing learning environment
- Respect and valuing of all members of the Buckingham community
- A full-time Campus Supervisor maintains a safe and orderly campus
- The high level of staff investment in the Buckingham mission.
- Administrators are more visible throughout campus
- An increase in the positive awareness of BCHMS as a valuable educational institution by the external community
- Upgraded two-way radio communications

Areas for Growth and Improvement:

- Need for increased commitment of the part of the District Office towards the acquisition of a more suitable facility site
- Additional training needed in first aid and CPR
- Closed campus
- Protocol accountability – defined staff expectations
- Bell system throughout campus

E-11 Does the school leadership and staff make decisions and initiate activities that focus on all students achieving the ESLRs and academic standards?

Evidence:

- Hard copies of ESLRs posted in classrooms and website
- Specific standards posted in classrooms, lessons and staff web pages
- Parent/Student Town Hall meetings
- Individual student computer accounts
- Leadership teams
- Mission Statement
- Authentic Assessments
- Vision Plan
- Student Survey
- Parent Survey
- Meeting Minutes
- CTAP Report
- Attendance Reporting
- Non-compliance data

Findings:

The Buckingham Leadership Team has gone through a transition over the last few years. Prior to the material revision of the school's charter (2002), the leadership team consisted of the following: Principal, Head Counselor, Testing / Assessment Coordinator, Administrative Assistant, three lead teachers and one parent representative. A WASC coordinator was added to the team in 2003. Going into the current 2004-2005 school year, the leadership teams consist of three different components: the Administrative Team, The Leadership Team, and the General Staff. The Administrative Team consisting of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Head Counselor and the Curriculum and Instruction Coordinator addresses daily operations and programmatic issues mostly surrounding implementation of policies and protocols.

The Leadership Team, consisting of the Administrative Team, plus the Student Activities Coordinator, three teachers selected by staff, and parent, parallels the WASC Leadership group. This group deals with Buckingham's mission and vision articulations.

The third team consists of general staff. BCMHS is a small school whose members desire to create a collaborative learning and working environment. All stakeholders are represented during

a weekly meeting to address “critical issues” that impact the learning environment of the community. All of the decision-making for policy revision or implementations are based on parent/student/staff survey results, team input and vision parameters.

The ESLRs are posted in every classroom and on the school’s website. Teachers review these along with content standards during their instruction. All staff are assigned “ teacher coaches” who review classroom curriculum and instruction throughout the year. Additionally, strategies and techniques are shared during staff development meetings.

Town Hall meeting are held prior to the start of school, at Back-to-School Night, and at Open House. These open forums for parents, prospective parents, and interested community members address issues and concerns, as well as communicate academic standards and expectations. Student orientations in August communicate and reinforce these expectations. Last year BCMHS held its first “Senior Brunch”, which recognizes and encourages student achievement.

Areas of Strength:

- Most stakeholders feel that they have a voice in the decision- making and development of activities that support the learning platform.
- Staff climate is very positive and supportive
- Staff energy and its openness to innovation and creative instructional strategies
- Willingness to implement technology into teaching and learning

Areas for Growth and Improvement:

- Continual reinforcement of ESLRs and content standards in the classroom
- Implement standards in all classrooms as they are developed
- Continue to provide training for new and part-time staff on content standards
- Assess the marketing of Senior Brunch as a motivational tool
- Effectively identify non-performing students and implement strategies for successful intervention
- Develop plans to incorporate more clubs and activities to further develop students’ sense of connectedness to school and self-esteem

E-12 Does a qualified staff facilitate achievement of the academic standards and the ESLRs through a system of preparation, induction, and on-going professional development?

Evidence:

- Staff Development (internal and external)
- Best Practices models
- Student Survey
- Staff Survey

- Parent Survey
- Staff Manual
- August Institute
- Staff Credentialing (voc ed) and expertise
- Peer Coaching
- School-wide assessment rubric
- Daily Bulletins
- Professional Journals
- Staff Evaluations

Findings:

Staff consists of one part-time administrative secretary, one counseling secretary, one part-time registrar, one part-time attendance clerk, two part-time support staff, one full and one part-time custodial staff, and one part-time campus supervisor. Additionally, a Head counselor, Assistant Principal, curriculum and instructional support coordinator/teacher, eleven full-time equivalent teaching (FTEs) employees and twelve part-time teaching employees

All new teachers in Vacaville Unified School District (including Buckingham’s FTEs) participate in the district’s new teacher in-service and are assigned a mentor teacher, who is available throughout the school year to address issues, concerns or on-going professional development. Additionally, all Buckingham instructional staff attends a site-based August Institute, which reviews Best Practice models, discusses major reform and research, current trends in education classroom management strategies, and legislative updates in charter law. Buckingham teaching staff are also assigned a “coach” and are observed at least once a year and evaluated according to CA Teaching Standards (see Appendix H).

A professional development meeting is held every Friday from 8AM to 10AM. During this time, staff addresses critical issues and shares best practices from their own classroom or department. Individuals regularly present topics from their own areas of expertise. This may include PowerPoint, setting up web pages, or demonstrating visual or media arts projects that address content standards or ESLRs. Staff also meets by department, grade level and in cross-curricular groups.

Professional journals or readings are sometimes used as professional development prompts to be discussed departmentally or collectively as a team. on-going staff access to conferences is supported (i.e., CTAP, AERIES, Association of California Charter Schools, etc.). Staff is encouraged to join professional organizations and some staff members have presented at national and state conferences.

Areas of Strength:

- Staff expertise
- Individual web sites and voice mail
- Knowledge of technology integration
- Support staff expertise and cross-training
- Active participation in the state charter school association (CCSA) and other professional organizations and associations

Areas for Growth and Improvement

- Organize a more comprehensive training program for part-time staff
- Leverage technology usage
- Utilize district staff development opportunities
- Seek additional training and professional certification opportunities through CCSA and other agencies
- Recruit and retain teachers who are highly qualified and whose educational philosophy reflects
- Buckingham's mission and vision
- Establish an alternative teacher evaluation model for certificated staff

E-13 Are leadership and staff involved in on-going professional development that focused on identified student learning needs?

Evidence:

- Student anecdotal information
- Charter document
- CAT / STAR scores
- Data analysis
- Special Education in-services
- 504 training
- Learning Style Survey
- Authentic Assessment
- Professional workshops / conferences
- Friday Labs
- Advance Placement teacher training

- Handouts / distributions
- Agendas
- CTAP staff survey

Findings:

Buckingham provides varied staff development opportunities which support identification of student learning needs. Staff addresses this element by using their one hundred fifty hours of professional development post-credentialing requirements, through on-site staff training, credentialing courses, county office of education seminars, CLAD training, and other professional workshops. Some of this includes recent IEP training on Special Education designed for administrator designees (sponsored by the COE **SELPA** consortium), as well as administrative support from the central office in addressing 504 issues and concerns. AP training has been provided by University of California Prep Initiative (UCCPI) for AP courses, students and instructors.

Every August, BCMHS conducts back-to-school training for all teaching staff that covers a variety of topics. These include instructional strategies and methodologies, classroom management, learning styles and modalities and current educational research. This is continued and reinforced throughout the school year during Friday Professional development workshops, which address such items as special education, nursing and health-related issues, and ESLR results. Staff has also attended local and statewide conferences and presentations. The school's math lead attended a "JUST4KIDS" training utilizing graphing results for STAR dissemination. The English lead teachers a two-day ASCD workshop last year. The Principal, Assistant Principal, Curriculum Coordinator, and Activities Coordinator attended the state charter school conference, which included workshops addressing learned goals and assessment techniques. Members of the BCMHS staff will visit the Fenton Avenue Charter School in East LA, a Blue Ribbon School. The visit will focus on student learner needs and Best Practices models in a high socio-economically disadvantaged community. Staff has also participated in SB 395 training. The media, visual arts and IT staff have on-going training to meet their vocational certifications and have established collegial professional relationships that keep them current in the use of industry standard tools.

Areas of Strength:

- Friday Labs
- Tutorial / staff office hours
- WEB page usage
- The Charter document
- On-going professional training opportunities

Areas for Growth and Improvement:

- Pursue outside funding options / resources for equipment
- Continued use and interpretation of data analysis
- Teacher training in data analysis
- Additional education and training for elective instructors on identifying student needs

E-14 To what extent does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to encourage parental and community involvement?

Evidence:

- Young Image-Maker Foundation minutes
- Parent Council Advisory minutes
- Principal's calendar
- Newsletter
- School brochures: Program, VMA, IT, YIMF
- VUSD business cards / staff
- YIMF business cards / Board
- School calendar
- Published articles in newspaper, professional journals, etc.
- Public speaking opportunities: rotary, community events, peer functions
- Posted vision and mission statements
- Local cable broadcasts and interviews
- Student community service teams
- Student Leadership community activities
- Parent / student / school community fundraisers
- Town Hall meetings
- School orientations
- Parent Handbook
- Course Catalog
- Student, parent and staff surveys
- Web sites
- Email for staff and administration

Findings:

As with many charter school operators throughout the state of California, the challenge of effectively promoting and engaging community and parents has been the key to successful charters and address the original intent of the initial legislation. Voice and choice educational alternatives for parents, students and community provide the unique customer service platforms that many charters build upon. Given this, and the recent transition from a blended program to site based, re-advertising the new school model has been challenging. Fortunately, students and parents have proven a most effective recruitment tool. Creating strategies and engaging parents and community during the transitional stage has been a microcosm of some of the challenges the school faced the last two years on a programmatic macrocosm level. Designated administrative time has been the biggest challenge in dealing with community re-education. Some of the more effective results have come from the very positive articles written by local reporters. Speaking with local community leaders, such as Rotary and City Government has helped get the “new message” out. The Young Image Makers Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation has brought in a fifteen member Board to promote student opportunities and community education. The Parent Advisory Council has grown significantly and contributed to the school the last two years. A major PAC focus has been on fundraising, staff support and the WASC process. AS a revised parent component that is still defining its direction the PAC has taken major steps forward with self-organization and developing capacity. PAC has partnered with Student Leadership in sponsoring a variety of student activities, college scholarship, Senior Brunch, has assisted with graduation and the Film Festival, and has representation on the Foundation Board. PAC is also a springboard for parent feedback and decision- making. As BCMHS adds courses and creates strategies in meeting its vision and mission goals, PAC is a vital tool in determining policies, procedures, sharing concerns and soliciting input in the decision-making process.

Non-English speaking parents have access to bilingual staff that assists them in a variety of capacities, including, but lot limited to: registration, course selection, questions on program policies and expectations, parent roles and availability of resources on the school’s web site and electronic communication. A key focus, pending the next charter revision, will be to address hiring protocols in partnership with Vacaville Unified School District. Currently, the ability to hire outside the district’s protocols has limited Buckingham in hiring more staff of color. This is felt to be a key component in recruitment, retention and effectively meeting students who are non-English speaking and of color.

Community resources have been targeted and some partnerships developed. The community is extremely supportive of public schools, but local resources and charitable dollars have been spread very thin throughout the community and local businesses. The Foundation Board will actively seek alternative sources of support and revenue for the school. As stated, administrative time to team with Board members to pursue this is challenging. The Leadership class, along with PAC parents, continues to look for creative opportunities to support the students and the school.

Areas of Strength:

- Parent Advisory Council
- Young Image-Makers Foundation

- Stakeholder support
- Local business Partnerships (i.e.: Brendan Theatre Corporation, Hearn Construction, Gateway Realty, Wells Fargo, etc.)
- Local media support
- California Charter Schools Association
- Vision Planning process

Areas of Need:

- PAC to continue to develop their advocacy and contributions
- Foundation Board to extend their fundraising activities and school promotion opportunities
- Develop business partnerships within the community and beyond
- Hire staff that addresses both internal and external vision, i.e.: curriculum and instructional staff that support the school mission
- Pursue facilities that support the school's mission and vision

F: Vision and Purpose

F-15 Does the school have a clearly stated vision or purpose based on its student needs, current educational research and the belief that all students can achieve high levels? Is the school's purpose defined further by ESLRs and the academic standards and supported by the governing board and central administration? Do the ESLRs stress attainment of academic standards?

Evidence:

- Current and Previous Buckingham Charters
- Elise P. Buckingham Mission Statement
- Enrollment information
- Student Handbook (2004-2005)
- Portfolio Handbook (2003-2004)
- School Profile (2004)
- Student Portfolios
- Expected School-wide Learning Results (2004)
- School surveys (2004)
- Student interviews

- Parent interviews
- School newsletter (various)

Findings:

Elise P. Buckingham Charter Magnet School's (BCMHS) vision and purpose are based on student needs, current educational research, and the belief that all students can achieve at high levels. Since the material revision of the school's charter in 2002, site administration and the school's leadership team have led the effort to create a clear and consistent vision for the school by soliciting participation from all stakeholders. Buckingham is a performance-based charter school that emphasizes a college preparatory curriculum, visual and media arts and information technology; the school continues to implement curriculum and instructional practices aligned with the Content Standards for California Public Schools. Through the process of material revision, the school has re-emphasized ongoing staff development sessions to encourage standards-based instruction, to promote technology integration, and to make connections between visual and media arts and core curricular areas. The intent is to create a culture that is data-driven, yet encourages student capacities such as creativity, critical thinking, problem solving and collaborative interaction that are not easily quantified.

Since early 2002, prior to submitting the revised charter, Buckingham's Administrative Cabinet, consisting of administrators, teachers, and classified staff, has been involved in the process of reviewing the school's Mission Statement, Expected School-wide Learning

Results (ESLRs), school handbook and other pertinent documents to ensure they clearly correspond to the goals articulated in the revised charter. During the 2003-2004 school year, the Leadership team was expanded to include parents and students, becoming the WASC Leadership Team. As a result, Buckingham's Mission Statement, ESLRs and supporting documents are acquiring a philosophical and operational unity. Teachers and staff members are involved in site-based decision-making, community building, high standards, accountability, instruction, parent participation, and staff development.

Buckingham's goals are to maintain its students' current high level of writing proficiency, improve math proficiency and develop college-level reading skills. During the 2003-2004 school year, the Leadership Team met regularly to assess the then-current ESLRs to determine if those statements were truly measurable, and if they supported the Buckingham Mission Statement. At the final faculty meeting of 2003-2004, the entire faculty and administrative team refined the ESLRs to better articulate the school's goals. The revised ESLRs were presented to the Buckingham community at the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year through the school handbook, the school newsletter, staff and parent meetings. Each department is reassessing its goals based on the Mission Statement, the ESLRs, and the needs of the students. ESLRs are posted in all classrooms.

The school's vision as a performance-based educational option also drives its curricular goals by becoming a small high school through the material revision of its charter. The site administration has been instrumental in moving these reform efforts forward by supporting staff development and providing of common planning time. Teachers attend staff development sessions each Friday focused on a variety of curricular, instructional practices and assessment topics in support of

student success in and out of the classroom.. In the school's vision plan, all students will eventually be placed in one or more of these focus areas. All teachers support this approach, and strategies are being discussed to implement this structure.

The curriculum in all departments is based on state, national, and where appropriate, industry standards, and stresses the attainment of high academic achievement articulated through the ESLRS. In each department, students are expected to show proficiency in the language arts through writing, reading, speaking and listening. During the 2003-2004 school year, the English department created specific grade-level writing domains, which formed the basis of writing instruction in English classes. During the 2004-2005 school year, practice in these domains was integrated into all content areas by grade level. BCMHS students are expected to increasingly integrate knowledge and skills from a variety of subject areas into their authentic assessments. For example, in social science classes, students word process research papers on historical topics, and analyze a wide range of historical literature. In the English Department, students analyze and comprehend literature through essays, media arts projects, and oral presentations, which incorporate computer-generated visual aids. In film classes, students apply their understanding of concepts taught in English, such as plot and characterization to write and produce independent short films.

The authentic assessments and semester projects form the basis for each student's portfolio, which is a graduation requirement unique to Buckingham in Vacaville Unified School District. All students create a collection of work that shows proficiency in academic and vocationally related areas. The portfolio's purpose is to demonstrate student work products that address the ESLRs and which validate learning and achievement that cannot be easily measured by traditional means and standardized tests but that better engages students in and prepares them for "real world" work. Information literacy, life-long learning skills, collaborative working, contribution to community, as well as core academic knowledge are fundamental components of the portfolio. As part of the portfolio process, students are asked to research post-secondary options and to reflect on future goals and past learning experiences. Eventually, a formal presentation of their portfolios by students to a committee of administrators, teachers, parents and community members will become an integral part of the process.

As a California Digital High School, and as a school with specific focus on Information Technology and Visual and Media Arts, Buckingham encourages students to develop a high level of information literacy. Students routinely use technology for Internet research, developing and making PowerPoint presentations, and creating a variety of digital images and publications. Visual and Media Arts students have produced weekly television broadcasts. BCMHS has a Career Center available for students to use to work on projects, and teachers take students to the Career Center to instruct them on using Internet research, search engines and databases, and to access resources for papers and authentic assessments.

Finally, Buckingham is currently housed in a physical plant that was acquired to provide an appropriate facility for the "blended" independent study program that was the school's educational platform prior to the material revision of the charter. The facility met the needs of that program admirably, and provides a high tech environment supported by adequate infrastructure, but poses several challenges for a totally site-based school. Overall campus size,

small classrooms, location in a commercial facility shared with industrial businesses and totally inadequate physical education facilities are a few of the most obvious areas of concern. Addressing facilities needs is a critical issue and will be a major focus in the next few years.

Areas of Strength:

- Cross-disciplinary articulation
- Student portfolio
- Student access to technology and application of industry- standard media tools
- Staff's encouragement with support of Buckingham's mission and vision
- *Yearly newspaper that touts accomplishments of BHS students*

Areas for Growth and Improvement:

- Acquisition of adequate facilities to support Buckingham's mission and vision
- Effective communication between governance, central office administration and site operators
- Understanding and compliance with charter school legislation by governing board and central office administration
- Continued staff development focused on integrating ESLRs and academic standards, especially for new staff.

F-15 Does the school have a clearly stated vision or purpose based on its student needs, current educational research and the belief that all students can achieve high levels?

Is the school's purpose defined further by ESLRs and the academic standards and supported by the governing board and central administration?

Do the ESLRs stress attainment of academic standards?

Evidence:

- Current and Previous Buckingham Charters
- Elise P. Buckingham Mission Statement
- Strand Brochures
- Student Handbook (2004-2005)
- Portfolio Handbook (2003-2004)
- School Profile (2004)
- Expected School-wide Learning Results (2004)

- School surveys (2004)
- Content Standards for California Public Schools (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/>)
- School newsletter (various)

Findings:

Elise P. Buckingham Charter Magnet School's (BCMHS) vision and purpose are based on student needs, current educational research, and the belief that all students can achieve at high levels. Since the material revision of the school's charter in 2002, site administration and the school's leadership team have led the effort to create a clear and consistent vision for the school by soliciting participation from all stakeholders. Buckingham is a performance-based charter school that emphasizes a college preparatory curriculum, visual and media arts and information technology; the school continues to implement curriculum and instructional practices aligned with the Content Standards for California Public Schools. Through the process of material revision, the school has re-emphasized ongoing staff development sessions to encourage standards-based instruction, to promote technology integration, and to make connections between visual and media arts and core curricular areas. The intent is to create a culture that is data-driven, yet encourages student capacities such as creativity, critical thinking, problem solving and collaborative interaction that are not easily quantified.

Since early 2002, prior to submitting the revised charter, Buckingham's Administrative Cabinet, consisting of administrators, teachers, and classified staff, has been involved in the process of reviewing the school's Mission Statement, Expected School-wide Learning

Results (ESLRs), school handbook and other pertinent documents to ensure they clearly correspond to the goals articulated in the revised charter. During the 2003-2004 school year, the Leadership team was expanded to include parents and students, becoming the WASC Leadership Team. As a result, Buckingham's Mission Statement, ESLRs and supporting documents are acquiring a philosophical and operational unity. Teachers and staff members are involved in site-based decision-making, community building, high standards, accountability, instruction, parent participation, and staff development.

Buckingham's goals are to maintain its students' current high level of writing proficiency, improve math proficiency and develop college-level reading skills. During the 2003-2004 school year, the Leadership Team met regularly to assess the then-current ESLRs to determine if those statements were truly measurable, and if they supported the Buckingham Mission Statement. At the final faculty meeting of 2003-2004, the entire faculty and administrative team refined the ESLRs to better articulate the school's goals. The revised ESLRs were presented to the Buckingham community at the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year through the school handbook, the school newsletter, staff and parent meetings. Each department is reassessing its goals based on the Mission Statement, the ESLRs, and the needs of the students. ESLRs are posted in all classrooms.

The school's vision as a performance-based educational option also drives its curricular goals by

becoming a small high school through the material revision of its charter. Based on current educational research, the small high school environment is a setting which promotes higher student achievement and provides a platform for support of the ESLRs. The Superintendent, Board of Education, and site administration have been instrumental in moving these reform efforts forward by supporting staff development and providing of common planning time. Teachers attend staff development sessions each Friday focused on a variety of curricular, instructional practices and assessment topics in support of student success in and out of the classroom. Buckingham has created specific academic and career-themed focus areas to engage student interest and facilitate cooperation across departments: College Prep, Visual and Media Arts, and Information Technology. In the school's vision plan, all students will eventually be placed in one or more of these focus areas. All teachers support this approach, and strategies are being discussed to implement this structure.

The curriculum in all departments is based on state, national, and where appropriate, industry standards, and stresses the attainment of high academic achievement articulated through the ESLRS. In each department, students are expected to show proficiency in the language arts through writing, reading, speaking and listening. During the 2003-2004 school year, the English department created specific grade-level writing domains, which formed the basis of writing instruction in English classes. During the 2004-2005 school year, practice in these domains was integrated into all content areas by grade level. Additionally, students are required to complete monthly authentic assessments and semester projects in each class which demonstrate learning and achievement in a creative non-objective format. BCMHS students are expected to increasingly integrate knowledge and skills from a variety of subject areas into their authentic assessments. For example, in social science classes, students word process research papers on historical topics, and analyze a wide range of historical literature. In the English Department, students analyze and comprehend literature through essays, media arts projects, and oral presentations, which incorporate computer-generated visual aids. In film classes, students apply their understanding of concepts taught in English, such as plot and characterization to write and produce independent short films.

The authentic assessments and semester projects form the basis for each student's portfolio, which is a graduation requirement unique to Buckingham in Vacaville Unified School District. All students create a collection of work that shows proficiency in academic and vocationally related areas. The portfolio's purpose is to demonstrate student work products that address the ESLRs and which validate learning and achievement that cannot be easily measured by traditional means and standardized tests but that better engages students in and prepares them for "real world" work. Information literacy, life-long learning skills, collaborative working, contribution to community, as well as core academic knowledge are fundamental components of the portfolio. As part of the portfolio process, students are asked to research post-secondary options and to reflect on future goals and past learning experiences. Eventually, a formal presentation of their portfolios by students to a committee of administrators, teachers, parents and community members will become an integral part of the process.

As a California Digital High School, and as a school with specific focus on Information Technology and Visual and Media Arts, Buckingham encourages students to develop a high level of information literacy. Students routinely use technology for Internet research, developing

and making PowerPoint presentations, and creating a variety of digital images and publications. Visual and Media Arts students have produced weekly television broadcasts. BCMHS has a Career Center available for students to use to work on projects, and teachers take students to the Career Center to instruct them on using Internet research, search engines and databases, and to access resources for papers and authentic assessments.

Finally, Buckingham is currently housed in a physical plant that was acquired to provide an appropriate facility for the “blended” independent study program that was the school’s educational platform prior to the material revision of the charter. The facility met the needs of that program admirably, and provides a high tech environment supported by adequate infrastructure, but poses several challenges for a totally site-based school. Overall campus size, small classrooms, location in a commercial facility shared with industrial businesses and totally inadequate physical education facilities are a few of the most obvious areas of concern. Addressing facilities needs is a critical issue and will be a major focus in the next few years.

Areas of Strength:

- Cross-disciplinary articulation
- Student portfolio
- Student access to technology and application of industry- standard media tools
- Staff’s encouragement with support of Buckingham’s mission and vision

Areas for Growth and Improvement:

- Acquisition of adequate facilities to support Buckingham’s mission and vision
- Effective, productive communication between governance, central office administration and site operators
- Understanding and compliance with charter school legislation by governing board and central office administration
- Continued staff development focused on integrating ESLRs and academic standards, especially for new staff

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

General Comments

The Buckingham Charter Magnet High School community is to be commended for the thoroughness in the preparation of the *Focus on Learning* document. All stakeholders assisted the Visiting Committee in the collection and clarification of data that was needed in order to analyze the existing status of the school. The WASC committee, school support staff, and student Leadership team provided direction and resources for the Visiting Committee. Students were extremely open and willing to share their experiences and opinions about BCMHS.

Schoolwide Areas of Strength

BCMHS is to be commended for

1. A highly motivated and respected administrator who advocates for his school and is highly regarded in the charter school reform movement throughout California and by all BCMHS stakeholders
2. Validation of best instructional practices and rigorous academic standards
3. The uniqueness of a staff that fully embraces the vision and mission of Buckingham Charter Magnet High School
4. The buy-in among staff in regards to standards alignment as it allows them to use multiple methods of instruction
5. The willingness of staff to work cooperatively and cross departmental boundaries for the benefit of students
6. The dedicated staff who are willing to contribute their vast experiences and connections outside the world of education facilitating “real-life” experiences for students
7. Employing a variety of assessment techniques including but not limited to standardized tests and authentic performance-based assessments (use of technology, portfolios, and productions)
8. Supporting identified student needs and interests through the addition of class offerings, clubs, and student support services
9. A Parent Advisory Council (PAC) that supports the school zealously both ideologically and fiscally
10. A creative and enthusiastic Student Leadership Program

Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-up

The subsequent list of critical areas for follow-up is a synthesis of 1) growth areas addressed by the school in the action plan, 2) suggestions to strengthen these areas already identified in the action plan sections, and 3) additional areas identified by the Visiting Committee.

The Visiting Committee concurs with the school’s identified areas that are outlined in the schoolwide action plan. These are summarized below:

1. The need for a facility that supports the school’s focus and allows for planned future growth

2. Continue to support cross curricular efforts and integration of core skills in all subject areas
3. Continued implementation of intervention strategies for non-compliant students
4. Continue efforts to improve math scores
5. Continue to explore both traditional and innovative funding options
6. Increase the number of certificated staff
7. Increase consistency amongst staff in regards to school procedures, discipline, grading, and lessons
8. Effective and productive communication between governance, central office administration, and site operators

In addition, the Visiting Committee has identified areas that need to be strengthened:

1. Support and recognition from the district office particularly with regard to the school's profound need for an appropriate facility that matches the school's mission and planned growth
2. Validation from the District of the uniqueness of staff who fully embrace the mission and vision of BCMHS
3. Increase the level of site level autonomy in regards to personnel decisions
4. Balance staffing protocol in favor of increasing the number of full-time and tenure-track teaching staff. The district office needs to validate the instructional practices and rigor of academic expectations at BCMHS

CHAPTER V
School-wide Action Plan
Elise P. Buckingham Charter Magnet High School

Action Plan Objective #1: Math

Goal: Per the latest charter revision, 75% of all students will earn a rating of proficient on the California Content Standards Test. Additionally, BCMHS students will equal Vacaville Unified School District's passage rate on the CAHSEE exam on the first attempt, or will pass at a 75% rate, whichever is higher.

Rational: The results of the CAT6, CST, CAHSEE and student work in class and grades indicate a need to address the poor mathematical performance of BCMHS students.

ESLR addressed: Indicator 1-Buckingham students will be prepared for academic success in post secondary education.

Indicator 3 - Students will analyze and develop solutions to problems

Indicator 4 - Students will understand and implement instructions

Findings: The specific school-wide action plan relating to academic credibility identifies critical elements in response to state-wide standards and benchmarks. Students will be expected to achieve according to a rigorous and yet feasible level of academic performance. Staff at Buckingham has implemented these academic standards and followed through on non-compliance for those students unwilling to follow an individualized action plan. Student accountability is maintained by a collaborative effort including teachers, counselors, administration, and parents. New standards aligned Mathematics texts have arrived and will be distributed before the years end.

Action Plan Objective #2: Professional Development

Goal: BCMHS will provide on-going professional development in a variety of areas as determined by student and staff need, including, but not limited to content standards, Writing Across the Curriculum, classroom management, assessment and meeting special needs.

Rational: Response to staff feedback and recommendations contained in WASC Progress

report of Candidacy Status.

ESLR addressed: Addresses all ESLRs

Findings: A comprehensive professional development program for staff in house, as well as opportunities to attend outside trainings has been verified. In-services and professional development sessions are offered every Fridays within the school's block schedule, which include bringing in outside sources for training in curriculum and assessment pieces such as WAC. Teachers are "bought back" in August for an in house institute that prepares them for the year. During the year teachers are encouraged to attend conferences and mini-conferences in their subject areas.

Action Plan Objective #3: Teacher Evaluation Tool

Goal: Teachers will be evaluated using a rubric built through consensus, which reflects the goals and objectives of the school.

Rational: Align teacher observation and evaluation with the mission and vision of the school.

ESLR addressed: Addresses all ESLRs

Findings: A plan for protocol accountability has been initiated and is being phased in, in all areas of staff performance. Professional development efforts are considerable and commended. However, greater efforts should be made toward ensuring higher percentages of staff credentialing.