

**MID-CYCLE VISIT
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

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

FOR

**SANTA CLARA ADULT AND COMMUNITY
EDUCATION**

**1840 Benton Street
Santa Clara, CA. 95050**

Santa Clara Unified School District

Original visit: March 22, 2015

Mid-cycle review: March 6, 2018

Visiting Committee Members

Diana Rumney, Chairperson
Retired Director of Adult Education
Jefferson Union High School District

Vicki Mayster
Instructor/Coordinator
Petaluma Adult School

I. Introduction

Include the following:

- **General comments about the school, its setting, and the school's analysis of student achievement data.**
- **Include a description of any significant changes and/or developments, i.e., program additions since the last full visit, changes in student enrollment, staffing changes.**
- **Describe the impact these changes and/or developments have had on the school and/or specific curricular programs.**
- **Briefly comment on the school's follow-up process. Include a description of the committee that has been responsible for overseeing the progress of the school's action plan and the preparation for the visit.**
- **Describe the process used to prepare the progress report.**

Santa Clara Adult and Community Education (SCAE) is located in the city of Santa Clara, CA, in the midst of "Silicon Valley." This area, well-known for technological innovation and economic prosperity, has also seen widening income inequality, with lower-income families leaving the area due to high costs of living. With the mission "*to empower students of all ages and abilities to succeed in an ever-changing world,*" SCAE works to bridge the gap between community members with high-paying jobs and those struggling for daily necessities.

SCAE offers a range of classes and programs for the community, from personal interest, health, fitness, parent education and programs for adults with disabilities in the Community Education program. Their traditional adult education core programs support adults needing education to bridge to the next step in their lives: English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), High School Equivalency (HSE), High School Diploma (HSD), Career and Technical Education (CTE.)

The school measures student learning as guided by SCAE's student learning outcomes (SLOs.) Students will be able to:

- Achieve measurable increases in knowledge and skills in their area of study.
- Gain knowledge to identify and access diverse resources, information and technology related to their area of study.
- Apply knowledge and skills from their areas of study to their personal and professional lives.

Santa Clara Adult Education is a member of the South Bay Consortium for Adult Education (SBCAE), the state-funded entity under CA's Adult Education Block Grant (AEBG), which coordinates core adult education programs in the South Bay. SBCAE's data team gathers and analyzes data from SCAE and other South Bay adult schools to identify trends in both demographics and student educational outcomes from AEBG-funded programs, including Adults with Disabilities programs.

One of the areas of focus for SBCAE is consolidating data and reporting on the National Reporting System (NRS) Educational Functioning Level completion rates for adult students in the consortium. NRS levels are evaluated by CASAS testing and students at SCAE function at one of six NRS educational levels.

Last year (2016-17), one of SCAE's goals was to improve student completion rates of NRS levels, and results of this effort are impressive. Utilizing a combination of best practices gleaned from colleagues, SCAE restructured the school's testing processes, including adding a qualified testing coordinator position and student volunteers for translation and welcoming new students. SCAE also targeted improvement in instruction through a range of staff professional development opportunities.

NRS completion levels in the ESL program jumped over 15 percentage points (from 35% - 50.2%) in 2016-17, with data from the current school year showing an even greater level completion rate. Data from the SBCAE showed SCAE as the only adult school in the consortium that made NRS level gains in ESL from 2015-16. Consortium data for completed NRS levels for Adult Secondary Education (ASE) at all adult schools also demonstrates improvements at SCAE. SCAE now has the highest percentage of students (81.6%) completing an NRS level of all adult schools in the consortium. The numbers of students at SCAE earning their HSD/HSE during these two years remained the same, leading the school to identify improvements in the HSD program in this year's action plans, designed to increase HSD completion rates.

EL Civics student benchmark data (based on numbers of assessments passed) also shows improvement from 2015-16 to 2016-17. While there were fewer students taking EL Civics assessments in 2016-17 than the year before, the numbers of benchmarks still increased, showing a higher level of student achievement.

The school gathered data on student achievement of SLOs by surveying randomly-selected students in Community Education (Enrichment, Health and Fitness and Skills Plus programs.) These surveys measured students' self-reported improvements. 77-99% of participants reported improvements in knowledge and skills, in accessing resources and information and in applying new knowledge and skills to their lives. Student outcomes for AEBG-funded programs in 2016-17 were reported by SBCAE. The outcome rates were low, likely indicating underreporting, incomplete data, and the lack of a state-funded data system.

This review of data highlights that SCAE has successfully developed goals and strategies for improvement of student achievement. They evaluated that achievement in partnership with the state-funded AE consortium, demonstrated achievement of SLOs, and also used this process to inform their future school planning and program development.

Over the past three years, SCAE has seen a couple of demographic changes that have an influence on how it plans to continue to effectively serve its community. For the first time ever in Santa Clara County, more people have left the county than moved in, undoubtedly due to the exorbitant cost of housing in the region. The greatest change at SCAE has been the decrease in Hispanic students and an appreciable increase in the number of Indo-Americans and immigrants from South Asia. The school leadership is exploring what changes need to occur to better address this new population of students. Currently there are plans to open a satellite facility at a new elementary school in a neighborhood with a largely Indian population.

The other change in student demographics is the decrease in the number of students in the 61+ age category. This is possibly due to the increased cost of classes now that they are fully sustained by the fees students pay. Another probable cause is that the "baby boomers" seek a different kind of adult education than has been offered typically for the senior citizen population.

SCAE school leadership is exploring how to effectively respond to this trend over the next three years. These changes will provide opportunities to consider as SCAE continually adapts to serve students in this ever-changing region.

There have been a few significant changes that have had a positive effect on SCAE's ability to effectively serve its student population, the most transcendent being the increased participation in the South Bay Consortium for Adult Education. Formed in July, 2013 as a result of AB86 legislation, the SBCAE Consortium is comprised of four other adult schools and four community colleges. As of 2015, state governance for adult basic education, based on regional plans, was concretized in AB104 which establishes designated funding through the Adult Education Block Grant (AEBG). Consequently, collaboration among the SBCAE participants has increased and strengthened.

Over the past two years, work group teams of community college and adult school instructors have been meeting on a regular basis to share curriculum and instructional practices. Teachers and leadership from SCAE have helped achieve a common ESL writing rubric, staff development on the implementation of College and Career Readiness Standards, the establishment of college "bridge classes" in English and math and free college child development credit classes on adult school campuses.

The most notable change for students served by SBCAE has been the inclusion of transition specialists on each of the adult school and community college sites. The purpose of the transition specialists is to provide a seamless transition, and "warm hand-off," as students move from one institution to another. They also provide job development services by assisting students in acquiring employment. In SCAE these transition specialists are also part-time faculty members in the ASE, ESL and CTE departments. A disability specialist was also contracted to serve all participating schools in the consortium. These specialists have strengthened the educational services and staff development provided to students and faculty at SCAE.

A significant improvement since the 2015 visit is the completion of the front office remodeling project. The new SCAE front office includes a workroom with computer access for teachers. Four workstations were added so that staff can more efficiently serve students.

The third significant change is that SCAE has a new director, Dr. Brenda Carrillo, who replaced Kathy Martarano when she retired in 2016. Dr. Carrillo has brought a breadth of knowledge and skills to SCAE. She has implemented a greater use of technology in communication and planning. With her leadership, the Parent Resource Center has been expanded into a Family Resource Center that serves all district families and adult education students with a wide range of services, including monthly food distribution.

Overall, these significant changes, as well as numerous actions and processes mentioned in their Mid-Cycle Progress Report, have been positive developments for supporting students. SCAE has seen substantive changes in infrastructure, programming and personnel. Stable, dedicated funding has allowed SCAE to expand student services through the transition and disability specialists. SCAE has successfully leveraged partnerships within SBCAE in order to offer bridge classes, internship placement and assistance with student transitions. These improvements have a positive effect on the implementation of SCAE's Action Plan.

The school’s leadership team, comprised of the program supervisors, program administrators and the director, is responsible for implementing and monitoring the school-wide action plan and wrote the Progress Report. The action plan is divided into three individual projects, and one program supervisor is designated to lead each of the corresponding action plan teams of staff and faculty: Staff Development, Technology and High School Diploma. At the monthly leadership team meetings a standing item is the program supervisors’ reports on progress made, as well as discussion regarding resource allocation for the implementation of the action plans.

Student achievement data is also presented and discussed regularly at the monthly leadership meetings. The information is shared with teachers via department staff meetings and with students so they can be involved in celebrating improvements and recognizing areas of needed growth. The student achievement data that is most commonly shared within the school comes from these programs: WIOA, CTE, Skills Plus and Health and Fitness.

Leadership of SCAE is likewise concerned with engaging the district and community in school events, recruiting students and publicizing their achievements. The District Update, mailed to all staff and a number of district parents, has been an important tool highlighting adult education accomplishments. Each year, SCAE leadership presents a report to the Board of Trustees, and space permitting, student achievement data is included in the school catalog.

II. Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up/Schoolwide Action Plan

- **Provide an analytical summary about the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section referencing the critical areas for follow-up addressed through each section.**
- **Note the evidence supporting the progress made and the impact made on student achievement.**
- **If any critical areas for follow-up were not included in the school’s action plan, indicate what actions have been taken to address these issue(s) and include supporting evidence.**
- **Note: The school’s schoolwide action plan should have incorporated all the critical areas of follow-up or major recommendations that were stated in the last self-study visiting committee report.**

SCAE has used the three Action Plan items as a roadmap for continuous school improvement. According to the January, 2018 updates, the school continues its commitment to the specific action steps identified in 2015. The three action plans incorporate all the critical areas of follow-up or major recommendations from the Visiting Committee Report of 2015.

Staff Development Action Plan: *SCAE needs to offer staff development that meets the needs of teachers across programs.* To date, SCAE has offered two schoolwide staff development workshops on topics requested from staff survey. An ad hoc staff development committee was formed and carried out the initial steps: the implementation of a professional development (PD) survey and presentation of its results to the leadership team. Approximately one third of the instructional staff responded to the survey, and the two topics that were of common interest were “How Adults Learn” and “Learning Styles”. Funding for continuous PD for all instructors is a major challenge, and is likely the reason for disbanding

the staff development committee. While there is AEBG funding and shared PD opportunities with other SBCAE participants, there is no supplemental funding for Enrichment and Health and Fitness Programs. The updated plan includes continuing further assessment of how to meet staff development needs in programs with limited or no funding.

The lack of funds allocated to PD in the non-academic programs may not have to be of vital concern, however, since the vast majority of teachers (in those areas) “find and fund their own professional development in order to improve or maintain their professional practice.” Additionally, at the program level, leadership ensures that instructional staff receive specialized training in order to stay current in their fields. The High School Diploma teachers need training on the new blended curriculum designed by the consortium’s ASE work group. Likewise, ESL teachers need training in the use of the new writing rubric designed by the consortium ESL workgroup. Staff in the Independence Network need training on the newest reporting requirements established by Adult Protective Services.

In the updated version of this action plan item, there is a recognition that measuring the impact of staff development on student learning is challenging. This is particularly true of one day workshops on topics of general common interest to all instructors. This type of professional development is instrumental in bringing together staff from different disciplines in order to promote communication regarding continuous school-wide improvement. However, a staff development plan that includes ongoing involvement and commitment among peers, such as the SBCAE workgroups or professional learning communities, might provide data better suited to the analysis of the impact on student learning. Deciding which PD activities are priorities for investing limited resources is as significant as implementing a formal means of its measurement. Offering PD through the SBCAE will continue to strengthen teaching and learning at SCAE.

Technology Action Plan: *SCAE needs to upgrade technology on a regular basis.*

The technology team at SCAE spearheaded this action plan item with the expressed purpose of planning and implementing a technology plan for the school. The team established quarterly technology meetings and closely followed the specific steps of the action plan. The team continues to consistently analyze the technology needs of individual courses, staff members and students. It developed the Schoolwide Technology Replacement Plan in March, 2017 which will continue to be updated and provide the input for decisions regarding resource management and purchase of technology. In the Technology Action Plan, the technology team recommends improving the school’s wireless infrastructure, an issue that had not been identified previously. Although already incorporated into the Action Plan, it may be advantageous to develop specific steps to guide completion.

In implementing the specific steps of the Technology Action Plan, it is evident that cooperation and collaboration are key elements in achieving success. The adult education IT staff works with the district IT department to maintain adult ed. servers at the district office. The leadership and technology team successfully leveraged funding to support the technology plan by working closely with other adult education providers and the district IT department.

As with the staff development plan, it is challenging to evaluate the impact on student learning of the actions incorporated in the technology plan. There is a direct impact on some classes in the CTE program, however, where adequate technology is a requirement because it determines a student's ability to pass industry certification exams. There are many other factors besides technology that influence data on student achievement, for which testing results or credits obtained can only provide a partial evaluation.

High School Diploma Action Plan: *SCAE intends to restructure the High School Program to improve student learning.* The high school action plan primarily involves “evolving” from a paper-based independent study model to one that uses a new blended learning approach that incorporates College and Career Readiness Standards.

In the Action Plan, the timeline for the completion of specific steps dates back to the fall of 2014, an indication that this action item has been a continuous priority for SCAE. As in the Technology Plan, cooperation and collaboration have played a vital role in selecting an online learning program and developing curricula with the ASE workgroup comprised of instructors from the community colleges and adult schools in the SBAEC. Collaboration with the consortium is also evident in providing services for ASE students, particularly the Transition and Disability Specialists. With district support, high school diploma students have access to learning disabilities specialist and a Family Resource Center.

Evaluating the impact on student achievement is clear and forthright; SCAE will base its analysis on graduation rates, since CAHSEE has been eliminated. The 2016-17 will be the baseline year upon which this and future years will be compared. Although program staff will also be able to compare passing rates of particular courses before and after the implementation of the blended learning model, other variables would make this an inappropriate evaluation tool.

SCAE is to be commended for the clear next steps outlined in the 2018 update of the high school diploma action plan: develop an exit process that includes transition counseling, create and implement procedures for ongoing monitoring, and leverage funds and resources to provide more support services. Implementation of the new curriculum is ongoing, and together with further curriculum development will continue over the coming years.

The Adult Education Base Grant has provided SCAE with a stable budget, separate and independent from District funds, which allows for greater precision in planning specific steps for the 2018 School-wide Action Plan. The requirement of collaboration in a regional consortium has led to strengthening adult education practices and supporting students' transitions between educational agencies in the region. In the updated version, more staff are involved in carrying out the actions, sometimes in a leadership role and sometimes by committee. Stability has allowed the formation and implementation of ESL and ASE workgroups with representatives from the five adult schools and three community colleges.

III. Commendations and Recommendations

A. Commendations:

- **Comment on significant progress the school has made in responding to the critical areas for follow-up and in carrying out the related action plan.**

General Commendations

- SCAE enjoys demonstrable support and respect from the SCUSD, as evidenced by collaborative programs on the adult school campus, including the district's Family Resource Center, other shared services and a significant annual budgetary contribution.
- The school has developed and sustained an impressive breadth of classes which offer holistic lifelong learning opportunities. Students and their families from infancy to advanced age, from diverse cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds, are all engaged in SCAE's school community.
- SCAE's participation in the regional consortium (SBCAE) has increased over the past three years. Faculty from adult schools and community colleges in the region meet to develop common curriculum and assessments.
- The position of transition specialist, funded by the consortium, is divided among three instructors in the ASE, CTE and ESL departments, which encourages students' access to faculty they already know and trust to pursue their next steps.
- Given the importance of programs for adults with disabilities, the SBCAE has allocated funding for a Disability Specialist shared among the adult schools and community colleges. This position has provided support to both students and faculty working to increase the success of students with disabilities.
- Modifications in the testing procedures and instruction, including a new position of testing coordinator, have led to a substantial increase in NRS completion levels.

Action Plans

Technology Plan

- The school has developed a technology replacement plan, which includes an inventory of technology schoolwide, an analysis of each item's age, purpose, cost and the priority for its replacement. The Technology Committee will continue to update the Technology Replacement Plan on a quarterly basis.

Staff Development Plan

- Instructional staff at SCAE are provided multiple opportunities for professional development. Despite the challenge of providing all-staff workshops, instructors in core programs participate in work groups through the consortium, attend conferences and participate in staff meetings by discipline.
- Future staff development activities will include Google application trainings for SCAE staff provided by the district, which will increase faculty collaboration and communication.

Restructure High School Diploma Program:

- SCAE has made great strides to transform its high school diploma curriculum, by integrating online and digital learning, college and career readiness standards and other media into individualized study plans.

B. Recommendations:

- **Comment on any critical areas for follow-up/action plan sections that have not yet been completely addressed, if applicable.**
 - **Identify any new areas of concerns, if applicable.**
1. Explore options to expand and improve the school WiFi connectivity, so it reaches all relevant classrooms and offices.
 2. Explore possibilities for meeting identified student needs for childcare, transportation and case management for family challenges through the new SCAE Transition Center or in collaboration with partnerships such as the Family Resource Center.
 3. In conjunction with SBCAE partners, identify how to measure the success of the transition initiative and its next steps.
 4. Continue to fine-tune the new HSD curriculum, including more “blended learning” materials and provide professional development to teachers on this curriculum.