

# ESCONDIDO CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL MIDTERM REVIEW, FEBRUARY 2010

## I. Introduction

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### BASIC STUDENT/COMMUNITY PROFILE DATA

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**General description of the school:** Escondido Charter High School (ECHS), a direct-funded charter school, is now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year with an average student population of 900. With the exception of special education services, ECHS is a Local Education Agency (LEA), known as Escondido Charter School District. It provides all services to students separate from the Escondido Union High School District (EUHSD), which is also the sponsoring district.

In the last three years, the school's enrollment has remained relatively stable. However, we have seen an increase in our Hispanic population and students eligible for free and reduced lunch. As a result, ECHS now has three significant subgroups: white, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged.

Phase II of our building project was completed in the fall of 2007. Our state-of-the-art theater is fully scheduled with student and community activities. Students enjoy a new gymnasium, where our basketball and volleyball teams play home games.

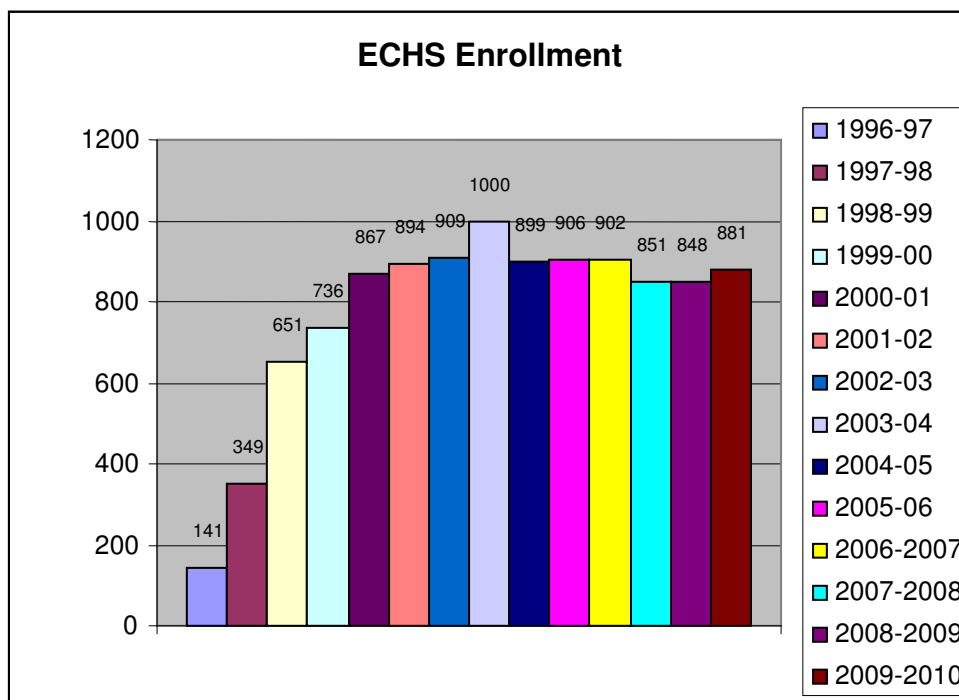
In addition to our main campus, we have a satellite site in San Marcos, which is approximately 10 miles from our main campus. It serves about 100 students in rented facilities.

The school draws primarily from the Escondido area, but we have students attending from as far away as Murrieta and Irvine, both at least 50 miles away.

ECHS serves its community through two separate and diverse programs: the Traditional Classroom Program (TCP) and the Individualized Learning Program (ILP). Each program is comprised of divergent populations and has a unique delivery for curriculum and instruction. Both programs, however, provide standardized curriculum and instruction that aligns to the California Content Standards and state curriculum Frameworks.

The graph below shows ECHS's schoolwide CBEDS enrollment from its opening in 1996 through October of 2009.





### Traditional Classroom Program (TCP)

TCP, our high-rigor, college preparatory classroom program, has grown by approximately 20 students since the full visit three years ago. TCP is currently at capacity with approximately 350 students. Students in TCP are chosen through a lottery system each year and, although that list continues to be long, the program has been capped due to facility restrictions and the desire to retain the small school atmosphere. The majority of the freshman class for TCP comes from our sister school, Heritage K-8 Charter School. The remainder is chosen from the lottery.

### Individualized Learning Program (ILP)

ILP, a modified independent study program, currently accounts for 62% of the school's population. In September 2006, there were 569 students enrolled in ILP. In October 2009, there were approximately 548 students enrolled in ILP. Enrollment figures in ILP fluctuate on a daily basis as new students enroll and existing students graduate, move, or are dropped.

Students in ILP attend year-round. Students meet with a credentialed Teacher of Record (TOR) at least one hour each week to work on core courses in the form of packets. ILP teachers carry a student load of no more than 30 students. In addition, ILP students attend computer classes, math classes, and some English classes on a college-type schedule, usually two or three days a week. They may also earn credits by taking concurrent courses at a community college. The



grade level of ILP students is determined by credits earned, not years in high school.

Unlike TCP students, most ILP students, about 65%, are on a general-level credit plan, and they are bound for the workplace or community college, rather than a four-year university. The general-level credit plan does not require lab science or foreign language.

### **Accreditation History**

In 1998, in its second year of operation, ECHS became a candidate for accreditation following an initial visit from a team from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). On May 15, 2001, after completing its initial Focus on Learning Self-Study Process and a full WASC visit, ECHS was granted a term of three years with a two-day visit during the third year. In February 2004, that visit occurred, and ECHS was subsequently granted a three-year extension of its term of accreditation to June 30, 2007.

In June 2007, ECHS was awarded a six-year term with a midterm visit, after its second full Self-Study Process and WASC visitation.

### **MISSION**

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Escondido Charter High School was founded on a mission of back-to-basics education with an emphasis on technology and the heritage of our nation. The school received its charter from the California Department of Education on February 9, 1996, and began instruction in August of 1996. The developer was a career educator and coach who believed that traditional public education should have some competition. His vision was to create a school that provided a quality, core-knowledge curriculum staffed by qualified teachers, with the fiscal goal of dedicating the highest possible percentage of public funds to students, classrooms, and instruction. The developer began the startup school in a couple of offices in a business complex in Escondido. Now, nearly 14 years later, ECHS has a beautiful new campus with an enrollment averaging 900 students. Yet, our mission and focus remains the same: improve pupil learning. That theme continues to permeate all that we do and is embedded within the school's leadership and culture.

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission statement has not changed since the submission of our original charter. It is as follows:

*The Escondido Charter High School is committed to providing a safe and orderly learning environment in which teachers will be responsible for implementing a*



*curriculum based on the fundamental skills that form the foundation of learning: reading, writing, mathematics, and computer skills. Accomplishment in academic areas will be stressed. In addition, the Escondido Charter High School will emphasize the understanding and appreciation of American civilization and United States history.*

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

## **Schoolwide Student Goals:**

### **Escondido Charter High School will prepare its graduates to be:**

#### **1. Academic achievers who**

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

#### **2. Technologically literate individuals who**

- Demonstrate proficiency in the six basic computer skills: word processing; Internet search and retrieval; spreadsheet applications; e-mail; desktop publishing; and courseware as evidenced by student portfolios and completion of technology course requirements,
- Have the opportunity to demonstrate high standards in the use of advanced technology, and
- Can apply technology across the curriculum and in the workplace

#### **3. Effective citizens who**

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

#### **4. Effective communicators who**

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



## 5. Responsible, Self-Directed Adults who

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

## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

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Enrollment has remained relatively stable for the past three years.

### All-School Enrollment

Grade Level	Enrollment Oct. 06	Enrollment Oct. 09
Grade 9	213	220
Grade 10	222	201
Grade 11	252	214
Grade 12	216	246
Total Enrollment	902	881

Enrollment in the Traditional Classroom Program is capped at 350 students.

Enrollment in the Individualized Learning Program fluctuates during the year because students are continuously enrolling and graduating, but it averages between 550 and 600. These enrollment numbers include an average of 100 students at our San Marcos site.

ECHS continues to have a waiting list for the TCP program. In TCP, the lottery procedure, which is mandated by our charter, is carefully executed each year by our Intake Department.

Students preparing to enter ILP must occasionally wait for a teacher opening before enrollment can take place.



## Student Demographics: Gender

The current overall school population by gender is approximately 50% male and 50% female, with males currently having a slight majority.

School Year	Male	Female	School Enrollment
2005-2006	448 (49%)	458 (51%)	906
2009-2010	447 (51%)	434 (49%)	881

## Student Demographics: Ethnicity

Student Ethnicity	2005-2006	2009-2010
School Year		
Number of Students	906	881
African American	2.3 %	4%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.9 %	1%
Asian	1.9 %	2%
Filipino	1.8 %	2%
Hispanic or Latino	15%	19%
Pacific Islander	Less than 1%	Less than 1%
White (Not Hispanic)	75.1 %	70%
Multiple or No Response	2.6 %	2%
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	2.5 %	19 %
English Learners	0.0 %	0.0 %
Students with Disabilities	2.0 %	2%

ECHS has seen an increase of its ethnic population in the last three years. The Hispanic population has grown nearly to 19%, resulting in the addition of a Hispanic subgroup to our federal reporting requirements. Other ethnicities are not statistically significant. There has also been an increase in economically disadvantaged students; however, we believe this is the result of refined data collection procedures and not a true increase in this population. Although ECHS does not accept funds for school lunch, nor do we provide lunch, we have been collecting this data for the past three years.

Spanish spoken in the home is the predominate primary language other than English.

ECHS is not a Title I School and accepts no Title I funding.



## ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND HONORS

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Due to small numbers in our Traditional Classroom Program, it is not feasible to offer a wide variety of AP courses. However, some students in Honors classes successfully study for and ultimately pass the AP exams in various subject areas, as shown in the chart below. The numbers of students taking and passing AP exams has risen significantly in the past three years.

AP Exam offered 2005/2006	Students attempting AP Exam 2005-2006	Students passing AP Exam	Percent of students passing AP exam
Biology 1	1	1	100%
Calculus	4	4	100%
English Language	14	10	71%
English Literature	2	2	100%
Government	3	2	67%
U.S. History	3	3	100%

AP Exam offered 2008/2009	Students attempting AP Exam 2008-2009	Students passing AP Exam	Percent of students passing AP exam
Calculus	11	10	91%
English Language	18	18	100%
English Literature	15	11	73%
Government	3	2	67%
U.S. History	13	10	77%
World History	4	2	50%
Spanish Language	1	1	100%
Chemistry	1	1	100%

As shown in the charts above, more students are taking AP exams in more subjects when compared to three years ago, despite the fact that actual AP classes are only offered in two subjects. In 2009, 44 students took 66 AP exams. Overall, 83% passed the exam. 2009 was the first year students took the AP exam in Chemistry and Spanish Language.



The chart below shows the AP and Honors courses offered at ECHS during the last visit and currently.

Subject	2005-2006 Enrollment	2008-2009 Enrollment
Honors English 9	22	18
Honors English 10	22	20
AP English Language	17	23
Honors English 12	15	22 (AP English Literature)
Honors World History	21	20
Honors U.S. History	17	21
Honors Government	14	22
Honors Economics	18	22
Honors Chemistry 1	22	22
Honors Biology II	21	18
Honors Chemistry II	14	10
Honors Physics	20	14
AP Calculus	8	9

AP and Honors classes are offered in the Traditional Classroom Program. Enrollment in these classes has remained relatively stable during the past three years with some slight increases and decreases dependent on the class offered. Since TCP is nearly at capacity, we do not expect these numbers to change significantly in the future.

### **Language Proficiency**

ECHS does not receive federal funds nor does it provide designated English Language Learner programs. While language fluency is not a requirement of enrollment at ECHS, students without proficiency in English would not be able to read and comprehend the curriculum and complete ILP packets, which is the primary mode of instruction.



## **SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS**

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ECHS does not provide government subsidized lunch programs or other programs predicated on income data. However, over the years we have realized the importance of collecting that data and have refined our process for gathering it.

The current percentage of students who would qualify for free and reduced lunch is 19%. Due to new data collection procedures that were implemented shortly after the WASC visit three years ago, we believe this accurately reflects the economically disadvantaged students enrolled in our school.

As of October 31, 2006, there were 26 students who qualified for free lunch and 36 students who qualified for reduced price lunch. This total of 62 students represented 6.8% of the school population. However, data reported in 2006 was unreliable, because our data collection process was just beginning.

We believe that most of the increase of economically disadvantaged students is a reflection of more thorough data collection procedures with a possible secondary influence of recession-era job loss.

### **Faculty/Staff Demographics**

ECHS currently employs 48 credentialed teachers, which is the same number as three years ago. We continue to keep our administrative staff lean, and all administrators perform multiple functions. The administrative staff includes: the Executive Director, (i.e., principal/superintendent); two Program Directors; one full-time academic counselor; a part-time Athletic Director, and a full-time Director of Educational Services, who oversees Special Education, assessment, and state and federal accountability for both the high school and its sister elementary school. All teachers are credentialed in accordance with charter school law and 100 percent meet the NCLB criteria for Highly Qualified in one or more subject areas. There are no teachers teaching outside of their credentialed area in accordance with charter credentialing law.

<b>ECHS Teacher Credentials</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2009</b>
Total Teachers	48	48
Teachers with Full Credential	46	48
Teachers with Emergency Permits (not qualified for a credential or internship but meeting minimum requirements)	2	0
Teachers with Waivers (does not have credential and does not qualify for an Emergency Permit)	0	0



## Teacher Education Level

ECHS Teacher Education Levels	School	Sponsoring District
Doctorate	2.1%	0.5%
Master's Degree plus 30 or more semester hours	10.4%	22.8%
Master's Degree	25.0%	17.3%
Bachelor's Degree plus 30 or more semester hours	29.2%	39.1%
Bachelor's Degree	31.3%	20.0%
Less than Bachelor's Degree	2%	0.3%

During the 2009-2010 school year ECHS has 48 certificated educators, including six certificated administrators.

### Certificated Staff: Gender

Male: 56%

Female: 44%

### Certificated Staff: Ethnicity

White: 85%

Hispanic: 8%

Asian: 4%

Filipino: 3%

There have been no significant changes in staff ethnicity since the full visit three years ago.

We currently have one staff member, an English teacher, in an intern program through Chapman University. We do not keep detailed statistics on teacher attendance rate, but it is not an area of concern. ECHS does not provide formal teacher induction programs. Instead, we refer new teachers who require induction to a program at UCSD Extension. Others complete induction through Chapman University or other online programs. We investigated a cooperative agreement for induction with our sponsoring district, but the funds for those programs have since dried up.

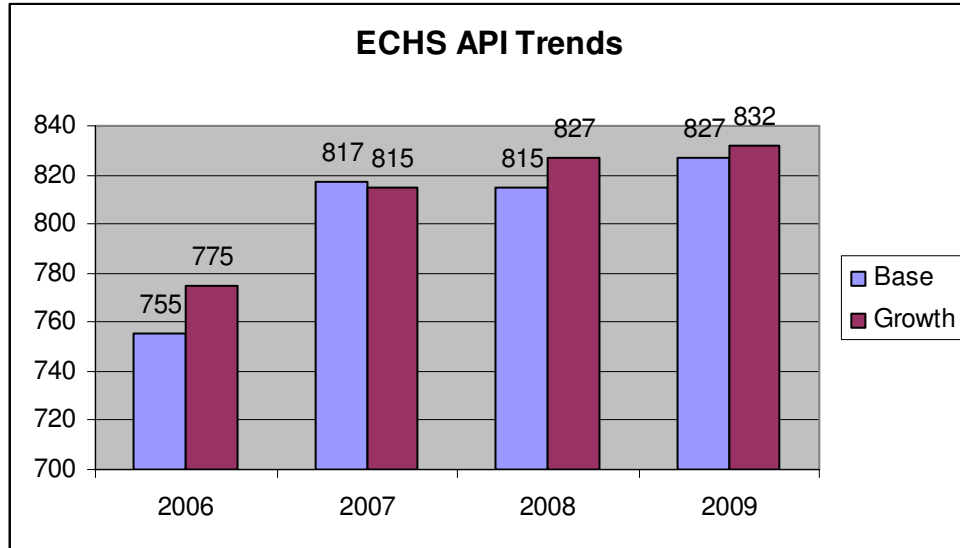
## Teacher Experience

The average teaching experience for an ECHS teacher is nearly 10 years.



## Summary of Student Achievement Data since Last Full Self-Study

### Academic Performance Index (API)



The chart above shows ECHS's API growth from 2006 through the most recent 2009 growth API of 832. Please note that each year the CDE reconfigures the base number according to each year's updated API elements. This explains the discrepancy between the 2006 growth API of 775 and the 2007 base of 817. ECHS has been above the state's target API of 800 since 2007, and we continue to improve each year. ECHS's API is higher than any other high school in our sponsoring district and any other charter school in the county.

Charter School	2009 Growth API
<b>ECHS</b>	<b>832</b>
Charter School of San Diego	637
High Tech High North	778
High Tech High San Diego	797
Classical Academy High	811

The chart above compares ECHS to the closest charter schools in San Diego County. Of these, the only charter school with a large independent study population similar to ECHS is the Charter School of San Diego.



District School	2009 Growth API
ECHS	832
San Pasqual HS	768
Escondido HS	723
Orange Glen HS	687

The chart above shows the 2009 growth API for all high schools in our sponsoring district. ECHS is the only school in the district above the state target of 800. Prior to 2006, San Pasqual High School had a higher API than ECHS. All three district high schools are comprehensive high schools.

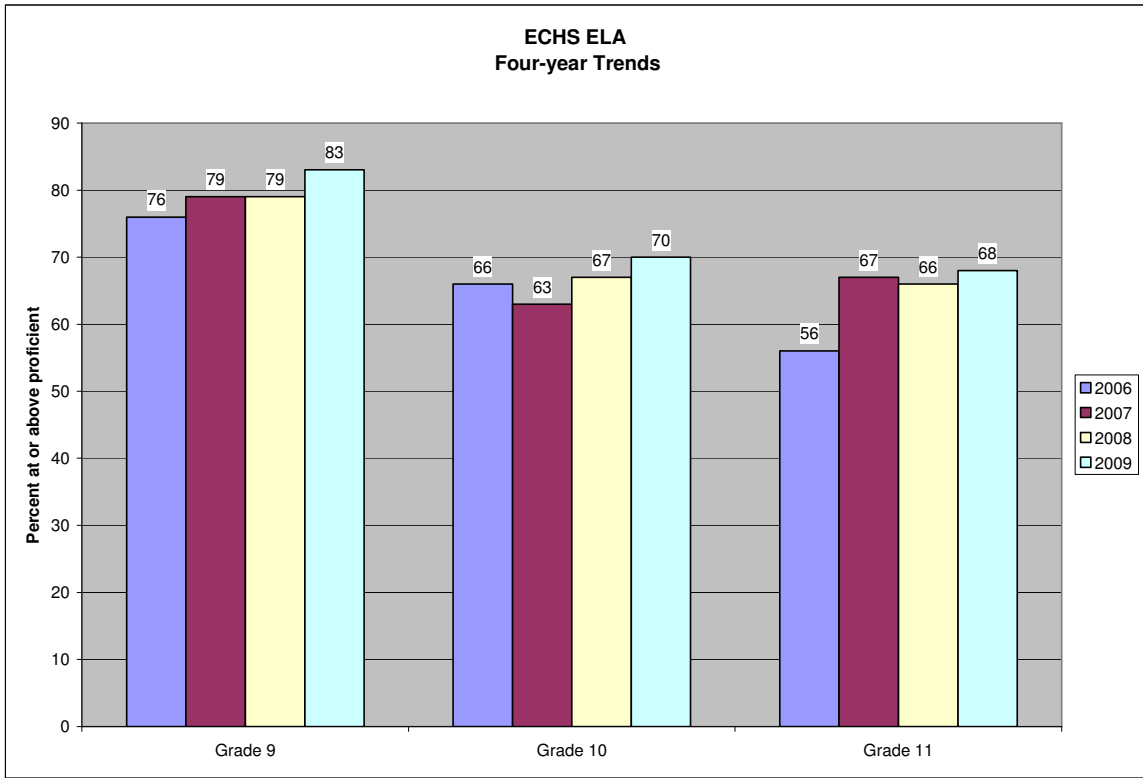
### **Growth of Designated Subgroups**

Besides the White subgroup, we have two statistically significant subgroups: Hispanic and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged. Our Hispanic subgroup did not make its 2009 API target of 786. The subgroup declined by nine points from its 2008 base of 781 to 772. However, it did achieve the proficiency rates in math and English proscribed by the federal government as a condition of making Adequate Yearly Progress in accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act.

Our Socioeconomically Disadvantaged subgroup exceeded its target, achieving a 2009 growth API of 803, compared to the 2008 base of 788.

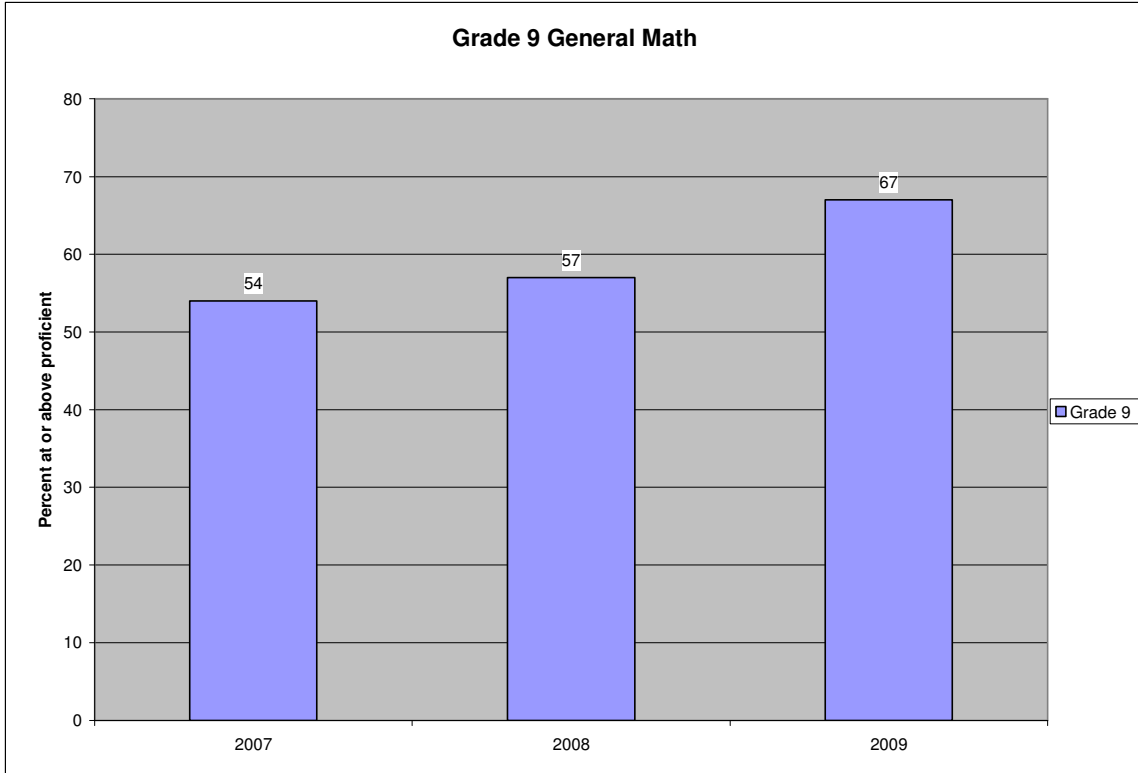


# California Standards Tests

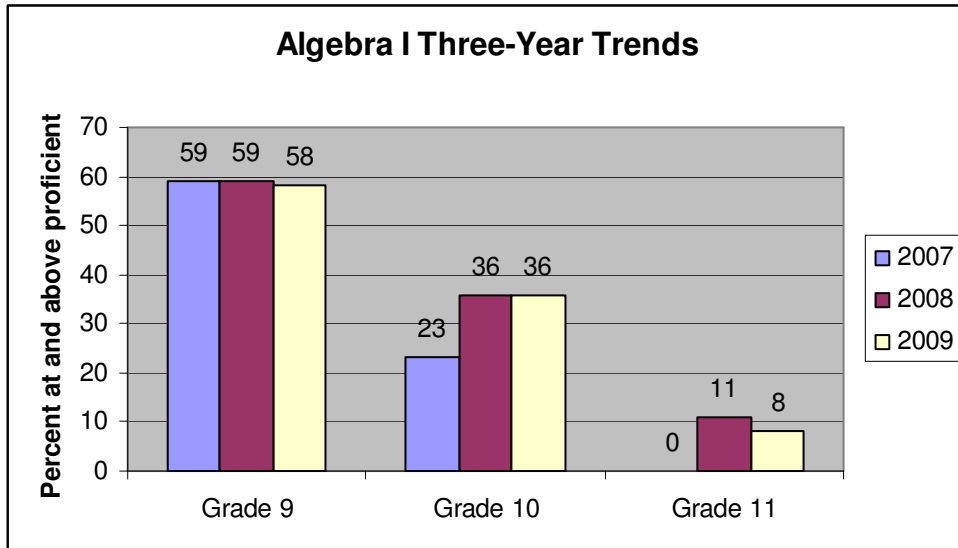


The chart above shows the last four years of achievement on the CST English Language Arts test in grades 9-11. Our scores are and continue to be well above the 50% state benchmark for proficiency. Generally, they continue to improve slightly each year and are higher than scores in surrounding districts.



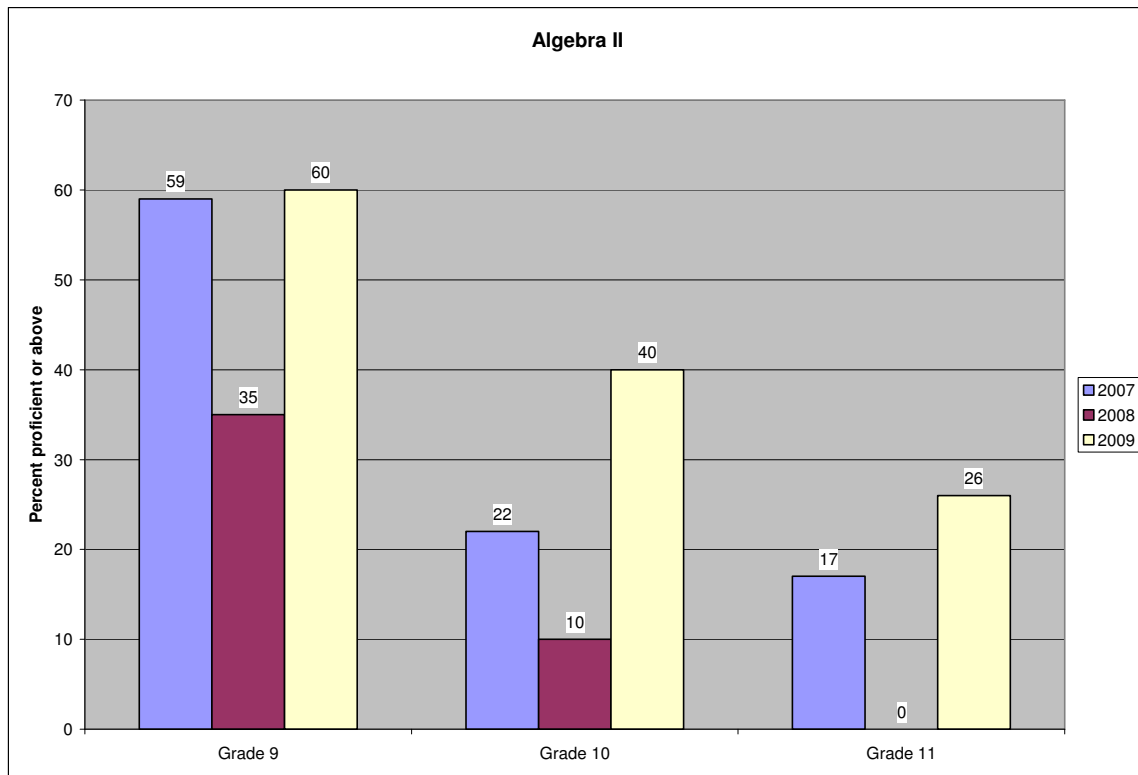


Many of our 9<sup>th</sup> grade students take the general math test due to the nature of ILP. The general math test is only given to 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Scores over the past three years have remained above the 50% proficiency mark and continue to rise.



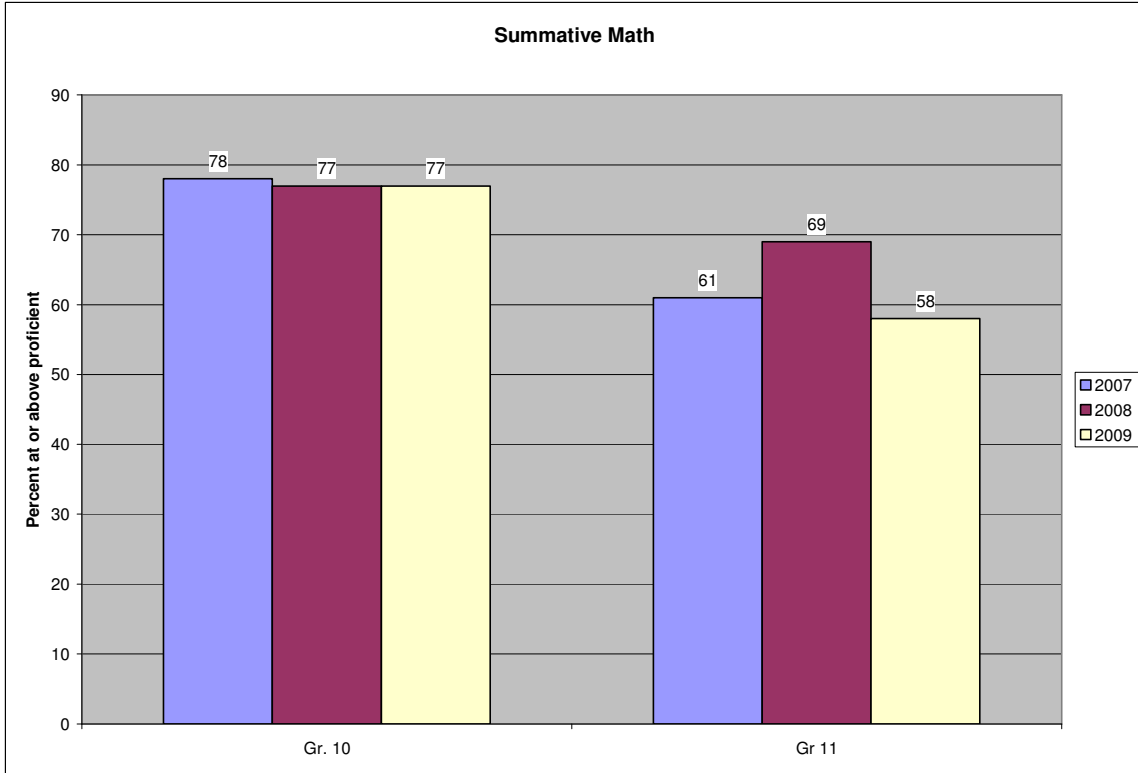
ECHS continues to produce Algebra I scores in the high 50's in grade 9, the year in which most students take the test. However, these scores are discrepant by program. Algebra I performance is a key element of our action plan, and it will be discussed in more detail in that section of this report.

**Geometry:** Very few students test in geometry, and it did not warrant a separate chart. Our geometry performance continues to lag, and it will be addressed in detail in the Action Plan section.

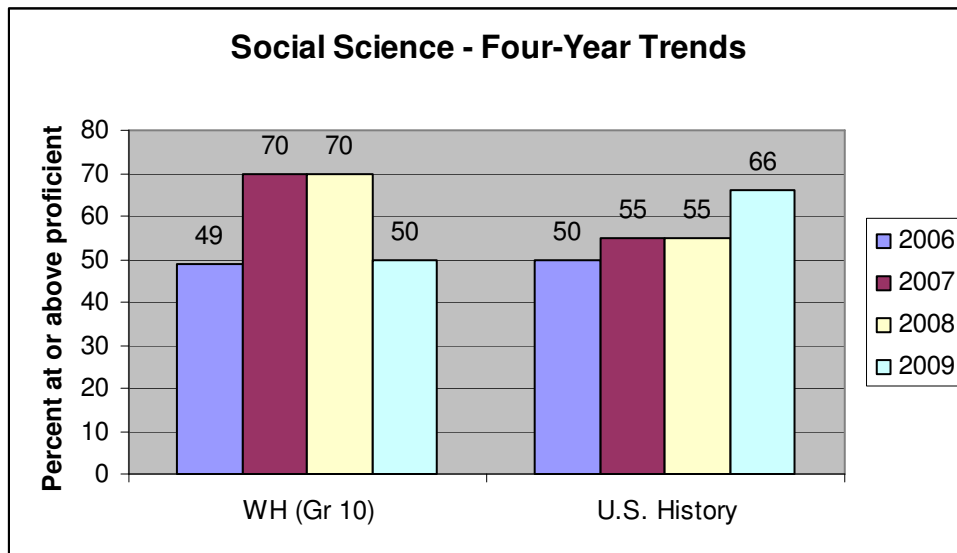


After three years of data analysis and curriculum restructuring, we broke through the Algebra II roadblock with significant gains in 2009. The chart above clearly depicts those impressive gains. We will discuss Algebra II in more detail in the Action Plan section of this report.





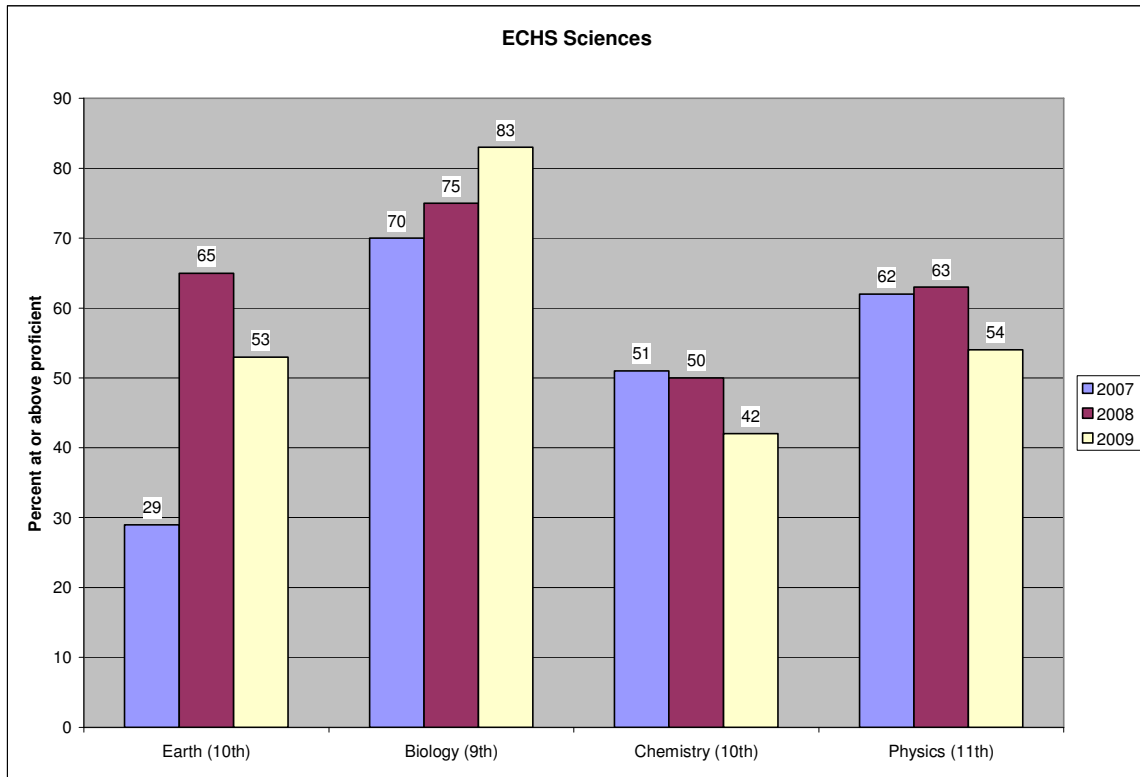
The Summative Math test, or High School Math test, is given almost exclusively in our classroom program. This area continues to show admirable performance in both grades.



We are currently analyzing the 20-point drop in Grade 10 World History. We have discovered that the drop is evenly distributed between our two educational

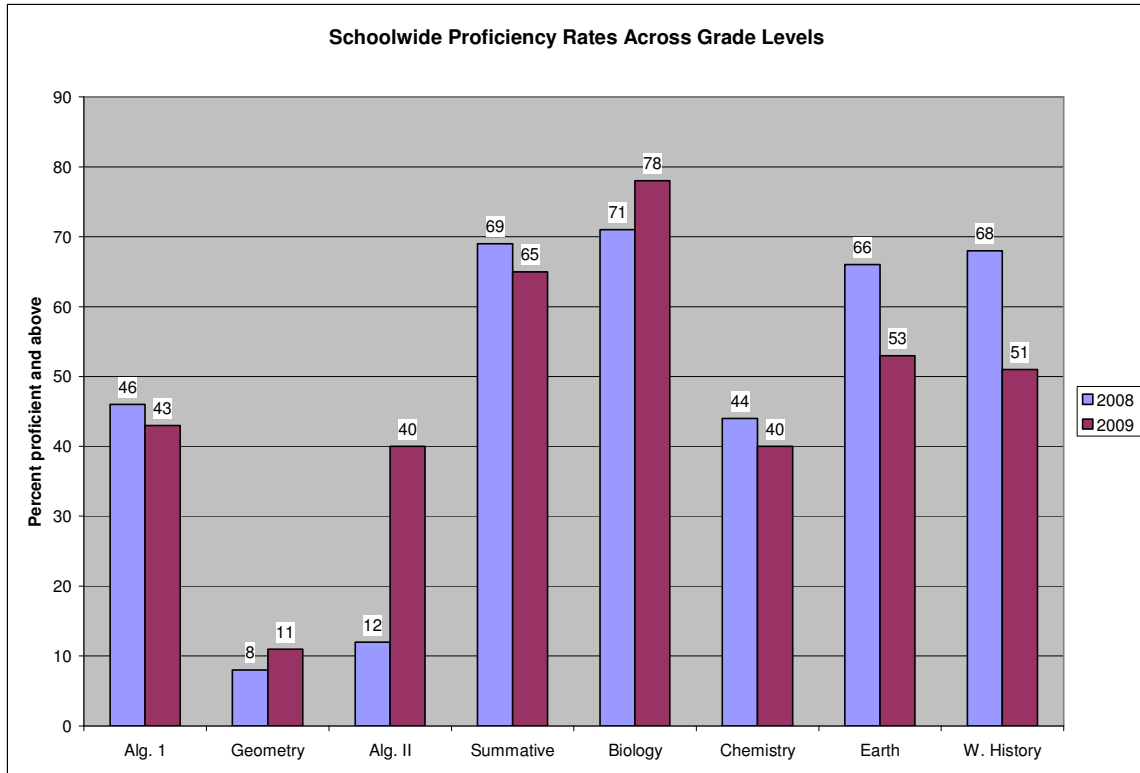


programs. With the exception of that recent score, our social science performance has been far above proficient and steadily improving.



Earth science is primarily an ILP subject, and very few students are tested, therefore, scores fluctuate each year. Biology is primarily a classroom program test. Ninth grade biology continues to be our highest performing area. Chemistry and physics are also small student samples and scores fluctuate from year to year; however, they are at, above, or near the state's 50% proficient benchmark.





This chart shows schoolwide proficiency rates over two years in major subjects. Numbers reflect all students, regardless of grade level, who took the end-of-course test. The chart clearly shows math as our area for improvement, when compared to performance in other subjects.

### **California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)**

In 2009, 99% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders passed the English Language Arts portion of the test on the first attempt. In 2009, 94% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders passed the mathematics portion on the first attempt. Since 2005, our passage rates for both portions have been in the mid to upper 90's. In the class of 2009, one student did not receive a diploma because she had not passed the math portion of the test. However, after passing the exam in July, she received her diploma.

### **Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)**

Students at ECHS continue to show scores that are significantly higher than state averages on the SAT college entrance test. In the class of 2009, 92 students took the test.



The following scores were reported:

<b>SAT Section</b>	<b>ECHS Average</b>	<b>State Average</b>
Critical Reading	548	500
Mathematics	550	513
Writing	532	498
Total	1630	1511

**Status of the School With Respect to Governing Authority Expectations**

ECHS does not accept federal funds including Title I, Title II and all other federally funded Title programs. This was a conscious choice by the school's developers in order to minimize the "strings" and administrative costs associated with these programs.

ECHS has achieved its federal Adequate Yearly Progress goals (AYP) for the past three years, and has never been identified for Program Improvement. The school has no outside evaluators with the exception of the annual audit, which occurs in August. The school has never been subjected to a state audit and has neither corrective action nor a joint intervention agreement. There are no federally imposed deadlines of any kind.



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## **SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS**

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### **New Program: Academy of Applied Technologies**

Operating under the umbrella of the Individualized Learning Program, the Academy of Applied Technologies (AA Tech) is currently in its first year. Funded with grant monies, AA Tech is our first organized effort into career education. Although this program is constantly changing to meet student and community needs, under the current structure, students can focus on five areas of study leading to careers in:

- Entertainment Technology: Audio/visual systems, technical theater, radio and television, broadcast writing and production and video editing
- Digital Design and Marketing: graphic communications, digital arts/imaging, multi-media and web design/graphics
- Information Technology: hardware and operating systems, networking, Windows client servers, and programming
- Power Production and Transmission: AC and DC power theory, power plant operation, power plant control systems, systems protection, and utilities management
- Fire Technology: fire protection organization, fire service skills, fire academy preparation, and advanced first aid
- Criminal Justice: includes an introduction to criminal justice, law enforcement procedures, crime scene investigation, preparation for law enforcement, pre-employment police fitness, and speech and police interviews

In October 2009, 12 students were enrolled on specific credit plans that will lead to a certificate in one of the career areas. ILP students may take any of these courses as electives. This is a good way for students to earn credit, broaden their knowledge base, and discover a future career pathway.

We anticipate that this program will be adjusted frequently since experience will be the ultimate determinant of its success and niche in the community.

### **New Program: ECHS Theater Arts Academy**

Also under the ILP umbrella, the ECHS Theater Arts Academy began during the 2007-2008 school year. In cooperation with the prestigious Christian Youth Theater (CYT), students attending ECHS may sign up for theater classes given on campus, earn credit, and participate in productions throughout the year. During the 2007-2008 school year, 16 participated in the program. Currently, 20 students are enrolled in this program.



**Online Education:**

This year we are experimenting with online education in select curricular areas. We recognize that this type of delivery is the wave of the future and is necessary in order to continue to provide efficient education and meet the needs of our community.

*Geography in the Traditional Classroom Program:* TCP geography is the first course to be taught online. Freshman students meet once each week with a credentialed teacher to go over work and concepts. The rest of the work is done at home on the Internet. Students work on standards-aligned curriculum developed by certificated social science teachers.

*Development of online science courses for ILP students:* In late October an online chemistry module for ILP students began with 16 students enrolled. The class combines Internet-based course work with a weekly 90-minute class, which includes lab work. The course will run for 24 weeks until May 7, and students will earn 10 college prep credits that will fulfill a year of lab science. If this model of instruction is successful, biology will be the next course developed for ILP. The course was developed through the combined effort of science teachers, technology personnel, and directors.

Prior to this program, ILP students on a college prep plan had to take their lab science courses at the community college or "blend" into TCP lab courses. Both of these options have become problematic in recent years with less availability of courses at the community colleges due to budget cuts, and less availability for "blended" slots due to higher enrollment in TCP. We believe that offering this online alternative gives our students additional options and may ultimately attract more students to our ILP college prep program.

**English Instruction Expanded:**

*TCP Academic Writing Class:* We have determined from the analysis of assessments that writing is a challenge for all students regardless of academic ability or program. To that end, we have expanded our TCP Academic Writing class to include all ninth grades students during the current school year. All TCP freshmen are now required to take both a writing class and an English class, which focuses on literature.

All students need additional time to develop their writing, reading, and critical thinking skills. In a traditional English class considerable time is needed to cover other material (literature, vocabulary, etc.), thus reducing the time to provide direct instruction in writing. Many students struggle with the basic skill of reading an article, creating an unbiased but purposeful summary, including quotations from the article with the necessary introduction and commentary explaining the quote, making an argument, and developing this argument with analysis and specific examples (be it from common knowledge, personal experience, or



research). To one degree or another, these skills are all essential and foundational to all writing tasks. Most importantly, students need to have the time to develop these skills at a reasonable pace and in manageable chunks as opposed to being pressed to acquire more than one of them at a time in a short period of time.

This course focuses on improving students' writing, reading, and reasoning skills by teaching strategies necessary for success as a writer. A heavy emphasis is placed on academic or analytical writing such as in-class essays to prepare students for the writing demands that will be expected of them in high school and college. Analytical writing is the students' opportunity to engage in an academic discussion on various topics and to move the conversation forward by contributing their ideas. The goal of this class is to give students the skills they need to have a powerful voice as a writer and to be able to demonstrate their ideas effectively.

*Additional Writing Modules in ILP:* In addition, we have added an Academic Writing module to our ILP program, geared for the college bound student. This is in addition to the general level writing module, which satisfies the credit requirement for English 9A.

During the 2008-2009 school year, we developed several new opportunities for ILP students to develop their written communication skills in a small class format. Many ILP teachers had expressed concern about their students' written communication skills, and they asked for a method of instruction that goes beyond the packet work. Although we have offered the English 9A writing module for general level students for nearly eight years, there has not been a writing class designed specifically for our students on the more rigorous college preparatory credit plans. Through the development and implementation of these Analytical Writing modules, we have created another means to teach written communication skills specifically geared toward academic writing.

So far, we have offered two different courses in Analytical Writing, each with its own emphasis. One course focuses on timed, on-demand writing prompts as found in the SAT, ACT, and college placement exams. In the spring of 2009, 13 students enrolled in this course.

The other course emphasizes persuasive writing techniques and culminates in an extended essay of eight to 10 pages. This module will be offered in the spring 2010 semester. There is a third module in development that will focus on journalism and writing about current events. The courses are generally offered in a 10-week module. Upon successful completion, students earn 2.5 units. The courses are taken for elective credit on a pass/no pass basis. The courses are becoming increasingly popular, and some students have shared anecdotal



evidence that their scores on the SAT writing section improved after successful completion of the module.

### **Expansion of Academic Counseling in ILP**

In addition to our full-time academic counselor in the Traditional Classroom Program, two teachers in the Individualized Learning Program have been designated to work with students and their teachers primarily with college preparation and planning. One of the teachers was an admissions counselor for UC San Diego; the other was Dean of Students at U.S. International University. The primary role of these teachers is to assist students and other teachers with questions regarding college preparation, application, and admissions. To that end, an ILP College Information Packet was developed and is available to all students upon request. It contains a college planning timeline, CSU and UC subject requirements, a list and maps of colleges and universities in the state, college planning resources on the Internet, financial need information including how to fill out the FAFSA, preparing for college entrance exams, and a glossary of terms.

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### **ONGOING IMPROVEMENT**

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The Leadership Team, consisting of the Executive Director, ILP and TCP program directors, Academic Counselor, Director of Educational Services, and remaining members of the original WASC Leadership Team from the full visit, takes on the primary responsibility of ensuring that the process for implementation of the Action Plan is carried out.

The Schoolwide Action Plan, developed during the WASC process, is a mirror of the academic monitoring process that has been in place since the school began 14 years ago. That process has been expanded and formalized as data has become more readily available due to state and federal accountability measures.

Elements of the Schoolwide Action Plan are discussed, sometimes debated, and adjusted during weekly Leadership Meetings. This process becomes more formalized in mid-July through September, when standardized test scores are released and analyzed. At that time, disaggregated data is provided to program directors who schedule departmental meetings in order to determine how curriculum should be adjusted prior to the start of the school year. Each program director is given disaggregated data, which includes strand performance. This data allows further direction of the teaching staff in areas of deficiency.

This report was prepared by the WASC Coordinator with input from all stakeholders. It will be reviewed and approved by the ECHS Board of Directors on January 27, 2010 and presented to the ECHS staff on January 28, 2010.



## II. Report on Schoolwide Action Plan Progress

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### **GOAL #1: IMPROVE MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS**

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ECBS is a high performing school with APIs above 800 for the past four years. However, mathematics achievement continues to be our focus for improvement.

Standardized test scores for 2009 showed marked improvement in Algebra II achievement, which is primarily taught in the Traditional Classroom Program. However, Algebra I and geometry achievement in the Individualized Learning Program continues to remain static despite numerous adjustments to programs and curriculum. As a result, we are rethinking our instructional strategies and curricular articulation, particularly in geometry. Performance in the critical areas of math is detailed below with analysis and current strategies for improvement.

#### **Algebra I and Geometry in the Individualized Learning Program:**

In the Individualized Learning Program, we have taken numerous steps over the past three years to improve pupil performance. These steps are described in detail below. We have every confidence that in years to come they will pay off in terms of quantifiable improved student performance.

In the short term, however, we have not met our achievement goals in algebra or geometry. In fact, this area continues to decline, forcing us to rethink our strategy and curricular articulation.

Only 11% of students tested in 2009 in geometry were proficient or above, and of those tested, 51% were below basic. In 2008 the ILP proficiency rate was 8%, and in 2007 the proficiency rate was 29%.

It is important to note that small numbers of students are tested in geometry each year (27 in 2008; 38 in 2009). Most students take Geometry in their senior year and, therefore, are not given the CST. When small numbers are tested, scores naturally vary from year to year, but the overall downward trend and low proficiency rate in Geometry continues to be of concern.

In addition, Algebra I scores in ILP show only 13% of students proficient in 2009, compared to Algebra I students in TCP with 60% of students proficient or above in 2009.

Each year, our CST scores are analyzed and disaggregated shortly after they are released in late July. Program directors meet with staff members to evaluate areas of weakness and develop plans of action to improve those areas. During



the past three years, we have made many adjustments in order to improve performance including:

*Standardizing curriculum in math modules*

The Algebra I module teacher has created a set of assessments that are aligned to standards, which are used periodically to measure progress. She is currently working on a list of curriculum changes and support materials needed to be totally aligned. In addition, students are regularly given CST released questions to familiarize them with the language used and the formatting of questions.

*Strengthening attendance policies in the math lab*

Two years ago, more stringent attendance policies were implemented in which students would be dropped from the Math Center with three unexcused absences.

*Cross-referencing math lab and module curricula with state standards and plugging "holes"*

This has been completed in Algebra I and Geometry modules, and changes have been made to meet nearly all standards. Algebra I in the Math Lab meets all state standards. Supplemental packets were created for Math Lab students enrolled in Algebra II and Pre-Calculus in order to address all standards.

*Keeping track of the rate and number of credits earned in math labs*

Since the progress of students enrolled in the Math Center had been an issue, we began tracking and reporting the earning of credits on a monthly basis. This ensures that students are moving through their courses at a reasonable rate of speed. Students who are not making satisfactory progress are flagged for intervention.

Despite these efforts, ILP math scores are not showing satisfactory improvement. The possible reasons for continued low math scores in ILP are as follows:

1. Not enough time on task: Students in math modules or math labs meet only twice a week for a semester, compared to five days a week in a traditional setting. Homework is minimal.
2. Weak foundational skills: Students placed into algebra and geometry may have weak foundational skills with no avenue to improve them prior to placement in core math classes. Intake test scores of basic math skills showed consistent weaknesses in division, fractions, decimals, and percentages.
3. Low numbers of students tested and a high turnover rate in ILP make CST data unreliable. (Note: Students in ILP are given a math CST only when they are 75% of the way through a class in either the math lab or a math module. Due to the rotating nature of math lab students, this results in low numbers of students actually taking the CST at the end of the year.)



We decided that addressing the issue of weak foundational skills made the most sense at this juncture, and it would serve a two-fold purpose: (1) It would provide foundational skills so that students would be better prepared for Algebra I and, (2) It would provide practical, real-life business math instruction to students.

In the fall of 2009, we began developing a course called Practical Business Math to be taught one-on-one by the student's regular ILP teacher. (We offered a consumer math course in the past, but it had become outdated and ineffective.) The course is being designed to incorporate real life applications of math, while providing an in-depth review of the foundational skills needed to be successful in higher level math. These foundational skills include: addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, decimals, and percentages. For general level students, the course may be used to fulfill a core credit requirement. The business skills taught in the course will give general level students, who are bound for the workplace or community college, a basic understanding of practical mathematics applications.

We believe that after students take the Practical Business Math course and develop foundational math skills, student mastery of Algebra I concepts and Algebra I scores in ILP and will improve greatly. We are confident that shoring up foundational skills will translate into improved geometry scores as well.

As of this writing (October 2009), we anticipate that this course will be ready to pilot by the spring semester. We believe it will take a year or two for the results of this course to translate into improved math performance in Algebra I.

Tracking ILP student performance is difficult at best. ILP has an estimated 30% turnover rate each year because students are constantly enrolling, dropping, graduating, and changing grade levels. We plan to assess the success of the Practical Business Math course by tracking credits earned. We will also check on the Algebra I performance of students who completed Business Math compared to those who did not.

Because Business Math will be considered core for general level students, fewer students will be enrolled in geometry. We will continue to offer geometry to our students, but it is likely that most of the students who take geometry in the future will be on a college prep program, rather than a general level credit plan.

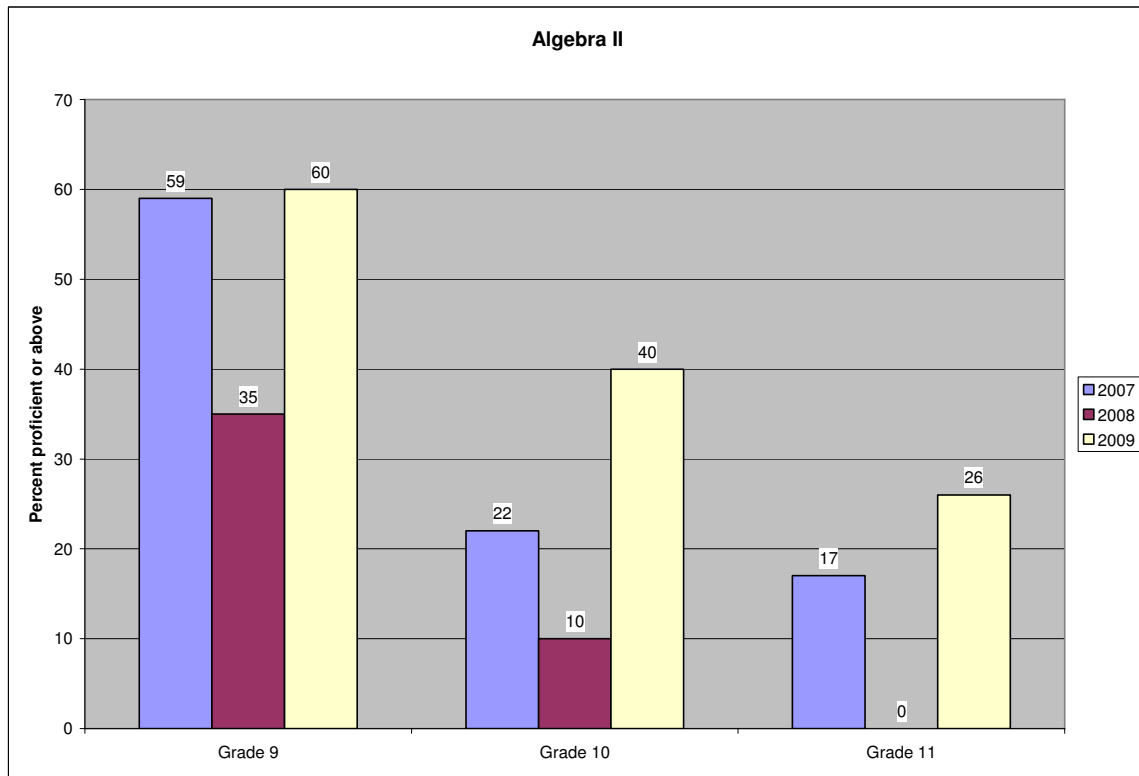
### **Algebra II in the Traditional Classroom Program:**

Improving Algebra II scores was high on our math improvement priority list. Algebra II is taught primarily in the Traditional Classroom program, and until this year it was the only course in that program with substandard test results.



The gains made in Algebra II this year can be attributed to significant changes which were set in motion more than two years ago. They include:

1. Piloting and ultimately adopting a new standards-aligned textbook
2. Adjusting teaching staff
3. Analyzing testing data to identify weak standards performance
4. Collaborative curriculum restructuring in order to address all standards



The chart above shows Algebra II performance over the most recent three years. In addition, our overall school performance rate for 2009 is 40% proficient or above, a significant gain from 2008 at only 12% proficient or above.

We plan to continue the successful course of action that resulted in these scores, and we are striving for a 5% increase in the proficiency rate at each grade level as well as a 5% increase in the schoolwide level for 2010.



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**GOAL #2: ALIGN ALL CURRICULUM TO STATE CONTENT STANDARDS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

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Self-Study findings indicated a need to update and align curriculum in the Individualized Learning Program (ILP). During the past three years, we have made progress in this area, but we have more work to do.

Our original Action Plan included the updating and aligning of electronic pre tests and post tests to be concurrent with curriculum development. We have eliminated the electronic system from our Action Plan for the following reasons:

1. The existing Wordware system was irrelevant and ultimately unworkable. The vendor of this software was not able or willing to make the changes needed to have a functional system. The system crashed regularly and despite assurances from the vendor, we were never able to obtain quantifiable data from it. It was discontinued in 2008.
2. We currently have no resources to implement a new electronic system.
3. Students take a closed-book final at the end of each course in ILP. We consider that to be our post-test.
4. We believe that CST end-of-course tests in subject areas in addition to written finals are adequate measures to determine student mastery of subject matter.

Curriculum development in ILP is time-consuming at best, and our budget does not allow the designation of a full-time curriculum developer. However, we did allow a 20% reduction in load for one of our teachers to serve as curriculum coordinator. The following progress has been made in curriculum alignment:

**Biology:** A new book was purchased and curriculum (packets) was revised in order to utilize the new text. As a result, however, some teachers discovered that the new text presents challenges for some of the general level students. To assist students in understanding the material, we have created a list of supplemental resources – primarily streaming video – which are available for teachers to use as teaching tools.

**World History:** In the fall of 2009, the finished course materials were piloted on actual students to receive feedback prior to releasing it to the entire ILP population. The curriculum coordinator reports that development of the course took much longer than anticipated. The new course is enhanced with computer simulations, streaming video/audio clips, and especially primary source analysis. The course is completely standards driven.



**English 10:** This course has undergone some changes to incorporate greater use of released test questions into the material to help ensure standards alignment.

The next course to be re-aligned will be U.S. History. We are hesitant to provide timelines for curricular development since it is dependent on the funds to purchase new texts and the time to develop new packets and materials to supplement the text.

For more information on curriculum development and its challenges in an independent study program, please contact the program director, Deron Galindo, and the curriculum coordinator, Marc Gilbertson.



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**GOAL #3: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE LITERACY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS**

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During the past three years, we discovered that we have adequate internal resources available to work with students on literacy remediation without resorting to an outside program and/or hiring outside providers. Besides being fiscally prohibitive, we believe that we are able to meet the needs of our students in the area of literacy by carefully targeting existing personnel and instruction and utilizing the trained people already on staff combined with additional teacher training in literacy.

Therefore, the portion of the original Action Plan that involved bringing in a remediation provider was deleted.

Our English-language arts scores are strong with 74% of students in grades 9-11 scoring proficient or above on the ELA CST.

To address the needs of our students, the following actions were completed:

**Professional Development:** During the 2007-2008 school year, all certificated teachers received a minimum of six hours of instruction in literacy. Attendance at these sessions was mandatory. The instructor was Linda A. Lee, the author of *Empowered College Reading*, published by Prentice Hall, 2008. Linda Lee is an instructor at San Diego Miramar College, and she directs the reading remediation program for incoming college students. The sessions covered topics such as Motivated Reading, Textbook Reading, and Critical Reading. The goal was to help teachers of all subjects empower their students to become successful college readers.

**Individualized Instruction:** Many years ago, ECHS had a fully-staffed Language Arts Center (LAC), where students could receive individualized instruction in all elements of reading and writing. The LAC was run by a credentialed English teacher, and staffed with two to three assistants, who received many hours of training in reading remediation, writing improvement, and literacy. Budget cuts and scheduling issues forced the closing of the LAC more than five years ago, but we were able to retain one of the dedicated staff members to continue the work. Today, she works exclusively with ILP students on a one-on-one basis in a variety of ways including: packet completion, literacy, writing, grammar, comprehension, phonemic awareness, and other skills.

Our reading instructor has been trained in: Phonographix (decoding), Sitton Spelling, We Are All ABCDarians (root words and their deviations), just to name a few. In the fall of 2009, she was working with six ILP students, who had been



assigned by their teacher for additional help. She has five additional openings available for students who may be assigned in the future. We believe that this program adequately meets our ILP students' needs for reading and literacy assistance.

### **Mandatory Writing Class**

All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students must complete a writing class that focuses on the basics of essay structure and response to prompts. In TCP this class is taught daily during a period separate from their regular English class. In ILP, students must complete an English 9A writing module. Incoming ILP students, who need additional help with writing, may take this class as an elective. These classes were described in detail above in the New Developments section.

