

**WASC Student Committee and Survey Narrative
Rancho Buena Vista High School
November 2009**

Background

In March, 2009, the formation of the WASC Student Committee was finalized, chaired by our ASB Director and the WASC Site Coordinator. Two notable groups on campus formed the pool from which student members were selected: the ASB Leadership Classes and the 2008-2009 Student Forum.

Students were recommended by the teacher advisors for each group. The specific criteria for nominations were that they proportionately represented the ethnicities found within our student populations. Further, they needed to represent varying degrees of academic success and they should reflect as many of our extracurricular offerings as possible.

Based upon the recommended lists submitted, four students were selected from each grade 9, 10, and 11. Seniors were not selected as they would not be available to finalize the task of evaluating the WASC Student Survey and they would not be present for the actual February, 2010 site visitation.

The twelve students selected, in fact, represent the school's ethnicities, their GPAs ranged from 2.5 to 4.2, and they were involved in over twenty different extracurricular activities.

The first session was designed to acquaint the students with the nature of WASC and their roles as student members and representatives of the entire student body. A packet of materials were given out and reviewed to capture a sense of what lay ahead.

Through a jigsaw process in the next two meetings, the students were able to determine the most pressing issues they wished to use in their survey. A fourth meeting at the beginning of this school year enabled the students to finalize their survey and it was then processed for web access via SurveyMonkey.com. The last two meetings provided the discussions necessary to develop the summary you find below.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Communication—Students use a variety of ways to keep informed about the school. While the school's website seems to be the best way to keep up, many students also rely on the school's third period bulletin announcements. The committee felt that other means—like a closed circuit TV system—should be investigated, as not every classroom has access to the school's cable network. In some classrooms, not every student remains quiet during the announcements using the current technology.

Administration—Many students agree that the school administration has made an effort to create a positive and supportive learning environment. The administration is supportive, but the increased pressures of state testing have made all classes more challenging. While these have not been felt in the same way by all students in all classes, most students recognize the efforts being made to support and encourage them. Some students are concerned about the attitudes and behaviors of others that distract from this process.

Counseling and Support Staff—Counselors have made an effort to show personal interest in students. While most students agree, one-fourth of the students had no opinion when asked on the survey. The committee felt that this is significant because all students should feel a more personal connection to their counselor and/or staff. They felt that teachers made the strongest connections and that they could go to them first, then their counselor, and then the administration.

ACADEMICS

Teachers— Nearly three-fourths of the students taking the survey responded that teachers are well-prepared for the subjects they teach. The committee strongly agreed with a resounding YES!

Tutoring and Support—There is a variety of opportunities for tutoring and individual assistance. Three-fourths of the students agreed on the survey. The committee noted specifically identified the work of the Gear Up tutors and the calculus teacher who gives lunch and afterschool tutoring sessions, but they also noted that the AP and IB teachers have been very supportive and generous with their time to provide help throughout the year, especially for review sessions during the final weeks prior to the exams themselves. The committee noted that the Science Department might consider more offerings and more consistency.

Teacher Support and Encouragement— Nearly 60% of the students responded that the teachers and staff show support for students in their activities. Nearly 25% of the students, however, said they had no opinion and the committee was unable to understand why. The committee did note that it appeared to them that it was generally the same core of teachers who come out and support sports, performing arts, etc.

Student Involvement—Participation in co-curricular activities seems, according to the committee, to be somewhat confusing. Some students are very active and very involved in numerous opportunities, yet other students seem to look at anything other than what they want to do as “boring” and too connected to their classes or teachers to be “cool.”

Students were more likely to participate if the school provided more types of clubs and/or more information. The committee felt that the school was already offering any type of club students wanted and that the process to start a club was clear and easy.

The committee also noted that more intramural-style opportunities should be considered as a way of involving more students.

One question on the survey gave the students the chance to comment on why they did not participate in school-based activities and they expressed a wide range of opinions, as noted in the pages of responses that follow.

FACILITIES

Bathrooms—Both the student survey respondents and the committee felt that this was one of the most critical needs of the school—sufficient and well-maintained bathrooms. The committee did not blame the custodians for lack of maintenance, but noted the lack of care on the part of students. The committee hoped that supplies like soap and toilet paper could be consistently available.

Locker Rooms—The responses reflected the variety of student needs and the times they seemed to need access. There appeared to be a clear split on the issue. The committee saw that it probably depended on which activity you were a part of; some sports, like football and basketball, had no problems with their facilities. The committee noted that Band and other sports teams did not have the same degree of access and often changed in restrooms or in their vehicles.

Student Lockers—Only 25% of the students felt their lockers were secure, nearly 50% disagreed. The committee felt that the lockers needed to be refurbished and made more secure, suggesting that the doors have small air holes rather than the larger slots. One committee member told of a friend whose locker was set on fire because whoever did it was able to slide a lit piece of paper through the slots/vents. Small air holes might minimize this type of vandalism.

Campus Supervisors—The students seemed to be evenly split between Agree and No Opinion/ Disagree. The committee noted that they feel safe and specifically noted the efforts of the School Resource Officer in having a significant impact on their safety and that of their fellow students. The committee did question the effectiveness of the campus supervision. They felt that more emphasis should be placed on being dispersed throughout the quad.

Trash—The Student Committee felt that more could be done about trash and 75% of the students responding to the survey agreed. The committee noted that the solution starts with the students; the students need to be more responsible. Trash cans seem to be very convenient, but teenagers are teenagers. Perhaps, instead of Saturday School, students should to be assigned to pick up trash after lunch or after school. The committee did acknowledge the efforts of the AP Environmental Sciences class, the Environmental Club, and the ASB Leadership class for their leadership in our recycling effort over the last two years.

Student Parking Lot—Approximately 50% of the students agreed it was sufficient for their needs, but nearly 30% had No Opinion and 25% Disagreed.

Traffic flow in and out of campus—More traffic control is needed. While some off-campus improvements may be coming in the future, the committee felt that something needs to be done to reconfigure the campus parking lot for better traffic flow.

Comments and Suggestions—This final section allowed for open-ended comments that represent the feelings of the student population at large. The committee, while having reviewed the comments, noted both the consistency of their observations and those of the rest of the students responding to the survey, as well as the general fact that less than one-third of the students even bothered to respond (only 103 students voiced their concerns and 262 students skipped the question altogether).

PLEASE NOTE: A complete record of the RBV WASC Student Survey responses (in English and in Spanish) follows...