

## **Yosemite High School**

### **Section II School Synopsis**

Yosemite High School (YHS) is nestled in the Sierra Nevada foothills in the rural community of Oakhurst, 10 miles from the southern gateway to Yosemite National Park. The campus is located on a 100-acre site graced by pines, oaks, and seasonal streams with views of high Sierra peaks. Amid this idyllic setting, the entire school community is involved in a dynamic process of positive change. The school is in the final stages of a \$30 million facilities expansion initiated by the passage of a local bond measure. Construction projects include development of a library media center, state-of-the-art science labs, cafeteria/multi-purpose building, music classrooms, swimming pool, stadium expansion, all-weather track, and athletic fields. Current work on a 23-classroom building and a performing arts center will result in facilities which are second to none. Amid the clamor of construction crews, the student body of 1,225 and support and teaching staff of 79 (including nine teachers who are former students) continue to achieve impressive educational and extracurricular successes.

Recognized as a California Distinguished School in 2001, YHS provides a comprehensive academic program that meets the needs of all students. An important academic focal point of the school is the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, a worldwide program that provides a rigorous, standards-based curriculum. Students who pass externally moderated exams are given college credit by most universities. The number of IB tests taken has increased from 142 in 2000 to 219 in 2004. YHS has had strong performances on IB exams, with a 100% pass rate on the Higher Level English exam for the past four years. Students have also shown growth on the California Standards Tests (CST), and had a 90% pass rate on the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in 2004. The school's Academic Performance Index (API) growth from 702 in 2002 to 756 in 2004 can be attributed to a focus on standards-based instruction, an emphasis on remediation of the skills of under-performing students, and the challenging IB curriculum. YHS also provides a comprehensive career technical education curriculum that showcases technology and multi-media production programs. YHS was one of the first schools in the world to offer an IB Film course.

Students have a positive connection to school; 75% reported involvement in co-curricular activities. The school strives to expand opportunities for all students. The addition of aquatic teams and the California Cadet Corps have provided additional opportunities for student involvement. Students have excelled in academic competitions. The Academic Decathlon team has won the county championship for the past 10 years. Four out of the last five years YHS has finished in the top three in California Division III, including state championships in 2000 and 2001. The Mock Trial team has had similar success, winning the county competition for the past 15 years. Drama and music groups, involving over one-third of the student body, have distinguished themselves with consistent superior ratings at festivals. The school showcases student art work in the campus gallery as well as in the community. In athletics, YHS regularly reaches California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) section and state playoffs. In the past three years, teams have won 18 league championships and earned 10 CIF Central Section championship or runner-up trophies.

The school is a source of pride and enjoys a high level of support from parents and the community. Local businesses and service organizations give over \$100,000 annually in scholarships. Booster groups provide ongoing support for co-curricular activities including athletic teams, band, choir, drama and Future Farmers of America (FFA). Parent attendance is high at freshman orientation, back to school night, post-graduate planning night, financial aid night, and at school athletic events and performances.

Through a process of continuous school improvement, YHS is striving to meet the challenges of state and federal educational reform. YHS received a six-year accreditation in 2000 and is currently working on the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) *Focus on Learning* self-study.

**1. Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Vision, Leadership, and Standards** Key concepts: School community collaboration using California content standards to reach a common vision of what students should know upon graduation \* involvement of teachers, paraprofessionals, families, community members and others in this process \* current research on effective learning \* school leadership promotes school vision and exhibits a continuing commitment to excellence for all students \* school and district implementation of California academic content standards \* school community evaluation of student assessment data to revise the school's yearly plan for continuing reform and renewal \* Single School Plan (SSP) aligned with the Local Education Agency Plan (LEAP) \* School Accountability Report Card (SARC) readily available on web site \* an array of strategies to communicate student assessment results to the community and to families.

*"We appreciate the school's stress on academic excellence."*

*Comment from 2003-2004 Parent Survey*

The school has a clear, common vision of what all students should know and be able to do upon graduation. The school's vision is formed by the district vision statement, the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs) and annual goals derived from the Single School Plan (SSP). The school vision is annually reviewed and modified to support student achievement. Stakeholders collaborate at many levels. Students, parents, teachers, support staff, administrators and community members regularly contribute to the establishment of a clear vision in a variety of forums including site council, steering committee, department meetings, department chair meetings, the leadership team, and Friday morning staff meetings. Stakeholders collaborate through the WASC process to examine student work and review student achievement data to clarify and define the goals of the school. Advisory committees meet regularly to shape the curriculum in career technical programs. Community/business round table forums are regularly held in order to obtain feedback regarding needed student skills, job expectations, and perceptions of the school. Through annual surveys, the school gathers valuable information from students, parents, and staff on how they perceive the school.

The school's vision and teaching practices are consistent with current educational research, including the *Effective Schools* research, *Second to None, Aiming High*, and the WASC criteria. The school has defined exemplary performance through indicators tied to the ESLRs. Research-based benchmark assessments, writing portfolios, rubrics, senior projects, and forms of authentic assessment define what is expected of students. The school has embedded the ESLRs in the curriculum by directly aligning them with district and state standards. The district vision statement and the ESLRs address respect for, and appreciation of, ethnic diversity, and are communicated to all stakeholders through inclusion in the student-parent handbook, display in classrooms, and posting on the district Website. The school's ESLRs call for all students to be critical and creative thinkers, to be effective workers, to be community contributors, and to be effective communicators. The ESLRs also call for students to demonstrate basic living skills and to demonstrate essential technological skills. Annual goals are developed by the steering committee and articulated to staff, site council and the board. The school vision and goals are consistent with the California Content Standards and are designed to prepare students to pursue post-secondary education or to enter the workforce.

School leadership is committed to excellence and high expectations for all students. Students, staff, parents and community members participate in decision-making through the development of the SSP, annual performance goals, staff development calendar, site instructional and categorical budgets, department budgets, curriculum proposals, intervention strategies, textbook adoption, instructional calendars, and assessment tools. Through collaborative processes, school leadership guides development of a school plan that is focused on a process of continuous school improvement. It is developed and monitored by the school steering committee and approved by the school site council and the district board of trustees. The steering committee conducts an annual review of student achievement data and surveys and makes recommendations regarding plan revision. This leads to development of annual schoolwide goals that are adopted by the staff, site council, and board.

Allocation of resources is determined at the site level and focuses on student achievement; it is guided by the SSP and input from stakeholder groups. The site instructional budget is developed in a collaborative process involving department chairs and administrators and is consistent with district goals. Categorical budgets, including the School Improvement Plan (SIP), are developed in conjunction with the annual SSP revision. Resources are clearly focused on the needs identified in the

school plan and by how they address the standards and the ESLRs. Department chairs collaborate on staffing assignments in order to best meet student needs. Specific examples of data-driven decisions and allocation of resources include implementation of a double period geometry class, after-school math tutoring, and allocation of staff development resources based upon an analysis of student achievement data. The SSP delineates annual academic performance goals for all students and is directly aligned to the Local Educational Agency Plan (LEAP). It sets targets for CST and CAHSEE performance for the general student population and for subgroups. The district has adopted the state content standards in all core curricular areas, including fine arts. The district has adopted local content standards in other curricular areas that are based on the California Challenge Standards. Course descriptions and syllabi in all curricular areas are aligned with the content standards and the ESLRs. The board has established policy on the adoption of instructional materials that ensures they are aligned with district and state standards. Standards are also identified on lesson plans, and are posted in classrooms. Administrators monitor the level of standards-based instruction through use of the *Walkabout* program that is based on the Nine Best Practices established by Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL Research). The program provides data collection and feedback on instructional strategies and the specific standards being addressed in the classroom. The district's teacher evaluation process is aligned with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) and includes focus on progress of students toward the standards.

The effectiveness of standards-based instruction is monitored through regular review of student achievement data including departmental assessments, district benchmark assessments, and standardized test scores to guide instruction. As the results of yearly assessments (Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR), IB, Advanced Placement (AP), and college placement tests) become available, they are used to shape standards-based instructional programs for students at all ability levels. Student achievement data is reviewed by teachers, site and district administrators, the school site council, the steering committee, and the board. Test results are disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, grade level, Title I participation, and disabilities. These results are used to develop plans to modify instruction. Students whose test results indicate skills below grade level are identified for Title I and provided with targeted instruction or tutoring. Changes that have been integrated into the SSP include the addition of math and English labs, CAHSEE test preparation and *Accelerated Math* software. Other changes have been development of a two-year algebra curriculum and a two-period geometry course, implementation of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, addition of a learning strategies class, after school math tutoring, and the *Reading Rewards* program.

The school vision and assessment results are communicated to all segments of the community through a variety of means. The community newspaper regularly publishes student achievement data. Also, a quarterly school newsletter is distributed to the homes of all students. The district Website ([www.yosemiteuhd.com](http://www.yosemiteuhd.com)) contains extensive information about YHS, including the school vision statement, assessment data, the School Accountability Report Card (SARC), course and program descriptions, calendar of events, and board policy, agendas and minutes. Yearly test results are mailed to parents and are provided to all students along with their high school transcripts during registration. Student achievement data is reviewed by the board and at community/business roundtable forums. The school's vision statement and ESLRs are also included in the student-parent handbook. While a very small segment of the school population is non-English speaking, translation of materials and information is provided as needed.

**2. Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: Student Assessment** Key concepts: \* classroom, grade level, school, district, and state student assessments linked into a local California content standards-aligned system to improve student achievement \* school monitors, reports, and recognizes students' progress toward meeting standards \* student achievement data used to implement specific changes in the school's curriculum, instructional practices, and classroom assessment strategies \* students know what is expected to produce proficient or advanced work \* students regularly evaluate their own work \* report cards are aligned to California content standards \* school staff involved in reporting student assessment results and progress toward achieving California content standards to families and the community \* long-term follow-up data on graduates used to improve student preparation for postsecondary education and careers.

*“The IB program was one reason I attended this school. While the workload sometimes seemed impossible, it prepared me for the rigors of college and the attitude to succeed.”*

*Comment from 2004 Valedictorian*

YHS utilizes multiple measures of assessment at both the school and classroom levels. Analysis of STAR, CAHSEE, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), American College Test (ACT), IB, AP, college placement exams, and student grade distribution is conducted annually to measure schoolwide progress toward meeting the standards. In individual classrooms a variety of performance-based assessments allow students to demonstrate mastery of content standards. End-of-course exams have been implemented in math, social studies, and science. In math and English, schoolwide benchmark assessments are regularly administered to measure student mastery of the content standards and to guide instruction. In all courses, teacher-prepared, on-demand assessments, aligned to the content standards, are frequently used to monitor student progress. A number of authentic assessment tools are imbedded in the curriculum. In a collaborative effort, IB Math Studies and IB Psychology students created a statistical model for the analysis of a schoolwide writing sample. In geometry and art courses, students do tessellation projects to demonstrate their understanding of patterns and symmetry as they relate to geometric functions. In an activity that articulates math and science classes, students show their understanding of ratios by calculating the ratios of various body parts and by studying the relationship of ratios to body mechanics. A culminating activity for all students is the Senior Project, which is a graduation requirement that directly connects to the ESLRs and the California Language Arts Standards. Each senior shares his or her project with a panel of community members. Individual student performance is reviewed and communicated to students, parents and teachers to track progress toward the achievement of the California Content Standards. CST results, along with other achievement data, such as student grades, are used to identify students for Title I assistance. Students performing at the “below basic” and “far below basic” levels are targeted for intervention and assistance in math and English/Language Arts.

The school uses assessment information to determine the effectiveness of instruction in order to help all students reach the proficient level. Monthly department meetings include discussion of assessment strategies, development of performance standards, comparisons of student work, work with rubrics and benchmarks, norming of assessment criteria, and curriculum planning. Math teachers review student achievement data and collaborate to identify key standards, align curricula, develop curriculum calendars, discuss instructional strategies and refine assessment tools. In English/Language Arts, teachers examine student writing, collaborate on common writing assignments, share student portfolios and define core reading lists based on student ability level. Achievement data is used to identify growth areas and target instruction to move all students toward proficient status. Since all curricula have been aligned with content standards, student performance on course assessments and projects reflects their progress toward meeting these standards. Title 1 students are identified and provided support services through math and English labs and a pullout program. A peer-tutoring program is utilized to assist students in achieving proficiency. After-school math intervention is available for students in algebra and geometry with coordination between the after-school teacher and the regular classroom teacher. Students who have not met the district’s writing proficiency requirement are provided with small group writing tutorials to help them reach proficiency.

Students are encouraged to view their individual courses and learning experiences in a larger context, and to take responsibility for their own learning. They are expected to produce work that is proficient or above. In many subjects, including English, social studies, math and science, students are provided with rubrics, anchor papers, and models that clearly define proficient work. In art, welding, woodshop, drafting and other classes, students are provided with samples of proficient and advanced work allowing them to evaluate their work against specific criteria. A schoolwide rubric for writing has been developed and used across the curricula so that students and teachers can have a clear indication of what constitutes proficient and advanced levels of writing. Students review and revise writing to

improve their work. Several disciplines utilize the services of *Turnitin.com*, which allows students access to constructive peer review. Improvements and refinements can be made to reach a proficient (or above) level of work. In fine arts classes students regularly critique both their own and fellow students' work. In a number of IB courses, the program provides for student analysis of projects and labs according to rubrics supplied by IB. Students rewrite their work if they determine that they have not met the standards.

Students and their families receive course syllabi that clearly identify content standards, class expectations and methods of assessment. Parents receive printed progress reports six times per year. The reports indicate student progress towards meeting the standards and the level of citizenship and work habits. They also indicate areas of student strength and areas where more work is needed. In addition, on the fourth Friday of every six-week period, teachers are provided with time to call parents to update them on student progress. Counselors and teachers identify students below proficiency and provide assistance through student study teams (SST), parent-teacher conferences, and other interventions. Special needs students and their parents receive more frequent progress reports and are provided with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) that defines specific learning objectives and performance standards. AP and IB courses have calendared expectations that communicate proficiency for the benefit of both students and parents. All test scores are mailed to parents on an annual basis. The Website includes data accessible to all stakeholders via the Internet. The data includes monthly calendars, staff phone extensions and e-mail addresses, state standards and curriculum, course outlines with descriptions, news about student activities, the district vision, and board policy.

Currently, YHS has very few students who are designated as English Language Learners. These students, whose primary language has typically been Spanish, are provided with special assistance by bilingual staff who also provides communication with Spanish-speaking parents of these students whenever the need arises.

The counseling department utilizes a senior project that conducts a yearly survey of seniors, as well as a follow-up survey after graduation, to determine how many are enrolled in colleges and universities, are working, or are involved in other activities. A 2004 graduate survey indicated that 65% of graduates went on to some form of post-secondary education. There were specific breakdowns for two-year and four-year colleges, vocational training, the military, and work. Projections for the 2005 graduating class (by survey) are that 83% will go on to some form of post-secondary education.

**3. Academic Excellence: Curriculum and Instructional Practices** Key concepts: \* course requirements for graduation \* comprehensive, standards-aligned core curriculum and instruction for every student \* comprehensive core curriculum and instruction that is articulated across departments/disciplines at all grade levels and with feeder middle schools and postsecondary institutions \* examples in English-language arts (ELA) and math illustrate the use of standards-aligned instructional materials and standards-based strategies \* access to intellectually challenged career technical education (CTE), with a major emphasis on using high-level ELA, math, science, and problem-solving skills \* service-learning strategies and internships are incorporated to enhance the curriculum with real-world experiences and provide connections to the community \* all students that are provided with a variety of challenging learning experiences that are age appropriate, reflect application of skills and concepts, are personalized for learning styles, and lead to success on the CAHSEE and STAR \* teachers work together to assess student work and plan and modify curriculum and instruction, including homework \* all incoming ninth grade students are placed in appropriate courses, based on assessment data and student, teacher, and parental concurrence \* the senior year is an academically rigorous and relevant year for all twelfth grade students \* master schedule serves all students \* standards-based instructional materials provided to all students \* high-quality library media program supports standards-based classroom instruction and contributes to improved student achievement \* plan for technology use at the school site and the ongoing process of integrating technology into the total school program \* technology used to enhance learning of all students \* electronic networking infrastructure throughout the site and beyond.

*“YHS was the first place I felt challenged. That challenge forced me to learn, but also to thrive.”*

*Comment from 2004 Valedictorian*

YHS graduates are required to complete 260 units including the following: four years of English, two years of math (including algebra), two years of P.E., one semester of health, two years of science, three-and-a-half years of social science, three years of career education, and one year of fine arts/foreign language. Students must pass district proficiencies in language arts, reading, mathematics, writing and technology in addition to completing a senior project that demonstrates mastery of the ESLRs. Students must also complete a service-learning project as a component of the senior social studies curriculum. The school promotes open access to all programs, including IB and AP courses.

Although only two years of math are currently required for graduation, approximately 42% of students are enrolled in higher-level math courses. The school has increased its University of California a-g completion rate from 28% to 37% in the past year. All students complete a career exploration unit in the ninth grade, developing a career portfolio that is updated as they progress through high school. The career center, which employs a full-time technician, provides career and college material and opportunities for students to survey job markets.

All students engage in a rigorous, standards-based curriculum. YHS has made it a priority to provide full inclusion, and high expectations are in place for all students, including those with learning handicaps. State content standards have been adopted and implemented in math, English, science, social science, and fine arts, and the district has adopted standards in other curricular areas that are based on the California Challenge Standards. Course outlines have been developed, approved by the board, and aligned with standards and the ESLRs. The curriculum planning process at YHS is consistent with current research such as *Second to None* and *WASC Focus on Learning*.

Careful selection of instructional materials is made through a textbook selection process that ensures instructional materials are aligned with the standards before they are presented for board adoption. Extensive curriculum planning through a backwards-mapping process has taken place. Staff works with blueprints from the CST and CAHSEE to identify key standards to be emphasized in the curriculum. Using the process and principles from Mike Schmoker's *Focus on Results*, an annual review of test results is conducted to identify growth areas and to target instruction.

In math, benchmark assessments have been implemented that define proficiency and ensure student progress toward attaining the standards. The research-based *Accelerated Math* program has been implemented to provide a consistent method of assessing student skills and providing targeted instruction. Homework, quizzes, worksheets, projects, and end of semester exams are aligned with the standards throughout the curriculum. The math department meets regularly to develop and refine a departmental curriculum calendar that paces instruction. Students who are identified as struggling are recommended for after-school intervention services or placement in a math lab. Teachers review test data, and performance in prior classes, to determine placement and advancement in the program.

In English/Language Arts, similar efforts have been made. Benchmark writing assignments have been developed at each grade level and are included in student writing portfolios. Each grade level focuses on a different writing genre: Autobiographical essays, expository writing, literary analysis, and research papers. A writing portfolio is used to assess student writing throughout the year, and assessment of the portfolio is the basis for determining that students are meeting the district writing proficiency requirements. Teachers also collaborate in science and social studies departments to annually review standardized test scores. They identify growth areas, target instruction, and review student progress to recommend placement in courses.

Articulation takes place across the curriculum, at grade levels and with feeder schools and post-secondary institutions. Teachers use Friday morning meeting time and release days to review student achievement data, examine student work, align curriculum, and plan instruction. In 11th grade English and U.S. History classes, teachers articulate across the curriculum to integrate lessons and jointly plan units of instruction. All lessons are coordinated to provide a close connection between literature and the period of history being studied. Biology and chemistry teachers collaborate through the "Group 4 Project" in IB classes, a 15-hour project that provides an interdisciplinary approach to science. There is articulation with feeder schools where educators share instructional and assessment information. Teachers from YHS and feeder schools have met extensively to collaboratively revise math curriculum. Efforts have been made to coordinate math curriculum, instruction, and assessment so that the instruction will provide an easier transition into high school. In social science there has been a continuous collaboration of writing strategies with elementary schools. This effort has raised the writing levels for the elementary students. Choir and band programs articulate extensively with feeder school programs. YHS music staff meets periodically with middle school teachers to articulate

curriculum and coordinate music selections. YHS students and teachers visit feeder schools and provide on-site clinics and joint performances with feeder school students. YHS also sponsors clinic days in which feeder school classes and teachers visit high school classes in preparation for a joint community concert. AVID students and teachers articulate with primary grade teachers and students through the Ambassador Literacy Program. This program trains high school students in literacy skills that they use in primary grade reading activities. Teachers and counselors collaborate when counselors visit feeder schools to help incoming freshmen make decisions about their high school course of study. Through these meetings, incoming students, their parents, and teachers are informed of high school programs and are provided with recommendations on class choices. Teachers meet to evaluate student achievement data across grade levels. In math classes, data are used to determine initial placement in ninth grade courses through administrators of a placement test to eighth grade students. Math standardized test scores and local assessment data are continually evaluated to plan intervention strategies, such as referral for an after-school intervention program or math lab. Students with reading or writing skills below proficiency level may be referred for placement in an English lab. The school works closely with colleges and universities, especially the local community college, to ensure that its programs provide students with the skills necessary for success in college. Counselors annually attend UC and California State University (CSU) workshops. Colleges and universities send representatives to participate in the YHS postgraduate planning night, and in financial aid and college application workshops. The community college comes to YHS to administer English and math placement exams and conduct registration. YHS provides opportunities for students to visit college campuses and vocational schools. Senior English teachers participated in the Early Assessment Program (EAP) training sponsored by the UC system to enhance student-writing skills. YHS also participates in the 2 + 2 program in which students receive college credit for courses with a curriculum that is defined jointly by YHS and the community college. Counselors distribute reports of graduates' performance on college math and English placement tests to staff.

Teachers use a wide range of instructional strategies to involve students in varied learning experiences in order to address their different learning styles. Students work independently and in groups, and in teacher-directed and student-directed learning activities. Students participate in lecture discussions, grand conversations, jigsaws, research projects, writing, bridging, literature circles, cooperative groups, laboratories, data collection, problem solving and experiments. Cross-curricular instruction and projects connect disciplines to provide a deeper understanding of historical events and societal conditions. Students studying the Viet Nam war era read the novel *The Things They Carried* while studying the political controversy surrounding the war. Students engage in class projects, group work, panel discussions, and a wide range of activities that provide an integrated approach to learning.

Staff has participated in training on multiple learning modalities, and students in learning strategy classes identify their predominant learning style in order to maximize their potential. On staff surveys, 94% reported that instructional strategies in their classroom are tailored to various learning styles. There is a strong emphasis on oral and written communication across the curriculum, on cooperative learning, modeling, strata building and curriculum spiraling. Homework is used to support and extend classroom learning, to teach time-management, to provide independent practice, to incorporate technology and the library-media center, and to involve families and the community. On an annual survey, 82% of respondents indicated that a significant amount of instructional time is devoted to challenging and rigorous learning activities. Classroom observations indicate that there is a clear emphasis placed on standards-based content and skills.

In many courses, students engage in learning experiences that are connected to the real world and provide a service to the community. Students engage in environmental projects, run local Special Olympics events, and serve meals to senior citizens. They also participate in food drives and Toys for Tots. Students in Regional Occupation Program (ROP) Videography classes plan and produce digital video presentations in collaboration with local businesses and public agencies including the local

television station public service announcements, County Homeland Security disaster planning, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and Yosemite National Park. In ROP Careers in Education, students teach local elementary school students. Classes in ROP automotive technology, emergency medical technician, and careers in education allow students to participate in community classroom experiences. These types of real-life service-learning experiences provide connections to the community and are the norm at Yosemite High School.

Students have access to career technical programs that provide opportunities to develop problem-solving skills by engaging in real life learning experiences. ROP classes have articulated math and English/Language Arts standards throughout the career technical curricula. Students in ROP Videography classes integrate math and English/Language Arts skills in the development of class projects. Students create storyboards that include writing, technical data and public speaking skills. Students must do complex mathematical computations in order to synchronize video and audio elements of production. Students in EAST classes engage in water quality projects that utilize science skills to map flora, endangered species, and areas of restoration. Students in welding, wood and drafting classes use math skills to design and construct projects requiring precise calculations.

Ag biology, computer science, ROP Photography, and ROP Videography classes have all been approved as UC a-g courses. Ag Science I and II classes are aligned with regular integrated science courses and fulfill the graduation requirements for science. YHS has a service-learning requirement that is completed by all students in the senior year. As part of their senior portfolio, students include evidence of a service-learning experience. Students participate in job shadowing and internships that are scheduled through the career center and through senior projects.

A strong effort is made to appropriately place ninth grade students. (The process is described in sections 5 and 6.) Student progress is tracked throughout the ninth grade year by examination of progress reports and grades, district benchmark assessments, and standardized test scores. This ensures that students are progressing towards meeting the standards and acquiring adequate academic skills. The incorporation of a senior project ensures that students are engaged in a rigorous, student-centered, learning experience. The senior project incorporates the ESLRs, a research paper, a service-learning experience, a portfolio, and a presentation to a panel of community members.

The school develops a demand-based master schedule that is designed to accommodate the course requests initiated by students. The master schedule is developed and adjusted in order to provide all students with access to the courses necessary to progress through a sequence of courses to acquire academic skills required for graduation, to demonstrate mastery on district and state assessments, and to prepare them to achieve their post-secondary goals. The school operates on a seven period class schedule that allows students to access a greater variety of courses in order to pursue their interests, receive remediation, and complete demanding coursework.

Because of the emphasis on aligning curriculum with local and state content standards, new textbooks and other instructional materials are aligned with the standards. Board policy has been strengthened to provide a clear process for selection of instructional materials. Textbook adoption committees (composed of teachers, parents, students, and feeder-school teachers), make recommendations regarding instructional materials. Criteria for selection include reading level, age appropriateness, and most importantly, alignment with the content standards.

The importance of the YHS Library Media Center (LMC) for students and staff is clearly recognized. A full-time credentialed librarian and a library aide provide services to students, parents, and the community through extended library hours. Forty-nine computers with Internet access, six different online subscription resources, and an online book catalogue are available. All library materials selected, both print and online, are chosen to match the frameworks and the standards with input from students, staff, and parents. Online resources are available at all times to students and staff with Internet connections at home. The LMC and computer lab are flexibly scheduled with the monthly calendar posted on the Website. Teachers, including special education staff, schedule the

LMC to encourage reading, research for debates and reports, and for group activities. Teams of students frequently use the LCM to create Power Point presentations, and to conduct Web quests and research for IB classes, History Day, senior projects and other topics. The librarian collaborates with teachers to create successful library activities that match standards and incorporate technology. The library provides a safe and educational environment for students to work independently and for those who stay after school.

Use of technology to enhance student learning is widespread. Computers are in every classroom, and the school has six computer labs available to students. A comprehensive technology plan is updated annually and is focused on utilizing technology to enhance student learning. State of the art technology is used extensively in the LMC. Teachers and students use Power Point presentations in class. Students do Internet research to complete projects and term papers. Science students and teachers use Vernier probes in conjunction with computers to conduct experiments and analyze data. Students use *Chariot* software in preparation for the CAHSEE, and they use *Accelerated Math* software to assess math skills. *Standards Master* software is used to provide benchmark assessments in English classes. Social science students access the *American Psychological Association (APA) Stylewriter* software to complete research papers. Technology is used extensively in EAST, ROP Photo and Videography, and in Web page design classes. The school is piloting *Accreditation Plus* software in the WASC self-study process. The *Aeries* system is used to organize, disaggregate, and manage student achievement data. Extensive use is made of e-mail and the Website to communicate both within the school and the community.

**4.Academic Excellence: Professional Development** Key concepts: \* professional development that prepares all teachers, administrators, and other staff to help students achieve local and state standards \* professional development plan evaluated on student progress in meeting standards \* professional development incorporates the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) \* a variety of funding sources to provide training \* professional development that enhances the understanding of student developmental needs \* scientifically based research incorporated into professional development activities to improve student academic achievement \* staff development and professional collaboration aligned with standards-based instructional materials \* opportunities for staff to collaborate, broaden their knowledge, and participate in decision-making \* professional development for all school personnel \* process for selecting and supporting new teachers \* opportunities for teachers to articulate with teachers from other grade levels, subjects, and middle school and higher education.

*"It is rewarding to see the amount of collaboration that goes into planning staff development activities."*

*Comment from Steering Committee member*

YHS has a comprehensive, long range, staff development plan that is focused on all students achieving the standards. Staff development activities and the district evaluation process are aligned with the CSTP. Decision-making for curriculum planning and school improvement is accomplished by consensus. The school steering committee develops an annual schoolwide staff development plan. Staff development activities take place during "late start" Friday mornings, on district staff development days, through participation in conferences and workshops focused on standards-based instruction, teacher release time to align curriculum, department collaboration time, and through staff development that occurs outside of the school day. The district's commitment to professional growth for all teachers is evidenced by an annual budget of over \$75,000. All teachers and administrators are responsible for developing personal professional growth plans. Teachers develop individual growth plans that have long-range, comprehensive goals that specify the kinds of in-service, coursework, or conferences that will help them address student instructional needs that have been identified by student assessments.

All teachers, administrators, special education staff, counselors, library and support staff participate in professional growth activities that are high quality, research-based, and focused on the standards. More than 80% of the staff participated in out-of-school training last year. Schoolwide activities have included work on learning modalities, benchmark assessments, developing performance standards, CAHSEE preparation, technology training, conflict resolution, suicide prevention, and training on Aspergers Syndrome. YHS teachers are actively involved as coaches with the San Joaquin Valley Writing Project and are currently leading an ongoing, schoolwide literacy training. Cornell note-taking skills, and *Read Aloud* strategies are included in this year's staff development plan.

During the last three years, English and math teachers have engaged in a variety of specialized activities that have included *Accelerated Math* training, CAHSEE Remediation workshops, a workshop

on narrative writing for SAT, CAHSEE, and CST, *Write Up to Standards* workshop, a *Performance Standards* workshop, *Developing Competent Readers* workshop, Early Assessment Program (EAP) training, Summer Reading Camp, and IB training in math and English. Special education staff participated in specialized training such as behavior intervention management, *The Reading Rewards* program and autism training. Every year IB teachers attend summer training sessions and new teachers are given top priority. Counselors and counseling technicians annually attend UC, CSU, and IB workshops. Office support staff participates in technology training. The district is currently sponsoring a Crosscultural, Language and Academic Development (CLAD) certification class that a number of staff is completing. Administrators have participated in AB 75 training, the Central Valley Educational Leadership Institute, the California School Leadership Academy, and the Curriculum and Instruction Leadership Symposium, featuring Kati Haycock, Doug Reeves, and Jay McTighe. Gains on standardized tests in English and math over the past several years can be directly attributed to professional growth activities.

Teachers collaborate to reach consensus on a variety of schoolwide and departmental issues. All staff is currently working on the schoolwide writing process that involves norming student writing expectations to a rubric. With the expectations of state content standards and the CAHSEE, the district has made it a priority to provide specific training and curriculum development opportunities for math and English teachers. Teachers are provided with release days to do curriculum mapping to align curriculum, assessment and instruction. Monthly departmental collaboration time is used to share student work from one grade level to the next and review student performance data to determine remediation strategies and place students in appropriate classes. Math teachers review data, develop pacing calendars, develop assessments, and refine instruction. English teachers discuss assessment data, norm student writing, review portfolios, and reflect on classroom practices.

New teachers are selected through a collaborative process involving students, teachers, administrators and community members. Priority is placed on hiring highly qualified teachers who hold credentials in the areas in which they will be teaching. New teachers go through an orientation program and are supported by department chairs, colleagues, and administrators. All first year teachers participate in the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program. A mentor teacher has been used to provide support for new teachers, and the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program provides for voluntary assistance. Consulting teachers provide training and support for teachers who request assistance and for those who are referred for assistance through the evaluation process. The program helps all teachers find ways to be successful by receiving positive assistance from qualified peers. The entire staff meets at the beginning of each school year, and a sense of a shared mission is emphasized. New staff members are introduced, annual goals are shared, and a focus for the year is established. Staff members are frequently commended for exceptional work, often with public commendations, letters in their personnel files, articles in the local newspaper, or commendations at board meetings. A teacher and a classified staff of the year are recognized at the annual retirement/awards dinner.

**5.Support for Student Learning: Curricular Paths and Academic Guidance** Key concepts: \* purpose of school's counseling program \* students are prepared upon graduation for postsecondary education, to focus on career technical education, or to directly enter the workforce \* resources and opportunities that are available for students to prepare their personal learning plans \* changes in students' academic goals are accommodated \* families are involved and supported in helping their students make informed decisions about academic options \* programs that support students from groups traditionally underrepresented in colleges and universities.

*“My counselor is a great listener and is there to help me when I get myself into difficult situations.”*

*2004 Graduate*

The guidance department at YHS takes appropriate steps to ensure that all students graduate from high school and have the ability to pursue their academic and career goals. All students have a five-year plan defining their high school paths and post-secondary plans. This personal learning plan is designed with each student and parent in the eighth grade to ensure that the student engages in an educational experience that meets his or her needs and fulfills all graduation requirements. Students are encouraged to enroll in a rigorous and challenging course of study that will help them to fulfill their

academic goals. Students revisit their plan annually and may make changes as they progress through high school. Beginning with their enrollment in the ninth grade and concluding with senior counseling sessions, students are regularly advised, informed, and monitored to ensure that they complete all graduation requirements and are prepared to enter college, vocational training, the military, or the world of work. Students and parents are advised regarding the CAHSEE and graduation and college requirements. Counselors monitor completion of UC/CSU a-g requirements and SAT/ACT test registration and scores. The school has set performance goals to increase the number of students who are qualified to enter college upon graduation from high school.

The counseling department conducts a number of activities to provide students and parents with information and assistance in pursuing their post-secondary goals. A Post-Graduate Planning Night includes workshops on college applications, financial planning for college, college placement exams, and a variety of other topics. A Financial Aid Night is held each year to assist parents with completing financial aid applications. The local community college provides counseling, placement exams, and registration on the YHS campus.

Students with academic, attendance, or behavior problems are identified and provided with appropriate interventions. Students with academic problems may be referred for an SST, support classes, tutoring, and when appropriate, special education screening. Teachers and counselors may recommend schedule changes if it is determined that course placement is inappropriate. Parents are engaged if students are experiencing academic, attendance or discipline problems. Teachers, counselors, and assistant principals collaborate to identify at-risk students and work to monitor progress and behavior, meet with parents and teachers, develop behavior plans, provide interventions or assign appropriate consequences in order to elicit a positive change in student behavior. Students who fail to graduate from eighth grade are offered a placement at Mountain View High School to provide a more sheltered environment and a smooth transition into high school. Students experiencing emotional difficulties are referred to the Student Support Facilitator for assistance. Students with continuing attendance or discipline problems may be referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB), or be assigned to one of the district's alternative schools.

All students are enrolled in an articulated sequence of courses designed to help them meet their goals. Students are required to develop a career plan that includes a 30-unit sequence of courses that will prepare them to meet their vocational goals. This may be composed of a sequence of vocational education and ROP courses, community classroom programs, and work experience. As an example, in welding, students progress through arc welding, oxyacetylene welding and into the ROP welding program to provide them with entry-level skills. In the case of students who are college bound, their plan may consist of a series of courses designed to prepare them for college admission.

YHS maintains a career center, staffed with a full time technician who provides students with information on how to research careers, research college majors, determine college admission requirements, or discover vocational and military opportunities. The career technician conducts workshops at each grade level to explain high school graduation requirements, college admissions policies, the role and importance of Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), SAT, PLAN, and ACT tests, and opportunities available in career technical programs. Students take interest inventories that assist them in connecting the importance of matching a career with their personal strengths. The career center hosts workshops to assist seniors in their transition from high school to college. At these workshops, students meet with college advisors and YHS alumni, learning how to build a class schedule. The career technician assists students in understanding financial aid and in discovering scholarship opportunities. She holds workshops to teach skills to prepare students for employment and she hosts a job fair for local employers at YHS where students present their resumes, fill out applications, and are interviewed for actual positions. Furthermore, she assists students in finding a career mentor and in job-shadowing opportunities and arranges for students to meet with advisors at their college of interest. Through the career center there are fairs on campus, arranged by discipline or theme, where students

have the opportunity to meet professionals in various careers. Students can also take field trips to colleges and trade schools to learn more about the programs offered and admissions policies.

Students entering high school are provided with support to ensure that their transition into YHS is successful. Counselors visit schools several times in the spring of the eighth grade year, meeting with students, parents, and eighth grade teachers to ensure that students are placed in appropriate courses. Multiple parent orientations nights are conducted to provide parents with information about the school, its programs, course selection, graduation and college requirements, co-curricular activities, and expectations. Incoming students attend a ninth grade orientation program the week before school starts to make their transition to high school a smooth one. Students are bused to the high school and engage in a variety of activities including meeting staff and visiting all of their classes. The activity includes a barbeque for students and parents and culminates with a parent meeting.

YHS has made it a priority to increase college readiness in underrepresented groups. The school has implemented an AVID program to prepare students for college admission who otherwise might not have been ready. The program enrollment has more than tripled over the past three years. The school sets performance goals each year to increase the number of students completing the UC a-g requirements and the SAT or ACT test. The school increased its UC completion rate last year by 24%, and the number of students taking the SAT increased from 65 in 2003 to 109 in 2004. A preliminary graduate survey shows that 83% of students plan to enroll in college upon graduation from high school.

**6. Support for Student Learning: Student Support Services** Key concepts: \* early assessment and identification of students at-risk and with special needs \* access to and success in the regular curriculum for students at-risk and with special needs \* student success team (SST) \* strategies for decreasing dropouts \* extended learning activities that are used to support students at-risk and with special needs \* assistance for students with disabilities in achieving their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals, to progress in the regular curriculum, and to be educated with non-disabled students \* programs and strategies used to facilitate the acquisition of English by English learners (EL) \* comprehensive student support services for all students that promote physical, mental and social/emotional health \* safe and secure learning environment \* support for programs and partnerships that promote healthy student behaviors \* school is free from drugs, alcohol, tobacco, crime, and violence.

*“Yosemite High School has a good teaching staff that genuinely cares about students.”*

*Comment from 2003-2004 student survey*

The school takes steps to identify at-risk and special-needs students and to provide appropriate programs to ensure success. Students are identified through a review of records, test results, and teacher or parent referral. Special needs students typically fall into the following categories: Students who qualify for special education services, students with disabilities who qualify for Section 504 accommodations, at-risk students who are struggling in school due to other circumstances, and Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) students. Ninth graders are placed in courses based upon a review of eighth grade assessment results, grades, teacher recommendation, and a mathematics readiness test. Students may be placed in college preparation, supported, or accelerated classes based on their individual ability and need. GATE students are provided with accelerated learning opportunities through the IB and AP programs.

The entire staff is committed to providing opportunities for at-risk and special needs students to be involved in courses and activities that make them successful. For those students who are not succeeding in regular programs, there are a number of support systems in place. Appropriate placement in courses and support programs is an essential part of the guidance program. Examples include placement in math and language arts labs, learning strategies classes, or tutoring. An SST provides intervention for students who are at-risk. IEPs, 504 plans, or referrals for special education assessment may be developed through the SST process. Lack of attendance, poor grades, disruptive behavior, and emotional or health problems prompt intervention through a parent contact by teacher, counselor, administrator or an SST. The SST, consisting of parents, teachers, counselors, and the student, frames a plan to help the student be successful. (See Page 7, No. 7 for a more detailed description of interventions for students who are suspended.) Students who have disabilities qualifying them for accommodations under Section 504 are identified through referral by teachers, parents, or counseling staff. The 504 Plan identifies reasonable accommodations that will allow the student to be successful in all areas of the

instructional program. Students who are experiencing difficulty in school but do not qualify for special education services or 504 accommodations are identified as “at-risk,” and provided with appropriate intervention or accommodations. These could include placement in math or language labs, tutoring, modified instruction, extended time or other services.

Title I students are referred by teachers and counselors and are identified through review of standardized test scores, student grades, and other achievement data. Parents of students who are identified as being qualified for services enter into a compact with the school that identifies intervention strategies available for students and defines responsibilities necessary for student success. This includes tutoring services, frequent monitoring and reporting of student progress. Many teachers provide regular reports that are sent home with students. Phone calls home to parents are encouraged.

Counselors regularly review student progress and provide students who are off-track with opportunities to make up failed coursework through summer school and concurrent enrollment courses. YHS has maintained a 100% graduation rate for the past two years, and the high school dropout rate has tracked below 1% for the past five years. The school uses the “Shining Stars” program to provide positive reinforcement for students who maintain regular attendance. Students who maintain regular attendance for a period of time are eligible for prizes, including a computer at the end of the year.

Students have access to extended learning time through double period math classes, math labs, English labs, Title I tutoring, peer tutoring, and an after-school math intervention program. The library media center is open to students at lunch and through extended hours after school and includes a tutoring center. The labs provide a low student-teacher ratio, access to computers, and other resources for individualized instruction. Students who have failed to pass a portion of the CAHSEE may be provided with tutoring utilizing the *Chariot* online program. Students reading below grade level utilize the *Reading Rewards* program to improve skills. Students are referred for services by teachers, counselors, through the SST process, and upon student or parent request, with priority given to at-risk students.

Learning handicapped students are identified through formal assessment, and IEPs are developed to meet their individual learning needs with a focus on the student meeting the standards. The school is transitioning to a full-inclusion model. Students from the Resource Program (RSP), Special Day Class (SDC), or Severely Emotionally Disturbed (SED) class are placed in the least restrictive environment. Students are provided access to a standards-based curriculum. Teachers in mainstream classes work with RSP teachers and instructional aides to provide appropriate instruction and accommodations in order to achieve full-inclusion. Students participate in a wide variety of learning experiences including regular academic classes, vocational programs, fine arts, IB classes, and co-curricular activities. SDC and SED students are involved in mainstream classes to the extent that support for their special needs makes that possible. Students have full access to all programs. Students with learning handicaps participate in the IB program, and in some cases have graduated with a full IB diploma.

YHS usually has no more than two or three English Language Learners (ELL) per year as identified through annual administration of the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). These students are assigned to a staff member who has English as a Second Language training. Students with language barriers are provided support through an individual plan that accommodates their specific learning needs. ELL students are enrolled in regular courses, engage in standards-based instruction, and are closely monitored and supported to ensure that they are successful in acquiring language skills and meeting all graduation requirements.

YHS maintains a safe and orderly learning environment that is a source of pride to the school and the community. In a recent survey, 73% of students, 95% of parents, and 89% of staff indicated “YHS maintains a safe campus.” A safe schools plan is in place and is reviewed and updated annually. The school has taken a number of proactive steps to ensure that the campus remains safe. The school has a full-time school resource officer who provides campus supervision, responds to emergencies, and counsels students. Five campus supervisors patrol YHS during the school day, equipped with radios to communicate quickly with the school administrators. The school utilizes contraband detection dogs on

campus to deter drugs, alcohol, and weapons. The school has video-surveillance cameras in place. The district periodically has worked with the sheriff's department to place undercover narcotics officers at YHS; minimal drug activity has been detected on campus. The school has a peer mediation program that has been very successful at helping students resolve conflicts.

Issues such as sexual harassment are discussed in a health course, that all freshmen take, as well as in psychology courses. The health course also addresses a spectrum of physical and mental health issues and encourages students to learn how to make responsible decisions. A great importance is also placed on drug and alcohol education, nutrition, and other health habits. A sex education unit emphasizes abstinence and awareness about sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS. All students also complete a two-year core curriculum in physical education that focuses on life-long physical fitness activities. Students are further discouraged from using tobacco through an intervention program operated cooperatively with the probation department.

The school has a system of coordinated services to meet the social and emotional needs of students. This year the district made a significant commitment to provide services by hiring a Student Support Facilitator who works within the guidance department. She is a certified drug and alcohol counselor and provides services to students who may be at risk emotionally or with potential substance abuse issues. Support groups are available to help students deal with alcohol and substance abuse, tobacco prevention, anger management, and decision-making skills. Several agencies cooperate with the school to provide crisis counseling and health services to students. The district contracts for services to provide a registered school nurse and a licensed school psychologist. For mental health issues, there are several services and agencies to which students and their parents can be referred, such as the county mental health department, and child protective services. All staff members are made aware of services available to students and are encouraged to refer troubled students. There are three certified emergency medical technicians on the staff who respond to emergencies. The school also contracts with a local physical therapy office to provide a certified athletic trainer who provides services for athletes.

There is a schoolwide focus on health and safety. The "Healthy Kids Survey" is administered to all ninth and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students every other year, and results are included in the annual review of data. Students who are temporarily incapacitated due to illness or injury are provided with a home/hospital teacher who acts as a liaison between regular classroom teachers and the student while the student is out of school. Students who return on crutches may have their schedule adjusted to provide for less movement during the day, or they may have campus supervisors provide transportation in a golf cart.

The school has developed partnerships with various businesses and community agencies to provide services for students and their families. The school has a close working relationship with local mental health and social service agencies. YHS annually holds a two-day Challenge Day activity that focuses students, parents, and community members on building positive relationships. This activity is made possible by donations from local businesses and service organizations and a partnership grant from the Madera County Health Department. Every four years the school conducts a weeklong "Every 15 Minutes" program that focuses on drug and alcohol prevention. This is made possible through collaborative efforts of the Madera County Sheriff's Department, the California Highway Patrol, Sierra Ambulance, and other local agencies, businesses, and service organizations. The school also hosts an annual Sober Graduation activity that is sponsored by the school with involvement from a number of local businesses and government agencies.

YHS has developed high expectations for student behavior that are clearly articulated to all stakeholders through the student-parent handbook, staff handbook, and on the school Website. The school and the district have adopted policies that promote acceptable social behavior, attendance, and appropriate student dress. The school has taken proactive steps to reduce harassment, bullying, and other inappropriate behaviors through educational programs such as Challenge Day, peer mediation and staff training. Data shows that the school has a relatively low level of discipline problems.

**7. Support for Student Learning: School Culture and Engaging the School Community** Key concepts: \* school culture that supports student success in achieving standards \* support for students' growth and development \* school prepares students to be lifelong learners \* positive character traits, good citizenship, prevention of violence and bullying, and promotion of non-violent conflict resolution \* classes grouped heterogeneously to reflect demographics of the school \* students that feel a sense of connection to the school \* engaging families and the community in two way communication\* school helps families support student learning at home \* student service to the communities and service learning experiences \* community partnerships with the school \* physical environment reflects the importance of education in society.

*“The school feels safe and there is always someone you can turn to if you need someone to talk to.”*

*Comment from 2003-2004 student survey*

With a 100 percent graduation rate, YHS has demonstrated success in assisting all students to meet the state grade level standards. The number of students achieving proficient or above on the CST continues to grow and exceeds the statewide performance. Standards are imbedded in course outlines, identified on lesson plans, integrated into assessment tools, included in the district evaluation process, listed on the Website, and are posted in classrooms. The district Vision Statement and the ESLRs that define the school goals; educational priorities are posted throughout the campus. Annual school goals and revision of the school plan are based on the standards, ESLRs, an analysis of student achievement data, and the needs of students. Implementation of a two-year algebra curriculum, a double-period geometry class, math and English labs, tutoring, after-school programs, and AVID are examples of how the school adjusts to meet the needs of students. The district vision statement includes a goal for all students to become life-long learners. In terms of life and career planning, there is a progression that is followed by all students related to exploration of careers and life choices.

YHS has a number of programs in place to support student growth in social, emotional and physical domains. Social development is encouraged through participation in athletics, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. These activities give students the opportunity to develop leadership skills, learn to be team members, develop social skills and to interact with students from other schools and backgrounds. Emotional and physical growth is achieved through the many programs identified in the support section, helping students develop in ways that allow them to be their best through support, mediation skills, and acceptance of people who have different interests and backgrounds.

The school has made significant progress in developing positive character traits in students. The many clubs, organizations, and activities the school sponsors teach students citizenship, responsibility and trustworthiness. Interact and Key Club students work with adult members of Rotary and Kiwanis in mentoring and job shadowing. The peer mediation program provides students with the opportunity to develop conflict resolution skills and has had a dramatic impact on the number of incidents of violence and bullying. Students, staff, and community members' participation in Challenge Day has led to greater understanding and respect between students and adults. Staff training on the 40 Developmental Assets has raised their awareness of the importance of positive reinforcement.

There is open access to all courses and programs at YHS. Disaggregation of data shows that student enrollment in courses is representative of the demographics of the school. There is open access to IB and AP classes, and students are encouraged to self-select courses for which they have interest or aptitude. The AVID program has been implemented to encourage more students to take advanced courses to prepare them for college. Students enroll in courses that are non-traditional for their gender. Males regularly enroll in home economics courses, females in automotive, wood and welding classes. Females are on the wrestling and football teams, while males participate on the cheerleading squad. Because of the school's focus on inclusion, learning handicapped students attend mainstream classes. Some will complete UC a-g requirements and a few have graduated with full IB diplomas.

There are many academic programs and extracurricular activities that provide students with positive connections to the school and community. Drama, athletics, choir, band, Mock Trial, Academic Decathlon, student government, pep squad, school newspaper, yearbook, Interact Club, Key Club, FFA, FBLA and many other opportunities exist that allow students to experience success in meaningful activities. During the 2003-04 school year, 70% of students were involved in extracurricular activities, and 76% stated that they felt that the school provided sufficient opportunities for them to participate.

Many avenues exist for service-learning. Clubs and organizations are involved in service projects such as food drives, toy drives, blood drives, and other activities. School clubs are encouraged to do community service, and this is one of the criteria for the annual club of the year award. Students are also involved in service-learning projects in instructional programs. The photo-media, videography and EAST classes have done service-learning projects for school and community groups. The ROP Careers in Education and Peer Communications' Big Buddy/Little Buddy programs involve high school students with students at a nearby elementary school. Candidates for IB diplomas must perform 150 hours of community service over a two-year period. As a graduation requirement, students complete senior projects that often focus on community service. Senior projects have involved students volunteering in the local nursing home, Children's Hospital of Central California, and in elementary classrooms.

Students have opportunities to participate in a number of school decisions. Students have participated on graduation committees, the dress code committee, and were involved in the process of closing the campus several years ago. There is a student representative on the district board of trustees, and students are members of the site council and focus groups, and were involved in the Distinguished School process. Student government makes many of the decisions regarding student activities.

The school utilizes a number of strategies to communicate with families and community members. Progress reports are sent home six times per year and teachers regularly are given Friday morning "late start" time to phone parents of students. The school Website contains extensive information about school activities, programs, curriculum, policies, schedules, and student achievement, and is updated daily. The district publishes a newspaper supplement in the local newspaper six times a year. Special notices are sent home by mail, there are frequent articles in the local newspaper, and announcements are made on the local radio station. The student newspaper, published six times a year, is inserted in the local newspaper. All staff members have e-mail addresses and voice mail so parents can have two-way communication. Annual surveys are distributed to students, staff and parents. Administrators, counselors and teachers are available to meet with parents and students on an appointment basis. Translators are provided for non-English speaking parents when needed.

There is a high level of parent and community involvement in the school. Parents and community members regularly participate through advisory committees, textbook selection committees, site council, scholarship committees, WASC focus groups, and booster organizations. They also serve as mentors, in job shadowing, as volunteers, chaperones, on Senior Project boards, and in a number of other capacities. Parent attendance at events like Freshman Orientation, Back to School Night, Post Graduate Planning Night, and other activities is indicative of the high level of parental support the school enjoys. Athletic contests and theater arts and music performances are also highly attended. Collaborative efforts with businesses and service organizations are extensive, both in terms of monetary support and participation. There is extensive involvement with the community through joint service-learning projects with local service organizations. Students work with community members who serve as mentors on senior projects. A local business hosts the annual academic awards night for valedictorians, and local businesses and service organizations award well over \$100,000 per year in scholarships. Local voters overwhelmingly passed an \$11.76 million school construction bond in 1998 and a community benefactor has made a \$1 million pledge for construction of the swimming pool.

Yosemite High School is the center of the mountain community and is a source of pride for students, staff and residents alike. All stakeholders are committed to providing students the best education possible in a safe, caring environment.