

**LIMITED-TERM REVISIT
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

FOR

BERKELEY TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY

**2701 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Berkeley, CA 94709**

Berkeley Unified School District

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Visiting Committee Members

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I. Introduction

Include the following:

- **General comments about the school and its setting and the school's analysis of student achievement data.**
- **Significant changes or developments that have affected the school since the last visit.**

Berkeley Technology Academy (B-Tech) is a continuation school that offers students in the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) a high school diploma program for both students in need of an involuntary placement due to a violation of Education Code 48900 and for those students credit deficient looking for a voluntary school placement. B-Tech serves over 150 students per year. Enrollment usually hovers around 150. More than half of the students enrolled are in the 12th grade. Approximately 30-40 percent of B-Tech 12th grade students start their time at B-Tech as 12th graders. Nearly sixty percent of the students are a part of the federal free/reduced lunch program.

Due to the impact of violence and truancy in their lives, most students arrive at Berkeley Tech often detached from the idea that school is their responsibility and that there is a place that wants them to be in the classrooms. Last years CAHSEE results show at least a 70% passing rate for students over last year. B-Tech students increased their 2010 API by 131 points.

Since the visit, there have been several major changes:

- Berkeley Tech welcomed a new principal, Ms. Sheila Quintana, who has served as a site administrator for seven years in other districts.
- A new counselor, Ms. Clark and several new teachers have joined the staff.
- A full time truancy officer / attendance clerk monitors student truancy and contacts parents when students are absent.
- The school benefits from a large surge in instructional materials and technology. The school has textbooks for the first time, and all students have workbooks at home.
- Berkeley Tech has partnered with Berkeley High School with a new ROP program, which provides CTE funding and a new 27-iMac computer workstations.
- Berkeley Tech has added additional structure to the PLC on campus, by adding

additional assessment data to drive instruction.

- To address the social-emotional well being of students, B-Tech has partnered with several agencies and programs.

The school is now in its first full year of using a 4x4 block schedule to provide students with more opportunities to earn 80 credits a year.

II. Follow-up Process

- **Description of the follow-up process, including a description of the committee that has been responsible for overseeing the progress of the school’s action plan and preparing the visit.**

Berkeley Tech has a five-member WASC team, composed of the principal, counselor, math instructor, social science instructor, and English instructor. The team collaborates around the planning, writing and implementation of the WASC plan. They are very conscientious, and have taken this process very seriously. The WASC team used the WASC process as a way to identify areas of needs, construct a plan to address instruction and student systems, and prepare the WASC report. All members of the WASC team are slated to serve on WASC Visiting Committees in other schools to increase their understanding of the WASC process. To date, both the principal and counselor have attended WASC Visiting Committee Member training, and they have shared the resources gathered at the training with other staff members. To ensure WASC is an embedded process, a WASC report is shared during every PLC meeting. In addition to site support, the district has taken an active role in planning and implementing WASC by joining the B-Tech WASC team and volunteering to serve on a WASC Visiting Committee Team.

III. School’s Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up

- A. Comment on the accomplishment of each schoolwide action plan section, noting how the critical areas for follow-up have been incorporated. Include pertinent comments on the impact on student achievement.**

#1. Berkeley Tech has made progress on addressing ESLRs and integrating them into school process and procedure:

The new leadership has been actively working with the staff to integrate the ESLRs into the school action plans. The ESLRs are posted throughout the school in classrooms and offices. It is also clear by reading their action plan that the ESLRs are a clear part of their community.

#2 The school should consider having members of the WASC team participate in WASC visits to other schools as members of visiting committees.

Each member of the WASC Team has volunteered to serve on WASC Visiting Committee Teams. To date, the principal and counselor have already attended the training and they have shared the resources and information with other staff members.

#3 Standardized test scores were not given the attention they needed nor were they utilized to help guide school practices.

The counselor and staff ensured that students on the CBEDS list participated in the testing cycle, although all B-Tech students are required to participate in state assessments.

The PLCs disaggregate data from the CAHSEE, CELDT, and CST to guide instruction. The school currently uses local benchmark assessments and data from eCAHSEE to individualize instruction. They plan to design their own benchmark exams next year. The PLCs also create action plans with SMART goals to drive modification of daily instruction to improve student achievement.

#4 The District needed to help B-Tech with making decisions.

B-Tech is very supported by the school district.

- The Superintendent meets monthly with the principal for school coaching.
- The office of the Director of Student Services and Berkeley Assessment and Evaluation Department worked with B-Tech during the construction of their report.
- The district has provided financial support to maintain the low teacher-student ratio. Berkeley Technology Academy also received \$5,331.00 from the Berkeley Education Foundation Classroom Grant.

#5 Student attendance and accountability- B-Tech needed more communication with parents and students about student responsibility for attendance and requirements for post-secondary education.

B-Tech welcomed a full time Student Welfare and Student Attendance Specialist. This new addition provides support to address daily and chronic student truancy. There is now a system in place to address student attendance.

1. Truancy Letter #1, explains the importance of daily attendance and the need to be on time.
2. Truancy Letter #2 requires a student-parent meeting at the school site and a behavior contract with clear incentives and consequences.
3. Truancy Letter #3, SART contract with the possibility of a SARB referral and/or referral to the District Attorney's office.

In addition to the Attendance Specialist, each staff member retains a paper and electronic log to monitor calls home around student attendance. Staff members and the principal have also make home visits.

#6 Drug issues continue to be a problem at B-Tech.

B-Tech has made a conscious effort to address the whole child, in addition to maintaining high standards for academics. In order to address the issues around student substance abuse, B-Tech has maintained and formed new liaisons with community partnerships. The following is a list of a few of the relationships formed to provide student support:

- This year B-Tech welcomes C.O.R.E of Children's Hospital Oakland; C.O.R.E. stands for Counseling, Outreach, Relationships, and Education. This program provides six professional women to B-Tech (four social workers and two clinical psychologists) who provides counseling services to students.
- Ms. Georgette Cobbs of New Bridge's ASPIRE (Adolescents, Services, Providing Inspiration, Recovery and Education) program is on campus every Tuesday and Thursday. ASPIRE is a highly regarded drug addiction treatment and recovery agency. Ms. Cobbs provides classroom presentations, one-on-one counseling and group counseling. Ms Cobbs recently wrote a grant that will now pay for her to be on campus five days a week.
- Berkeley High School Health Center provides young adults information by giving classroom presentations, providing STD screening and birth control, and information regarding healthy relationships.

- The Berkeley Police Department’s Gang Awareness Task Force gave an intense professional development session one Wednesday.
- B-Tech has hired a full time Drug and Alcohol Coordinator to work with students individually to address substance abuse.
- TUPE (Tobacco Use Prevention Education) provides group sessions and cessation activities.
- The district now assumes students suffer from PTSD and therefore supports these various mental health support systems.

#7 B-Tech continues to collaborate with Community Based Organizations to help their families overcome violence and provide therapeutic services and/or connect families to these services.

B-Tech has a number of progressive relationships with programs that offer education to students around the area of violence:

- The entire staff has adopted the “ALIVE and FREE...AND EDUCATED” prescription curriculum from the Omega Boys Club to address students psychological, communal, and social needs. The program teaches students about the cycle of violence, abuse, and destructive language. The B-Tech staff has adopted the norms as well as coordinated professional development for all staff around the curriculum. The students currently receive instruction utilizing Dr. Joe Marshall’s of Omega Boys Club within all six B-Tech English courses to ensure that it reaches the entire student population.
- B-Tech has a new relationship with the YMCA/PG&E Teen Center Mentor Program, which provides homework assistance and tutoring B-Tech students who are parents receive extra support through the Vera Casey Project, which supports pregnant teens

#8 B-Tech will continue to target our efforts with the Berkeley Health Center to help reduce high-risk behaviors—namely, teen pregnancy and drug use.

B-Tech students benefit from the services of nurse practitioner, Ms. Tamara Goode, who works in the on-site Health Center. The Health Center provides lessons and information regarding safe sex, alcohol, tobacco, nutrition, and mental health. The Health Center also implemented an STI drive, and information regarding HIV and AIDS transmission. Students also receive medical treatment from the Health Center staff. The B-Tech Health Services Clinic provides:

- First Aid services for everyone

- Injuries
- HIA
- Cramps
- Triage Primary Care health concerns including dental, mental health, chronic health conditions, immunizations, etc. Helps students to establish a medical home for their non-primary care provider for longer-term continued care.
- Sexual Health Services: Starting and managing birth control, pregnancy counseling, sexual decision making counseling, B/C option counseling and screening for and treating STDs.
- Helping students, and their families, get health insurance.
- Health fairs, health education presentations/workshops in classes, campus outreach and bi-annual STD Testing Drive.
- General Health Counseling: Nutrition, Drug and Alcohol Intervention, relationships, stress management and appropriate referrals.
- Students have access to condoms and may schedule office visits.

#9 BUSD should follow the lead of B-Tech in providing Career Technology Education opportunities for students.

BUSD has greatly expanded the school Career Technology Education to students by completing the following action steps:

I. The Superintendent's office created a BUSD Career Technology Education (CTE) Advisory Committee. B-Tech is a member of this Advisory Committee. They meet once per month to identify pathways for B-Tech and BHS students to explore a variety of careers and professions in the world of industry.

a. The Committee has signed a joint labor agreement with 38 unions to provide pre-internships for students. Upon graduation, the students will have access to paid internships. The superintendent was very instrumental with this process. By meeting with the trade unions and organizing a structured partnership. The following plans have been created to give students access to internships:

- i. In the month of January 2012, the CTE Advisory and the Steamfitters' Union sponsored a bus trip to Concord for B-Tech students to explore career opportunities.
- ii. Members of the Steamfitters' Union will visit B-Tech to talk to students about various career options as well.

- b. CTE within the district is being addressed though:
 - i. Closer collaboration with the Adult School to provide opportunities for B-Tech students to enroll in CTE classes already available. To date, B-Tech has enrolled eight students in Berkeley Adult School.
 - ii. BUSD opened up Berkeley High ROP sections to B-Tech students. To date, B-Tech has three students concurrently enrolled in Sports Medicine at BHS.
- c. In terms of what B-Tech has continued to do with CTE/ROP opportunities:
 - i. B-Tech has acquired a new iMac Lab with 27 workstations.
 - ii. The school offers Microsoft Office Suites (MOS) certification classes.
 - iii. The certifications are offered with three levels of mastery. Each level allows the student upon completion of the certification to enter the world of work immediately. B-Tech LEARNS after school program provides additional career pathways for our students in the fields cosmetology, fashion design, early childhood, barbershop, art design, and culinary arts

B. Recommendations: Priority and/or Additional Areas for Improvement

- **Write recommendations stating where additional attention is needed in the action plan regarding previous areas for improvement.**
- **Identify new concerns, if applicable.**

1. It was recommended for B-Tech to submit course approval for UC/CSU A-G approval.

To date, B-Tech has completed the “New School Information Form” and is waiting for a response. The VC strongly encourages B-Tech to continue with this process, until all academic courses receive UC/CSU approval and are listed on the UC Doorways, which is the public list of approved courses.

2. The school should investigate an option that will enable students to earn a diploma with less than 220 credits.

The school has strengthened its relationship with Berkeley Adult School, which provides a diploma program with 180 credits. Students who need an option for a diploma with less than 220 credits and are 18 years old may now attend Berkeley Adult School. The school has also adopted a 4x4 Block schedule to provide students with more opportunities to earn 80 credits a year, versus 60 credits. In addition to the structures offered during the school day, B-Tech has started a program called Summer School Now, which allows students to earn credits after school.

3. The school needs to explore the possibilities of Power School with respect to documenting student information.

The staff and parents have received training on Power School to allow an expanded use of the program. Staff members have learned how to document academic interventions on Power School. Parents also have access to student grades and attendance on a daily basis.

4. The school is still becoming familiar with the WASC process and how it is complimentary to what they are already doing on site.

Every member of the WASC team has volunteered to serve on WASC Visiting Committees at other school sites.

5. B-Tech may want to revisit their mission statement and ESLRs as they continue the self-study process.

The school plans to revisit their mission statement and ESLRs during their three year self study.

6. B-Tech should continue with the PLC, but strengthen the structure with common learning goals supported by common assessments that measure student learning. Perhaps they should include a cycle of inquiry and data evaluation upon which they will base their changes.

The school has restructured the PLCs to include student data to drive the conversation and goals of the PLCs. The PLCs are highly collaborative and meet on a regular basis to update their progress and continue the cycle of inquiry.

7. B-Tech needs formalized communication to students so they know where they stand with graduation progress. This documentation needs to be available and accessible to all stakeholders in the students' progress.

The new counselor has created a very clear system called the ISP (Individual School Plan) that allows students and their parents to clearly view their progress with completing the graduation requirements. Each student meets with the counselor and receives a copy of their ISP.

8. As B-Tech restructure and reorganize their processes, they should consider attaching tasks to a position, not to a specific human. Some processes seem to be falling through the cracks because people are being assigned to complete things instead of it being a job responsibility.

The new principal has ensured that each completes their assigned job duties, and systems are in place according to the staff position, not the person.

In other situations it appears that collaboration is not being used to maximize use of time spent in Friday afternoon meetings for PLC endeavors.

B-Tech changed their weekly schedule so collaboration now happens on Wednesdays instead of Friday afternoons.

Commendations Related to Progress: Note and report on significant progress the school has made in responding to the critical areas for follow-up and in carrying out the related action plan.

1. The B-Tech community has selected a very strong and focused leader, Ms. Sheila Quintana, has positively influenced the school in a short period of time.
2. The district has provided a wealth of knowledge, resources, and support to B-Tech.
3. The staff is very committed to B-Tech students, and addresses the challenges that may influence health or hinder instruction.
4. The WASC team has taken the WASC process seriously, and has embedded the accreditation process into their school culture. The team has used the process to identify areas of need, and create structures to address instruction and student support systems.
5. Instruction is rigorous and relevant, and speaks to the learning needs of the students. Data is utilized to guide curriculum and instruction.
6. Students receive a wealth of services that address their social-emotional development. This ranges from the “Alive and Free” curriculum, peer education, medical services, therapy, and more.
7. Teachers are organized in a PLC model. The PLCs are highly collaborative, and use assessment data to guide curriculum and instruction. Professional development is teacher centered and utilizes the expertise of the in-house staff.

8. In a short period of time, the school has updated the infrastructure. The school now has textbooks and instructional materials, window coverings, new furniture, and a new iMac lab.
9. The college and career opportunities have greatly expanded. The school has submitted the proper paperwork for UC A-G course approval. A third year of math has been added in addition to two levels of a foreign language.
10. The campus offers CTE and ROP instruction that is relevant to current market demands.
11. The district has created a structured relationship with 38 local trade unions; to give B-Tech graduates access to internships that may lead to viable careers. The city of Berkeley passed a bond measure in 2010 that provides 15 million dollars to offer career technology education, and the superintendent has targeted B-Tech as one of the beneficiaries of this new program.
12. The school has implemented a 4x4 block schedule and an after school program entitled "Summer School Now" that allows credit remediation.
13. B-Tech has a new Truancy Officer and a system for addressing student truancy. The students share that this system is working and their attendance has drastically improved.

Recommendations

B-Tech has new leadership and has made numerous gains. During the next WASC study, which is the three-year revisit, we recommend that B-Tech revise the current ESLRs with measureable outcomes that reflect the current school community.