

**WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES  
CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**THREE-YEAR TERM REVISIT  
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**FOR**

**BERKELEY TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY**

**2701 Martin Luther King Jr. Way**

**Berkeley CA 94702**

**Berkeley Unified School District**

**April 15-16, 2013**

**Visiting Committee Members**

**Dr. John Bernard, Chairperson**

**Superintendent / State Administrator (retired)**

**Mr. Yanik Ruley**

**Principal, Merlo Institute of Environmental Technology**

**Stockton Unified School District**

## **I. Introduction**

**General comments about the school and its setting and the school's analysis of student achievement data.**

Berkeley Technology Academy (B-Tech) is a continuation high 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, as well as the students with credit deficiencies seeking a voluntary school placement.

B-Tech serves over 150 students per year. Enrollment is usually around 130. More than half of the students enrolled are in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Approximately 30-40 percent of B-Tech 12<sup>th</sup> grade students start their instruction at B-Tech as 12<sup>th</sup> graders. Nearly 56 percent of the students are a part of the federal free/reduced lunch program, and more than 15 percent are English Language Learners. The composition of the B-Tech student body is predominantly students of color: African American (63%), Hispanic Latino (22%), Other, including two or more races (7%), Asian (4%), White (4%).

Due to the impact of violence and truancy in their lives, many students arrive at B-Tech often detached from the idea that school is their responsibility and that there is a place that requires them to be in the classrooms in front of direct instruction daily. B-Tech has identified several students that are traumatized and suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD).

B-Tech does not have a large enough student population taking the CAHSEE in 10<sup>th</sup> grade due to enrollment; as such, B-Tech does not have an Academic Performance Index (API). However, in the 2011-12 school year 84 students (including students re-taking the test) took the CAHSEE Math, and 32% passed, and 61 students (including students re-taking the test) took the CAHSEE English Language Arts (ELA) test and 34% passed.

When comparing 2010-2012 CST scores, B-Tech:

- reduced the percent of students scoring below & far below basic, from 100% to 90% for Algebra I,
- reduced the percent of students scoring below & far below basic from 89% to 78% for English Language Arts
- reduced the percent of students scoring below & far below basic from 92% to 77% for U.S. History, and increased the percent of students scoring proficient & advanced from 4% to 5%.

**Significant changes or developments that have affected the school since the last visit.**

B-Tech has participated in WASC visits and revisits annually since 2010:

- March 2010 - Self-Study Visiting Committee Report was completed
- February 2011 - Limited-Term Revisit Report was completed, and
- March 2012 - Limited-Term Revisit Report was completed.

1. B-Tech has made progress on addressing their ESLRs. During 2012-13 the ESLRs were updated after being approved by Staff-Professional Learning Committee (PLC), School Governance Council (SGC), and their Parent/Teacher/Student/Association (PTSA).
2. All B-Tech staff members are part of the B-Tech WASC committee, and four B-Tech staff members have participated on Site Visiting Teams for other schools.
3. The Staff PLCs meet weekly on the Wednesday school minimum day to review and restructure curriculum and assessments.
4. The B-Tech staff is incorporating high frequency academic language across all content areas to improve the rigor in the curriculum, to prepare student for secondary opportunities, and to more closely align their practices with neighboring Berkeley High School.
5. The Staff PLCs are disaggregating data from CAHSEE and CST sections to determine where course instruction or assessment need to be changed. Staff now utilizes *Illuminate*, which allows teachers access to their current students' standardized test scores e.g. CAHSEE & STAR.
6. B-Tech recently received "A-G" approval for UC Berkeley's "Doorways". This approval applies from 2007 to current school year.

## **II. Follow-up Process**

**Briefly comment upon the school's process for follow-up, including the capacity of the school to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the areas for improvement as recommended by the previous visiting committee.**

For 2012-13 the B-Tech WASC Committee was expanded to include B-Tech's entire faculty and some of B-Tech's staff for individual input and expertise in writing the updates for each section.

The WASC Committee 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. The WASC Committee have participated and supported the reviewing, editing, re-writing, and implementation of the WASC plan.

More members of the WASC Committee are slated to serve on WASC Visiting Committees in other schools to crease their understanding of the WASC Process. To date, four B-Tech WASC Committee members have participated on Site Visiting Teams for other schools: the principal, the social studies instructor, the math instructor, and the counselor. In addition to site support, the District has taken an active role in planning and implementing WASC by joining the B-Tech WASC Committee 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 school-wide 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 progress on addressing ESLRs and integrating them into school process and procedure:**

B-Tech has made progress on addressing their ESLRs and integrating them into school process and procedures. During 2012-13 the ESLRs, per approval from WASC, were updated after being approved by Staff-Professional Learning Committee (PLC), School Governance Council (SGC), and their Parent/Teacher/Student Association (PTSA):

**Berkeley Technology Academy's Expected School-Wide Learning Results (ESLRs):**  
**Upon completion of high school, Berkeley Technology Academy students will become more ...**

**Literate**

- **Literate Students:**
  - Think critically and problem solve
  - Demonstrate growth in multiple academic disciplines
  - Communicate and receive ideas effectively through reading, writing, listening, speaking and visual representations
  - Value life-long learning
  - Apply 21st Century technological competencies

**Healthy**

- **Healthy Students**
  - Show respect for themselves, others, and the environment
  - Are responsible for their action, the choices that they make and for the resulting outcomes
  - Possess effective social skills and manage conflict constructively
  - Are active and positive members in their communities who seek ways to serve or give back
  - Are proactive in the use of appropriate tools to avoid destructive behaviors or lifestyles

**Involved**

- **Involved Students:**
  - Explore a variety of career pathways and post-secondary educational opportunities and construct realistic career goals based on interest and ability
  - Discover their unique talents and abilities and utilize them to passionately advocate for themselves and their communities
  - Understand the connection between school, family, and the community
  - Can advocate for themselves in a post-secondary academic community and in the world of work
  - Develop and utilize resources that are culturally and linguistically authentic in order to reach their potential

The ESLRs are posted throughout the school in classrooms and offices. It is clear by reading their action plan that the ESLRs are a clear part of the B-Tech school community.

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

Members of the faculty WASC Committee are slated to serve on WASC Visiting Committees in other schools to crease their understanding of the WASC Process. To date, four B-Tech WASC Committee members have participated on Site Visiting Teams for other schools: the principal, the social studies instructor, the math instructor, and the counselor. In addition to site support, the District has taken an active role in planning and implementing WASC by joining the B-Tech WASC Committee and volunteering to serve on a WASC Visiting Committee Team.

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

To improve participation rates, B-Tech is using strategies that have established clear testing protocols for the CAHSEE and CSTs; e.g. in the weeks prior to the testing window, the counselor and the entire staff will encourage all students to take their exams, especially those listed CBEDS students, and impress upon them the importance of their participation and test-taking.

B-Tech's PLCs look at disaggregated data on CAHSEE and CST sections to determine where course instruction or assessment needs to change through *DataWise*. The review process involves each teacher accessing the summative data from the *DataWise* program, and pull individual student or class groups of student's results on CST, CAHSEE, CELDT, and Benchmark assessments. These data are used during an Academic Conference with our PLC to identify where students show mastery or challenges with the standards aligned with the core curriculum.

B-Tech's student population of mostly 12th<sup>th</sup> graders focuses on the CAHSEE, not the CST's, which are taken in earlier grades. B-Tech's 11th<sup>th</sup> grade students have access to the Early Assessment Program Subtest of the CST. Students are counseled to complete the CAHSEE through the B-Tech Individualized Progress Plan (BIPP). In addition, courses are available for CAHSEE preparation in Math, English, and through Cyber High. B-Tech also purchased curriculum for preparation for the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) from KAPLAN.

B-Tech continues to use a "4 by 4 Block Schedule" model, which provides both tangible and intangible structures and mechanisms to successfully serve our students. Among these structures are such features as:

- fewer transitions due to reduced passing periods,
- fewer opportunities for students to "wander" away from campus and miss instruction,
- calmer campus as a result of far fewer transitions,
- increased attendance and reduced disciplinary incidents,

- more concentrated and in-depth lessons due to fewer subjects being assigned at any given time as compared to more traditional 6 or 7 daily period high schools,
- higher quality connection with adult educators by virtue of longer class time with fewer instructors at a time,
- more opportunity for “credit recovery” provided to students who have fallen behind their cohorts.

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

B-Tech is very supported by the school district.

The principal participates in district meetings with other principals and district staff as needed to advocate and report on B-Tech’s needs.

BUSD continues to increase the amount of support for facilities at B-Tech, including the Derby Field Project Update (across the street from B-Tech), and B-Tech will be able to use the field exclusively during the day program and share with BHS after school.

The Berkeley Evaluation and Assessment (BEA) department were instrumental in training staff on Illuminate, and providing data for this report.

Berkeley Public Education Foundation (BPEF) offers classroom grant awards that provide additional funds for school-based projects to improve student achievement. In 2012-2013, B-Tech received a total \$5,004.00 in grants to B-Tech staff.

#### **#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.**

The Student Welfare & Attendance Specialist shares responsibility for parent contact along with teachers, but specifically coordinates student attendance data and reporting, targets students with severe attendance issues, and works with students and guardians to create a plan and provide interventions to decrease high absenteeism. B-Tech now implements the following process for students with attendance issues:

- Students, who are absent from 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Block during instruction, receive a phone call home to inquiry about this absence.
- Students absent for the entire school day, receive another call home to inquiry about their absence.
- Students obtaining three or more unverified absences receive their first truancy letter.
- Students obtaining six or more unverified absences receive their second truancy

letter and must participate in a Student Intervention Team (SIT) meeting. They will be placed on an attendance behavior contract.

- Students, who continue in their truant behavior, will receive a third letter of truancy. They must attend a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) meeting with their families, placed on another contract, and referred to the district-level Student Attendance Review Board (SARB). SARB will hold a hearing with consequences that may include a fine paid by the parent or guardian and/or referral to the District Attorney's office.

#### **#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 list is an example of the many relationships formed to provide student support:

- Partnership with Children's Hospital of Oakland "Counseling, Outreach, Relationships, and Education" (CORE) Program
- ASPIRE program of New Bridge Foundation
- B-Tech is now a Tobacco-Use Prevention Education (TUPE) site for Alameda County
- Alameda County Office of Education provided the services of renown marijuana expert Ralph Cantor to provide presentations to students and staff

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

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

- The entire B-Tech staff has adopted the "ALIVE and FREE . . . AND EDUCATED" prescription curriculum from the Omega Boys Club to address students' psychological, communal and social needs. By teaching them about cycles of violence, abuse, and destructive language students are able to pursue secondary opportunities and interact with others in their community in a positive way.
- A new connection and partnership recently emerged with the YMCA/PG&E Teen Center Mentor Program. The director of the YMCA/PG&E and one of their coordinators addressed the whole B-Tech staff and dialogue has started to involve our students in this program, including access to their homework and tutoring services, as well as their developing mentor program.

- Tutoring through Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church
- BPEF School Volunteers to assist with student mastery of curriculum in the classroom
- McGee Avenue Baptist Church toiletry gift bags and gift cards for our homeless students.

**#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 a nurse practitioner, who works in the on-site Health Center three days per week.

The Health Center provides Students provides lessons and information regarding risky behaviors, safe sex, alcohol, tobacco, nutrition, and mental health. The Health Center has also implemented a Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) drive, and information about HIV, AIDS, and other diseases through the Health Center.

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.
- Men and women's health issues.
- 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.
- Weekly tabling to offer condoms and schedule office visits



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

BUSD has expanded the School to Career Technology Education to students by completing the following:

- BUSD created a BUSD Career technology Education (CTE) Advisory Committee on that meets 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. B-Tech is a member of this committee.
- B-Tech now employs three teachers in the field of CTE.
- B-Tech partnered with the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) ROP program. Through CTE funding, B-Tech purchased twenty-seven new iMac computer workstations in 2011; located in our Lab in Room 130. The BUSD CTE Director approved the creation of another iMac Lab for 128. The lab will be on-line by the end of April 2013.
- Mini computer labs were installed in three (3) classrooms for English, Math and CTE to support individualized and differentiated instruction for students and make the main iMac lab more accessible for whole class projects.
- The BUSD has signed a joint labor agreement with 39 unions to provide pre-internships and internships for our students. Upon graduation, the students will have access to paid internships.
- BUSD School Board has approved several new CTE courses currently being offered to B-Tech students.
  - Computer Applications I & II (Elective). The course provides Microsoft Office Suites training to obtain three levels of certification in Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.
  - Entrepreneurship: Business Economics (G - Advanced Elective). The course teaches principles of Economics while supporting the development plans for the creation of small businesses.
  - Early Childhood Education (Elective). The course provides curriculum and internships in Early Childhood education with BUSD elementary schools.
  - Computer Art – Animation (G – Advanced Elective). This course teaches art history and animation techniques. It moves into computerized art to write and animate stories.
  - Computer Art – Video (G – Advanced Elective). This course provides introductory coursework on video production with a focus on web-based video episodes.

- Computerized Accounting (Elective). This course provides introductory accounting knowledge and skills to prepare student for entry-level bookkeeping and accounting careers.

**B. Recommendations: Priority and/or Additional Areas for Improvement: Identify and note any areas that need to be given priority for the school's ongoing improvement. (This may also include critical areas for follow-up.) Identify new areas of concern, if applicable.**

1. Pursue providing District-led staff development/coaching to ensure that teaching strategies maximize student engagement.
2. Pursue the creation of a modified closed campus in order to:
  - a. Eliminate end-of-lunch tardies and maximize teaching time
  - b. Improve quality of lunch; both selection and portions
3. Pursue exploring, with District support, an agreement with California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) that allows B-Tech students to participate in Berkeley High School Sports.
4. Pursue having the B-Tech counselor and/or principal participate in transition meetings with students coming to B-Tech from BHS, and having a counselor from BHS participate in transition meetings with students planning to return from B-Tech to BHS.
5. Pursue providing psycho-social support for students at B-Tech who suffer from social/emotional conditions: e.g. Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder (PTSD), parents returning from incarceration, etc.
6. To improve communication, collegiality and articulation, include the B-Tech administration in the weekly meetings with Berkeley High School administration.

**C. 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.**

Based on the progress report and confirmed by the Visiting Committee, it appears that Berkeley Technology Academy has made important progress on implementing its action plan and in addressing the Critical Areas for Follow-up, cited by the Visiting Committee in 2010, and the Revisiting Committees of 2011 & 2012. This present committee feels that the following commendations are deserved:

- 1) The principal of the school has been instrumental in bringing about important changes and improvements, and has developed a relationship with the District leadership that B-Tech staff view as greatly improved. Her efficient preparation included the involvement of the entire B-Tech staff in the WASC process. Her staff has also acknowledged her for her transparent leadership and guiding the staff in creating a more nurturing environment for students.
- 2) Every student meets with the counselor and principal to review their academic progress & Individual Learning Plan (ILP) to determine if they are on track for graduation.
- 3) B-Tech has received "A-G" approval for UC Berkeley's "Doorways". This approval applies from 2007 to current school year.