

CHAPTER THREE

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY ROP WASC PROGRESS REPORT

Introduction

Following the 2004 WASC visit, Contra Costa County ROP regularly reviewed the Action Plan goals and objectives while monitoring the economic and demographic changes occurring in the region. The Leadership team focused on the data collection and analysis goal, while other staff with appropriate expertise developed the tools to accomplish the marketing goal. Progress on the Action Plan goals and related changes or barriers that developed encompassed much of the discussion at leadership and staff meetings. ROP accomplished huge gains in some goal areas and gains in smaller increments in others. As this section illustrates, Contra Costa County ROP is always moving forward to meet the needs of the districts and students we serve.

Significant Changes or Developments Since the 2004 Visit

Although some school districts continue to experience declining enrollment, demand for ROP programs continues to grow and to exceed the ROP cap. Contra Costa County ROP has addressed this demand by maintaining a primary focus on the career development needs of high school juniors and seniors, with a secondary focus on accelerated sophomores. Recently, however, a second challenge emerged on the high school campuses. Due to the ongoing budget crisis many high schools have eliminated the career foundation courses that lead into ROP. ROP is determining how best to bridge the gap in knowledge among juniors and seniors who have not had access to foundation courses while continuing to push accelerated students to new levels of achievement. ROP is also determining ways to help high schools fill the gap in awareness about the array of future careers among their ninth and tenth graders.

ROP expanded high school programs and reduced adult training programs in order to meet state requirements to lower adult enrollment. The addition of Piedmont High and Emery High in Alameda County and Dougherty Valley High and Heritage High in Contra Costa County increased to 32 the total number of high schools ROP serves. Meanwhile, the number of ROP Adult sites decreased from 9 to 3, and the following program changes also occurred:

- ROP Adult programs closing since the 2004-05 school year include: Computer Applications classes in Richmond, Rodeo, San Pablo, Pleasant Hill, and Antioch; Culinary Careers in Antioch; Certified Nurse Assistant in Walnut Creek; and Cosmetology. When adults call about training ROP no longer offers, they are directed to adult schools or community colleges that provide the training they seek.
- One new health class leading to EMT certification was opened for two years.

New ROP high school courses added since the 2004-05 school year include:

- Advanced Digital Design
 - Automotive Technician (NATEF)
 - Communication Media (Advanced)
 - Community Service Professions
 - Computer Programming/Science - Advanced
 - Database Design & Management
 - Developmental Psychology of Children
 - Digital Recording Studio
 - Emergency Medical Careers – First Responder
 - EMT – Emergency Medical Technician
 - Engineering, Introduction to
 - Engineering, Principles of
 - Forensic Science (Analytical)
 - Government Services Internship
 - Internet & Database Programming
 - Introduction to Engineering
 - Introduction to Law
 - Landscaping Maintenance
 - Law, Introduction to
 - Medical Terminology
 - Photography
 - Photography, Digital
 - Play Production
 - Principles of Engineering
 - Sports Medicine (Advanced)
 - Veterinary Science
 - Video Broadcasting
 - Web Development & Programming
- All of the ROP course outlines have been updated to include the CTE standards. ROP course outlines now include the ESLRs in their performance objectives.

The 32 high schools that ROP serves include those at the top of the performance scale as well as those at the bottom. The schools represent ethnic and language diversity, as well as a broad range of parental income levels and educational attainment. ROP utilized this information to plan the programs offered at each high school to ensure that ROP course offerings enhanced each student's skill development.

Due to the popularity of ROP course offerings among the high school population, ROP ADA soared over this six-year period. As the data below illustrates, Adult ADA declined by nearly 300, while High School ADA increased by over 760.

	<u>P-2 ADA</u> <u>2004-05</u>	<u>P-2 ADA</u> <u>2006-07</u>	<u>P-2 ADA</u> <u>2008-09</u>
High School	2,309.82	2,903.93	3,071.34
Adult	<u>711.56</u>	<u>430.65</u>	<u>427.17</u>
	3,021.38	3334.58	3,498.50

“My ROP class helped me receive training that makes me competitive and gives me an advantage whenever I am working in a lab (school or outside of school).”

*ROP Student
Biotechnology*

Financial Resources

Over the six-year period, in addition to ADA revenue and CDE grants, ROP also benefited from increased support from industry partners. A few examples include the following:

Chevron Corporation

- Provided a full-time instructor for the highly successful ROP Process Plant Operator training program at Alvarado Adult School in Richmond.
- Granted \$500,000 to develop new and expand current ROP science classes.
 - 10 new science classes benefited from state-of-the-art equipment
 - 10 existing science classes benefited from updated equipment
 - Chevron advisors supported program development
- Granted \$50,000 to develop a Career Guidance network across the region.
 - District career technicians from 30 high schools joined the network and received career guidance materials and software for their career centers
 - Experienced career technicians mentored new techs
 - The network continues



- Granted \$100,000 to continue to expand engineering and science classes and to continue to expand career guidance in high schools through the ROP/high school career guidance network.
- Granted \$15,000 to implement ROP summer course for students interested in engineering. The course will be offered during the summer of 2010 in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District.

Citibank

- Granted \$10,000 to increase career awareness experiences for low-income students in ROP classes at two low-performing high schools. The transportation provided enabled these students to take field trips to see careers in action, and Citibank representatives helped students learn about finance through classroom presentations.
- Granted an additional \$10,000 to expand career awareness experience to additional students at two low performing high schools. This money was used to pay for transportation and entrance fees to locations throughout the Bay Area that were requested by ROP teachers at the selected schools. This funding supported students by providing community experiences. The goal of this grant is for underserved students to learn about college and the college application process.
- Granted \$15,000 to expand career awareness experiences to students at two additional low performing high schools. Again this funding targeted low-income, culturally and language diverse high school juniors and seniors. It was used to provide enrichment opportunities within their community to see the variety of career pathways available.

Additional Partners

Bank of America
 Bridgestone Firestone Corporation
 Contra Costa Employer Advisory Council
 John Muir Hospital
 Walnut Creek Honda

As a result of their awareness of ROP student achievements, the above companies initiated new funding and, in some cases, increased their current level of funding for the ROP Student Awards program. Their donations provided 36 awards annually

in the amount of \$200 each to recognize the academic achievements of the most outstanding students in ROP classes. The 35 ROP high school seniors and 1 adult student selected by business advisors for these awards are honored at the annual ROP Awards Ceremony held in May.

Summer Internships

John Muir and Kaiser Hospitals
City of Walnut Creek
Local Automotive Dealerships

These companies partner with ROP to provide paid summer internships for high school juniors and seniors.

The automotive dealerships also provide job shadowing and internships during the school year.



Staffing

Over the past six-year period, the Contra Costa County Office of Education moved from a countywide Student Programs focus to a regionalized approach, which identified three separate geographic regions within the County. With the August 2009 retirement of a Student Programs Director, the three regions merged into two. Student Programs Principals focus on the needs of the programs within their assigned region.

“ROP programs are fantastic! They have provided valuable career opportunities for lots of kids.”

*ROP student
John Muir intern*

Description of the Follow-Up Process

The ROP leadership team oversees the progress of the Action Plan. Progress on the objectives listed in the Action Plan goals are discussed at administrator and staff meetings. Overall program achievements and challenges are reported to the Superintendent and Board of Education at the annual Board Budget Workshop held in April. In addition, several groups focus on specific Action Plan goals. The leadership team regularly analyzes the data collection and analysis issues described in Goal 1. In addition to the staff assigned to specific objectives in Goal 2, the communications specialist and the career guidance staff work together to achieve the marketing objectives described. Although the entire leadership team is involved in the expansion of opportunities for business involvement in the ROP program, a Student Programs Principal oversees the internship development that results from Goal 3 and the career guidance activities that are the focus of Goal 4.

Progress on the Critical Areas for Follow-up

a. Progress on School wide Action Plan:

Goal 1: Improve and expand the collection and analysis of data.

In 2005, staff followed a step-by-step procedure to determine student information needed, the process used to collect data, and the gap between the existing data system and a more efficient system. After analyzing the systems and processes other ROPs were using, Contra Costa County ROP developed criteria for a new student information system. Since the Contra Costa County ROP provided classes at 30 high schools, 7 adult sites, and 3 cosmetology schools in two counties, the new system needed to be Web-based. A company was hired to develop and install the new system. After the first two years of training teachers, debugging the system, and modifying the program, the system works well. Each year staff trains each new teachers to ensure all student data is collected and reported.

The Student Programs Principals are now able to quickly determine student enrollment and attendance by district, school, course, class, and individual student. The student information system also provides information about grade level, age, under-age students, number of ROP courses taken, internship participation, and course completion. The system accelerates the collection and reporting of student data and provides timely, accurate student data that enables Student Programs Principals to monitor student enrollment and attendance, and make effective program decisions.

The student data generated illustrates the long-term effectiveness of the Contra Costa County ROP program. Over the last six years, the overall ROP completion rate has remained just above 80% and over 99% of twelfth grade completers have graduated from high school. The data also shows that in 2008-09 ROP served the highest number of high school students ever (over 12,000), and earned 356 ADA above CAP. Coupled with the fact that students choose to take ROP classes, this data is further evidence that Contra Costa County ROP provides the career-focused programs that high school students seek.

The implementation of the student information system has freed the career guidance staff to provide additional career

information to students. All of the Career Guidance Liaisons completed the year-long Career Development Facilitator program provided by the Workforce Investment Board and developed a *Career Guide* that is used in presentations and posted on the COE website. In response to school requests, ROP provides copies of the career guide that schools use for career guidance presentations to ninth and tenth grade students.

The Career Guidance Liaisons also develop and present career pathway presentations by industry sector. The career guidance staff keep track of the number of presentations given each year, and they meet quarterly with the Student Programs Principals to review and determine ways to increase the number of classes and students they can reach with their services.

The student information system provides postal and email addresses that speed the student follow-up process and enables the use of Survey Monkey. In surveys, graduates mentioned the value of ROP in preparing for career entry and this led to a publication devoted to outcome data about ROP graduates.

Goal 2: To market the benefits and value of ROP programs to students, school personnel, and the community.

ROP has broadened the population served by developing 34 UC “a-g” courses and expanding courses in Engineering, Computer Science, Health, Forensics, Environmental Science, Biotechnology, Sports Medicine, Multimedia, Automotive Technology, Construction, Fire Science, Law, and Law Enforcement. The breadth of ROP courses enables the 32 high schools served to offer a wide variety of electives in many industry sectors for junior and senior students. Student Programs Principals monitor course effectiveness and provide timely changes in course offerings, resulting in over-CAP enrollment annually. This outcome also illustrates the strong support districts provide for ROP classes.

The successes students achieve in the ROP program are highlighted on the County Web site and in the semi-annual newsletters. Six years ago the newsletters were mainly sent to ROP teachers, but each year additional recipients have been added. Now the newsletter is posted on the COE website and over 800 copies are sent to the following: 200



“My ROP class definitely sparked my interest in journalism. Overall, it was a really good experience and has helped me a lot, especially since I now write for my college paper.”

ROP Journalism Graduate

ROP teachers; 50 high school principals; 35 high school career centers; 45 middle school principals; 20 school district superintendents; 10 school district curriculum directors; 18 school district governing boards (5 each); 5 County Board of Education members; California Department of Education; 20 Coastal Region ROPs; 15 government representatives; 25 chambers of commerce; 15 newspaper education reporters; 20 One Stop Career Centers; PTA, and 150 randomly selected parents. In addition, the industry partners who provide financial support for the ROP Student Awards program annually receive plaques of appreciation, with a picture of their award winning students and the programs they support. Administrators report that the plaques are prominently displayed in the businesses' reception areas.

Additional visibility results from newspaper articles about the ROP program. In the past six years Contra Costa County ROP has been featured in the California School Boards' magazine, the Diablo magazine, the County Office's newsletter, regional newspapers, and the Superintendent's Monday Morning Memo. ROP programs have been featured on the national news on television, and have earned promotional spots on local radio stations. Further visibility occurs when administrators give presentations to chambers of commerce, PTAs, health consortiums, and a variety of other community groups. Parents and the community respond positively when staff participate in career fairs at middle and high schools, as well as community locations. Invitations to the annual ROP Student Awards ceremony coupled with COE Communications Department's press releases about the event enhance program visibility.

Goal 3: To enhance student learning by developing and expanding opportunities for business partnerships to participate in the educational process.

As a result of the above marketing efforts, new partnerships have formed. Examples of these partnerships include: 1) the contact from the Citibank community partnership coordinator after she learned about ROP from the COE Web site. As a result of the contact, Citibank has provided continuing grants so that ROP can expand career exploration opportunities for low-income high school students and has made financial education presentations in ROP classrooms. 2) John Muir Health System learned about the Kaiser/ROP summer internship program and requested the same type of partnership. In the second year,

400 students applied so John Muir and ROP agreed to double the size of the program; and 3) Bank of America funded an award for an outstanding ROP Art and Communications student.

Each year, ROP teachers develop some new internship sites to replace sites that have closed or are no longer able to host interns. During the school year, ROP students from Sports Medicine, Clinical Medical Assistant, Health Careers, Careers in Teaching, Marketing, Automotive Technology, and Governmental Careers move from the classroom to the internship site to apply the skills they have learned in class. They return to class one day each week to review their internship progress and to refine their skills and knowledge. The internship experiences help them gain a broader understanding of the nature of the job duties and employment expectations. Since the last WASC visitation, ROP expanded the number of internship opportunities for students and increased the number of programs offering internships as an integral component of the instructional program. For the 2009-10 school year, however, the number of internships was reduced due to reduced program funding.

Not all high school students can participate in ROP internships during the school year because they have work, sports, or family obligations after school. Since the internship is an important component in many ROP courses, administrators have expanded internship opportunities by developing summer internship programs. During the last six years, ROP added the John Muir Health System internship and the NATEF Automotive Internship program. Due to continuing high demand from high school students, the Kaiser Richmond and Kaiser Walnut Creek summer internship programs continue to thrive. The summer of 2009, however, illustrated the effects of the economic decline when these business partners decreased the number of paid internships they could provide.

Goal 4: To continue to provide a broad range of career guidance activities and academically rigorous and relevant career training opportunities to students.

ROP is keenly aware that high school students and their parents feel that career guidance is lacking in their high schools. The junior and senior level students who enroll in an ROP course receive career guidance as part of the course curriculum, but they are a fraction of the overall high



“It (ROP class) helped me decide to have a medical career, and helped me decide my job in the army which is medical.”

*ROP graduate
Sports Medicine*

school population. ROP staff uses the Career Guide they developed and annually update for presentations in **non-ROP classrooms**, but they cannot reach every classroom. Chevron began to address this need in 2005 when they provided a \$50,000 Career Guidance grant to ROP to develop a countywide high school/ROP career guidance network. The network provides mentors to career guidance staff new to their position, and serves as a resource for career guidance activities across the county. All 30 high schools in ROP's jurisdiction in 2005 and COE Career Guidance Liaisons participated. Career center staffing and resources were assessed. Experienced career guidance staff developed lists of resources and career guidance software and reference resources were purchased to bring each career center up-to-date. New staff collaborated with experienced guidance technicians who served as mentors. The cross training and dialogue resulted in a vibrant career guidance network. After the grant ended, members requested continuation of the network. Once again, Chevron assisted with another grant to continue this effort. The funding provides materials and references career guidance staff needs to adequately serve students and ROP staff continue to guide and support their career guidance efforts.

In order to develop a well-prepared workforce, administrators closely monitor labor market trends and emerging career fields. The courses in Forensics, Environmental Science, Biotechnology, Engineering, and Robotics illustrate ROP's focus on high skill, state-of-the-art STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) focused courses. Students thrive in these meaningful, challenging courses.

Contra Costa County ROP has 34 UC "a-g" approved courses. This is the highest number in existence among the 74 ROPs in the state and illustrates the rigor and relevance of the courses ROP offers. An important note is that students completing the "a-g" curriculum are prepared for both college and careers.

b. Additional Areas Addressed in the Action Plan

The WASC Visiting Team identified two issues for follow-up:

- 1) Consistently reinforce safety protocols; and
- 2) Improve Advisory members' knowledge about ROP resource allocation.

Safety is the first unit of instruction in ROP classrooms, and a safety test must be passed before any lab work begins. ROP ensures that each class has the required number of safety glasses, gloves, and other safety-related items (including safety posters) required in the curriculum. Administrators continue to monitor to ensure that all ROP students follow safety practices and that ROP teachers are knowledgeable about safety procedures and reinforce safe practices in their classrooms.

The Home Group meetings revealed that a few teachers who taught computer-related subjects thought safety lessons did not apply to their subjects. As they discussed the ergonomic topics and classroom procedures they taught, they immediately recognized that every ROP course has safety guidelines that must be addressed at the beginning of each school year.

The Leadership Team noted that 93% of the ROP teachers reported that they have the resources needed to teach their curriculum. Some advisory members, however, reported that they were not sure whether classroom resources were adequate. The topic of resource allocation has now been added to the Advisory Committee Agenda so that student programs principals and teachers can describe the state-of-the-art resources ROP provides for each classroom.

c. Impact of the Action Plan on the quality and level of student learning

The Action Plan is an important tool for the Contra Costa County ROP. The Plan parallels the major focus areas that the Contra Costa County Office of Education (COE) requires of ROP and other student programs. The Action Plan coupled with the COE focus areas represents a unified strategy to enhance student achievement. The details in the Action Plan enable ROP to identify the significant progress that the students and program achieve each year. For example, annual analysis of the data reveals that ROP has very few students who are under the age of 16 (4%), that the

student population is very diverse, and that both male and female students are nearly equally represented in ROP classrooms. In addition, the interest in ROP from new business partners and some elementary and middle school parents is indicative of an Action Plan marketing strategy that works. The overall progress shown each year is the result of the work of a highly talented and dedicated staff. As the 2004 WASC Visiting Committee stated in its report, "There is strong evidence and commitment by staff to look at ways to improve on an already outstanding delivery system of services to the communities they serve."