



# The Hatchet

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Washington High School 38442 Fremont Blvd. Fremont, CA 94536

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## Students are not informed of all the options available for getting through school



NICOLE PHAM  
*Online Editor in Chief*

Those dissatisfied with the school system can leave early by taking the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE), but few Washington students know about it.

Most students drop out, complete independent study or attend an alternative school, such as Robertson. Some students learn about the CHSPE through word of mouth, but the school has not communicated this option to all juniors and seniors.

According to state law, high school principals are required to distribute an announcement

explaining the CHSPE to each student in grades 11 and 12. The superintendent is responsible for informing the principals.

Students who pass CHSPE earn the legal equivalent of a high school diploma by obtaining a Certificate of Proficiency, even without the required units for graduation. Those interested must be between 16 and 18 years old. The exam includes math and English language arts sections. Taking and passing CHSPE, however, does not necessarily require a student to leave high school.

"I believe students should be made aware of this option by school staff," superintendent Milt Werner said, in an e-mail.

Principal Linda Fernandez relies on career technician Michelene Wittmer and school counselors Carol Brahmst, Britny Stewart and Carrie Merfeld to relay information about CHSPE to students.

In her eight years as a counselor, Stewart knows of two students who took the test.

"For most people, it's not the alternative they want to take," Stewart said. "They don't want a full exit."

English teacher Teri Hu prepared "How Would You Like to Finish High School Early?," a presentation about CHSPE, at a Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) meeting Dec. 7.

"It is not up to counselors, teachers or administrators to determine if a student would possibly want to take CHSPE," Hu said.

"At most, maybe a dozen or so kids will take it, but that will be a dozen kids who would otherwise be miserable in high school."

The test is administered three times a year: March, June and November. Though the March 21 test date passed, those interested can apply for the June 19 test by May 21.

The fee is \$92 for regular registration, \$120 for late registration and \$145 for special registration. Results are mailed July 23.

## ASB decorates the school with planters and other subtle additions

ALEX TYLER  
*Opinions Editor*

ASB members redistributed large planters filled with an assortment of wildflowers around campus over the past few weeks.

The students put in a brick pathway outside of the Eggers building, and they also trimmed plants around school, with student activities director Helen Paris wielding an electric edger.

These efforts are appreciated, but some students feel the money should go to school improvements, such as new books and bathroom locks. However, ASB isn't authorized to use student funds on such items.

Senior John Rasure said although the improvements are helpful "they should have done this a long time ago, at this point the money could be better spent elsewhere."

Paris thought of the idea to move the planters from their original position near the Eggers building because she thought that students were not noticing them. So ASB moved the planters to more noticeable areas, and work during fourth period to water the new flowers and make sure the additions maintain their beauty.

Junior Julien Malard, president of the New Leaf Club, said their club submitted a plan to ASB to place plants around school throughout the year, but then ASB moved ahead with this project separately.

"I first was a bit disappointed because I wanted our club to do the planting," Malard said.

"I helped organize the teacher input in the report. I wrote sections of the report. I organized the actual visit with the committee. I did none of these things alone," Osicka said.

The committee was given a tour of the school from ASB members, and in the following three days, they met with teachers and administrations and visited almost every classroom. A student focus group was also included in the evaluation. These areas will have to be improved upon the next time that WASC visits.

However, ASB agreed with the New Leaf Club to continue adding flowers, trees and other plants around the school with the help of the club. They will plant to celebrate Earth Day, April 22.

## The westerners came and killed people

BACH PHAN  
*Staff Reporter*

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) had their ceremonious evaluation of the school from March 7 to March 10. The committee members were given an itinerary from WASC coordinator Brynn Osicka.

"I helped organize the teacher input in the report. I wrote sections of the report. I organized the actual visit with the committee. I did none of these things alone," Osicka said.

The committee was given a tour of the school from ASB members, and in the following three days, they met with teachers and administrations and visited almost every classroom. A student focus group was also included in the evaluation.

The focus group included members from some of our clubs

on campus such as MeCHA, Gay-Straight Alliance, Black Student Union and Interact.

There were also students from the African American Male Focus Group, the Multimedia Art Academy and a group of juniors who have been in the families program since their freshmen year. They discussed things such as school atmosphere, preparation for college and the standardized tests.

"The chairman of WASC said we should bottle [clubs and support groups that allow a non-discriminatory environment] and sell it to other schools," junior David Agorastos said.

The report gave out the traditional points of strength. They consisted of our staff encouraging high expectations of students and using assessments, group projects and collaboration to improve achievement. Other strong points were our school's leadership

program, student activities such as clubs and student government.

The focal point of many of the representatives was the supportive community, the school's leadership program and the student related programs that were available at the school. They also applauded the school for using assessment tools such as the Online Assessment Reportings (OARS) to direct our curriculum.

Most of the areas of focus that were around for the last evaluation were met except for closing the achievement gaps and implementing ESLers in order to heighten academic achievement.

This year, the committee focused on developing programs for underrepresented sub-groups and closing the achievement gaps for those groups. This meant getting the communities of those groups involved more with the school. Another area of improvement that

was a big factor was the technology plan.

Even though the school recently installed LCD projectors, the committee wants to develop a technology plan that will be able to increase learning efficiency in the classroom.

These areas will have to be improved upon the next time that WASC visits. The school's accreditation is temporary and the number of years is unknown at this moment, but during that time, the school will be implementing changes to meet the requirements.

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