

*Silver Creek High School*  
Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> - Silver Creek Valley Country Club  
“Get To Know Your Local High School” Forum  
*Follow-up Q & As*

The following document contains Silver Creek High School’s response to questions submitted during/after the Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> SCHS presentation at SCVCC.

Having 25 presenters in a two-hour format, with such a diverse audience was not easy to manage, and we recognize some people would have liked to ask questions during the actual presentations, but we felt live Q & A could have made it difficult to get through the many scheduled presenters. We hope the majority of our audience felt the presentations were beneficial in starting a dialogue about Silver Creek High School. SCHS welcomes ANYONE to make an appointment to come by and chat with administration, take a tour, have a student shadow, etc...

Consider this the first of many informative communications, and we welcome additional questions and comments at: [SilverCreekPTSA@sbcglobal.net](mailto:SilverCreekPTSA@sbcglobal.net) .

Here are the questions that were submitted, *in no particular order*:

1. How does one get into SCHS’s National Honors Society?

Acceptance into the SCHS National Honors Society is based on Leadership, Service, Character, and Scholarship criteria. Beginning in their sophomore year, students can apply in the fall. To be eligible for NHS, students must have at least a 3.3 cumulative GPA. There is also a requirement that the student participate in additional activities, which could include things like service clubs, athletics, performing arts, boy/girl scouts, etc. There is an extensive application, which includes a student-written essay. Two letters of recommendation are also required. There is a 5 member Faculty Council who uses a rubric to determine how well each candidate meets the criteria. 3 of the 5 faculty must decide that a student should be invited to join.

There is also an active chapter of the California Scholarship Federation (CSF) at SCHS, which is a statewide organization for students who achieve mostly A’s and B’s. Prospective members must apply each semester. The CSF is committed to service to the school and the community.

2. When is the earliest grade for AP classes in English, History, Math, and Sciences (Physics, Biology, Chemistry)? What are the prerequisites for each? How many students are in AP classes this year at SCHS? What percentage?

First, there are accelerated “honors” English classes that freshmen and sophomores may take with instructor approval. Typically, advanced students would take these accelerated courses (non-AP), as well as more advanced math and science coursework, starting as freshmen.

All AP classes are meant for 10<sup>th</sup> grade and up, focused on students who wish to challenge themselves and also get a head start on college. National standardized tests occur each May and should the student pass with a 3 or better (on a 5 point scale), he/she will receive college credit for that AP class. AP class grades are also weighted higher when calculating weighted grade point averages for college admission. SCHS students have a high pass rate on these standardized tests.

Typically, advanced students would take accelerated English, science and math courses as a freshman, and then begin to take AP classes in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, with possible courses such as AP World History, AP Biology or AP Chemistry. In rare cases, Calculus AB would be allowed as a sophomore, with teacher approval and successful completion of previous coursework.

All other AP classes are open to 11 and 12<sup>th</sup> graders (such as AP Calculus, AP Statistics, Foreign Languages, AP Physics, AP US History, AP European History, AP Government, AP Psychology, etc).

Approximately 475 students are in AP this year – representing 20% of the student body who have at least one AP class.

3. What percentage of students was applying to a 4-year college last year?

38% of SCHS students (last year) were planning on attending a 4-year college this year. This information was generated from surveys answered by students just prior to graduation last year.

4. We are in EVHS zone. Can we apply for a transfer to SCHS?

Yes. However, permission from the home school is necessary before enrolling in the new school.

5. “Summer Bridge” – I heard there’s a summer program for incoming SCHS freshmen. Can you say something about that?

The summer bridge program is also known as English and Math Institute. It is a program to help students successfully transition into high school, particularly to prepare them to be successful with Algebra 1 and English 1 courses. Talk with your middle school counselor and/or SCHS administration should you believe your child would benefit from participating in the program.

6. “Student ID” – what ID is this? Where do I find out what my child’s ID is?

Students are assigned an ID that they will retain all 4 years at SCHS. The ID is used for all school reporting. Parents can obtain the ID from the school, although students should know it. Students also have a photo ID they should always have with them while at school.

7. I am interested in my child attending the Japan trip in the summer, what are the qualifications?

Your student needs to be enrolled in one of the Japanese classes and needs to apply to attend the trip, which requires instructor approval. There are financial requirements, strict behavior requirements, and stringent deadlines for applying/paying fees/completing forms/etc. The instructor holds an informative – and mandatory – planning meeting each year and interested participants must attend that meeting in order to be eligible for the trip. If your child is taking a Japanese class, you should be on the instructor’s school loop email distribution list and you should receive information on the planning meeting. There are also other interesting cultural opportunities within the Japanese program, such as hosting a Japanese student during their home-stay visit to SCHS each year. The Silver Creek High School Thunderously Hip Japanese Program (SCTHJP) maintains a website at <http://scweb.esuhdsd.org/programs/jp/> which shows just a few of their many activities outside the traditional classroom.

8. Do you accommodate children on the Autism spectrum (i.e. Resource classes for all subjects?)

Yes, we have self contained classes and resource classes depending on the need of the child. For additional info specific to your child, please contact the school to make an appointment.

9. Do you have an online homework system similar to school loop at Chaboya?

SCHS uses the same school loop system for homework posting and grade reporting and it is utilized by most teachers. The tool is also used extensively for posting school news, and provides for student, parent, teacher and staff email communication via its email posting capabilities.

10. What is Silver Creek High School’s magnet program?

SCHS has *four* magnet programs:  
Forensic Science, Legal Studies, Telecommunications, and Business.

In each of these programs, students have the opportunity to learn about a field through a set of special classes related to that field. The program also keeps track of students academic progress through extra attention from the many teachers involved in the program. The magnet program is a strong academic program with a career path and technical skills emphasis, and provides an exceptional opportunity for those students who may not be focused on a 4-year college, but who may be either community college bound, perhaps on a path to achieving a certification versus a degree (such as in Telecommunications, obtaining a networking certification within 2 years) or who may be entering directly into the workplace after high school.

The magnet program has built strong ties to nearby community colleges, universities and local corporations, which enable field-specific guest speakers, field trips and even the opportunity for summer internships.

A student may wish to talk with a magnet program coordinator to learn more about the different paths that best match their interests. The magnet program accepts enrollment from 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students who live outside the SCHS attendance area must acquire an application and gain approval from the district.

Briefly, each program is as follows:

Forensic Science – a career path which introduced students to the study of forensics, the science that examines evidence and solves crimes for presentation in a court of law. Students are taught the theory, concepts, and application of a full-service crime laboratory, including physical science, documentation examination, toxicology, a fingerprint unit, photography, etc.

Legal Studies – a career path to develop a strong understanding about our legal system. Topics include: history of laws, constitutional rights, trial process, dispute resolution, criminal law, contracts, etc.

Telecommunications – a career path focused on the fundamentals of computer networking installation and integration. Students will study concepts related to audio and text information transmission.

Business – this career path features a combination of language studies, principles of international trade with a focus on business, and cross-cultural communication. Global business, economics, world cultures, personal finance, etc.

#### 11. Can I see a list of clubs available at Silver Creek?

A list of clubs was distributed in the initial SCHS FAQs document sent prior to the Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> event. If you would like a copy of that document, please email [SilverCreekPTSA@sbcglobal.net](mailto:SilverCreekPTSA@sbcglobal.net). The school hosts some 30 active clubs, consisting of academic (i.e., California Scholarship Federation), special interest (i.e., Anime Club, Film Club, Video Game Club, etc), service (i.e., KEY Club, Interact Club, Conservation Corporation, etc), sports (i.e., Juggling Club, Sports Club, Breakdancing Club, etc) and so on. New clubs can be formed at the beginning of the school year; a faculty sponsor is required and the club must apply for charter through the Associated Student Body. The SCHS teachers and staff encourage an active and diverse group of extracurricular activities!

Additionally, there is a strong “Leadership” student body alive at SCHS! The SCHS student body has numerous options for involvement in activities on campus. Helping focus, coordinate, and represent the desire of Silver Creek’s diverse student body is the Leadership class of elected student body officer and appointed students. These officers are selected to serve for one year, representing their classmates in official events as well as working to provide a lively, equitable, and entertaining atmosphere on campus, while being instructed in and working in leadership positions within the school. They attend a Leadership class, headed up by our Activities Director, Mr. Berg.

Along with clubs, leadership and athletics, the school also hosts many “student body” activities where anyone can participate. One such example is the “Winterfest” talent show. Another is the FANTASTICS class competition. FANTASTICS is an acronym for “Fun At Night Through Activities and Skits to Increase Class Spirit”! It is a huge, spirit competition between the four classes that is held at the San Jose Civic Auditorium each spring.

12. Do you have to register at SCHS or is registration automatic if the child is coming from Chaboya?

Registration is automatic if SCHS is considered your student's home school.

13. Is there a school visiting day when parents can visit SCHS? How do we arrange for our child to "shadow" at SCHS?

The local middle schools typically schedule a day for their students to visit SCHS. Parents wanting to tour the school, or to schedule a shadow day for your 8<sup>th</sup> grade/new student, please contact Mr. Berg, Activities Director, at 347-5830.

Current SCHS parents have many opportunities to visit and support the school year-round. Each year the school hosts many events, such as Back To School Night, in which parents can meet teachers and staff, tour the campus and enjoy student-led activities such as musical performances, juggling club performances, etc. A school calendar (one was in the Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> packets of info) is distributed each year which details all school events, PTSA meetings and other forums of interest happening on the campus. Additionally, the school is currently redesigning its website, where this type of calendar/event info will be made available.

PTSA, school site council, the athletics booster group, parent coalitions (African-American, Hispanic and Vietnamese), participation at school fundraisers, attendance at school performances and sports events...there are many ways parents and community members can get to know SCHS! The SCHS administration is always willing to have parents and/or community members visit the campus!

14. I heard SCHS has gangs. Can you talk more about that?

Every high school, both public and private, has external community gang issues which can intrude onto campus without proactive measures in place. What SCHS does as a school is to *prevent* the activities from *occurring on our campus*. Our associate principal of administrative services, Ms. Tammy Maddox, is in charge of attendance and discipline on the SCHS campus. Her team makes every attempt to identify issues or persons of interest that are becoming discipline problems on campus, and they also extend that to beyond the school boundaries into the surrounding community. Her team also works with the SJ Police Dept to coordinate efforts to keep SCHS and its surroundings safe. At lunch and during after school functions there is additional school staff focused on providing supervision services.

The school maintains a school safety plan, which is reassessed and updates each year by the School Safety Committee, which is composed of teachers, staff, administrators, students, parents and interested community members. It can be reviewed by the public. The plan consists of a well communicated (to the student population), strict discipline policy which encompasses everything from attendance to dress policies.

SCHS students are proud of their school, and the incidence of graffiti, vandalism or other issues is minimal. Many students volunteer time to clean and beautify the campus, including members

of various clubs. The school hosts an incredibly active NJROTC program, which can be seen guiding visitors and helping out at most school functions.

The SCHS Healthy Start Center brings a whole additional support network to students who might otherwise be struggling from personal issues unrelated to the school. Individual and group counseling is provided for many teen issues, including depression, family problems, anger, relationships, grief, drug/alcohol use, health concerns, peer conflicts, and others as needed. Healthy Start plays a key role in the academic setting of SCHS with a focus on team building, understanding, and increased individual attention for students.

Additionally, every student has an assigned academic counselor, and students have direct access to counseling services.

For additional information related to SCHS safety, please contact Ms. Maddox at [MaddoxT@esuhsd.org](mailto:MaddoxT@esuhsd.org) . As our students at the Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> event mentioned, the most important point in their description of SCHS being a safe environment is truly that the students themselves feel safe, respected and part of a very diverse – yet cohesive - family.

#### 15. How can the SCVCC community support the school?

If you are a parent, participate in the PTSA, Athletics Booster Club (ABC), School Site Council, Parent Coalition, etc! Check out school loop for communications and regularly email your child's teachers! Regular meetings for most of the SCHS parent organizations are pre-scheduled and posted on the annual school calendar which you can pick-up at the school if you don't have the one handed out in your Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> packet...(and the calendar will be posted on the new website eventually). There are many active alumni groups available on the web and on Facebook! Get involved!

For the general SCVCC community, we welcome your support and involvement in our school. Attend a school event, help with our fundraising efforts (attend a club car-washing fundraiser; donate a raffle prize for one of our many fundraising events, etc), email us at [SilverCreekPTSA@sbcglobal.net](mailto:SilverCreekPTSA@sbcglobal.net) and let us know you'd like to help... the school is always looking for sponsors for fundraising efforts...for example, the district is holding its second 5K run, to raise money for all of the ESUHSD athletes, in April...there are raffles for gift baskets, and those require generous donations from the community!

An easy, FREE way to support the school is to take a look at all the ways various merchants will make donations to our school on your behalf. A description of these "community partnerships" was included in your Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> packets, but let us know if you require additional information. If you shop at: Lucky/Savemart/FoodMax, Safeway, Office Depot, Macys, PW Market, Round Table, TARGET (and the list goes on and on!) there are easy ways for you to support Silver Creek High School!

There is a page highlighting some of the ways you can help the PTSA help SCHS, (from the old website): <http://silvercreekhs.ca.campusgrid.net/home/PTSA> .

16. How many times did you have lock down/evacuations?

By law the school must have a drill four times a year covering evacuation, lockdown, fire, earthquake, and full evacuation.

In the past five years, we had one lockdown which included all schools in the vicinity due to a police action in the community that did not involve Silver Creek High School or any of its students. The only other evacuation was for precautionary measure due to an electrical transformer breakdown which caused a school wide power failure.

17. What is the biggest non-budget related challenge at SCHS?

SCHS's biggest non-budget related challenge is to reach at least 800 points for API. We have made major strides and have come close to the goal.

SCHS has been working to improve student success rates on standardized tests by focusing additional assistance to English learners and economically disadvantaged students.

18. How many kids drop out of school before completing their education?

SCHS has an 86% graduation rate. However, this does not mean that 14% of students have dropped out. Many students are pursuing their diploma at Adult Ed, Community College, GED and through the California High School Proficiency Exam.

19. How many students were expelled last year from SCHS?

One SCHS student was recommended and approved for expulsion by the East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD) Board of Trustees during the 2008-09 school year.

20. How do you ensure integration of students from dramatically different socio-economic backgrounds?

It is actually *the large diversity that exists* on the SCHS campus, in terms of both ethnic and socio-economic areas, that facilitates the integration of *all* students! As you heard from our students at the Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> event, SCHS is very inclusive. The many activities available through clubs, academic organizations, performing arts groups, and athletics all support a very inclusive environment, and allow every student many options to "fit in" and participate. Healthy Start provides additional assistance relating to personal family issues and challenges. Many of our students may come from families where English is not the primary language, so the school translates many materials so that students with non-english speaking parents may feel included and informed. There are 3 parent coalitions to help provide additional communication.

Even within the teaching staff at SCHS, there is a very diverse mix of ethnic backgrounds; this has facilitated having more role models on our campus for our Hispanic, Asian, Vietnamese and African-American students.

21. Other schools make claims about the excellence of their teachers and staff – what specifically is different/special about the SCHS teachers/staff?

The fact that almost one third of the SCHS staff were willing to give up their evening (from 6-9 pm, after a full day at school) to spend time with the community at the Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> event says volumes about the Silver Creek staff in terms of their dedication and commitment to the school and its students.

Throughout Silver Creek High School, spanning all departments, you will find teachers rising “above and beyond” when it comes to challenging, yet supporting, their students. Teachers routinely become mentors. Faculty is very involved in all school activities. The faculty at SCHS has an average of over 14 years of teaching experience, and approx 36% of our faculty have earned at least a master’s degree.

Space does not allow an exhaustive rundown on all that the faculty are doing at Silver Creek to make their class “just a bit more special”... it is hard to communicate all that the staff will do at SCHS to help students, such as the math department setting up individual office hours for any student who needs additional help in math...most people have heard about SCHS’s award winning Japanese program (and National Japan Bowl champions in 2007), SCHS’s AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program that is a model for other schools in the country, and perhaps info on SCHS’s very respected Forensic Science magnet program...but the list goes on! Come visit SCHS’s campus and get to know us, and you’ll see!

22. What are you doing to get your student population to be representative of the local community demographically?

SCHS has a very diverse student population which is representative of the broad community that the school supports. School boundaries are set by the East Side Union High School District Board of Trustees.

23. Will you have a Vietnamese Language program at SCHS in the future?

We currently have a Vietnamese Language Program, consisting of 4 years of courses for native speakers or students near native fluency. An added component to the language instruction is a cultural introduction to the traditions and customs.

24. If my kid isn’t the “AP” type, what good things/services are available to make him/her successful?

SCHS offers a varied course selection and many support systems for different student needs.

SCHS has its AVID Program, which is in its eleventh year. The AVID Program (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is an option for students entering high school who are in the median academic achievement range (2.2-3.2 GPA in middle school), who may need some additional focus and skill development throughout high school in order to be accepted by a 4 year college/university.

AVID is a 4-year program, and students in the program meet for 55 minutes daily. AVID sets a goal that all students who participate in 4 years of the program will be eligible for admission to a 4-year university. Parents need to apply to have their child accepted into the AVID program, and the selection is made based on teacher recommendations from the junior high school, an interview, grades and a student application.

SCHS has 4 excellent magnet programs, discussed earlier in question #10. These can be good options for students desiring post-secondary learning opportunities, additional vocational training or who may be directly entering the workplace. Several of the magnet programs offer certification, summer internships as well as the possibility of taking college level courses while in high school.

Silver Creek's NJROTC (Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps) was recently awarded "Distinguished Unit" status for the 2008-2009 school year. The program is a leadership and citizenship program designed to give students a head start. Some students may find the program helpful in developing their leadership skills, self-confidence and self-discipline. Outstanding graduates of the program are eligible for nomination to attend the US Naval Academy or one of the other service academies. They may also be awarded a 4-year scholarship to attend college. The program is also a great opportunity for those students who may be interested in the military as a post-graduation option.

SCHS has a very active and diverse performing arts program, which includes drama, music, choir and dance. A new multi-purpose theatre arts building will soon be under construction, with a full stage, new music classrooms and new dance studios! The completion of this new building, in the fall of 2011, will further facilitate the many performing arts options and activities students will have.

Extra resources are provided for those needing additional support, such as: tutoring, support classes, counselor support, individual or group counseling sessions, and even classroom sessions to ensure that all students are receiving a challenging and appropriate academic program. SCHS has an award winning counseling team, the Healthy Start program, and a Special Education/Needs program. SCHS's homework center meets in the library on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-8 pm. Math tutoring is available, and many teachers provide tutoring assistance or other help.

25. What is the deal with the athletics program within ESUHSD? I heard it was being cancelled after this year.

SCHS has an extensive athletics program. We hope to continue the program, but ultimately, the decision relating to the program's future is that of the East Side Union High School District's Board of Trustees. In March 2009, the trustees decided that after school sports needed to be "self-funded". The entire cost for after school sports now needs to be generated by a proposed \$200 per player donation, along with donations from the community and district-side fundraising. Last year, the district's athletes raised money in a district-wide 5K run/walk. That same event is scheduled to be repeated this year in April. Additionally, each school's athletics dept and athletics booster groups are scheduling various fundraising opportunities.

SCHS has an athletics booster club (SCHS ABC) that recently re-established itself earlier this year. For additional info/contacts, please email [SilverCreekPTSA@sbcglobal.net](mailto:SilverCreekPTSA@sbcglobal.net) and your email will be forwarded to one of the athletics booster parents. They are eager to get additional bodies, support and assistance! Unfortunately, fundraising to retain sports at Silver Creek - and at most public high schools throughout California - will no longer be a luxury to help pay for extras but will become a necessary aspect of maintaining high school sports.

Silver Creek High School encourages all students to tryout for their favorite sports team. Some of the sports teams at Silver Creek include varsity football, JV football, baseball, softball, wrestling, track and field, cross country, soccer, swimming, water polo, badminton, tennis, volleyball and JV and varsity basketball.

As the redesigned SCHS website gets further along, we will hopefully be able to have more info on athletics posted there. Check out the school calendar, and come out to a game!

26. Are there busses that come into SCVCC and surrounding communities for SCHS students?

No. The East Side Union High School District does not offer bus service. Please check with VTA.

27. What does the PTSA do? Are parents allowed on campus? Is there an organization within SCHS that focuses on fundraising? Is there an athletics booster club?

PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association) is very involved on our campus. The organization focuses on fundraising, promoting the school in the community, assisting with on campus projects (helping out in the college center, posting information on school loop, etc), giving input on facility improvements, offering assistance to clubs, offering an annual college scholarship, and much more. The next PTSA general meeting is scheduled for January 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00. This meeting is a special session, in which the California Highway Patrol is presenting its "Start Smart" driving class for teenagers who are new or soon-to-be drivers. For more info, email us at [SilverCreekPTSA@sbcglobal.net](mailto:SilverCreekPTSA@sbcglobal.net). An rsvp is required to attend this class, and a parent/student duo is required to attend. Other monthly PTSA meetings are posted on the school calendar, in school loop and via reminder emails to the PTSA yahoo group. A PTSA membership form was included in the Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> packets.

Parents and community members are always welcome on campus as long as they check-in with the front office. Visiting classrooms is permissible but must get prior authorization from administration. Shadowing by students can be arranged.

There is an athletic booster club which is briefly discussed in question #25.

28. I hear there are police issues on campus all of the time. What stats do you have about how many police incidents there are on campus?

Like every school in the East Side Union High School District, SCHS has a police officer on duty on a daily basis. Their presence is to provide additional security and to ensure safety on the campus. The police officer works directly with the Associate Principal in-charge of discipline, safety, facilities and the Safety Team of the school. The police officer's presence on campus is a deterrent for any type of disturbances that might occur. More on safety was discussed in question # 14.

29. What areas are contained in the boundaries of the school? Why can't the boundaries be re-districted so that the school isn't so big?

You can check the attendance boundaries on the District website ([www.esuhsd.org](http://www.esuhsd.org)). Again, the East Side Union High School District Board of Trustees sets the school attendance boundaries for all schools in the district. You can find the Board's meeting schedule on the website, if you are interested in learning more about the district. There is also an ESUHSDsupporters yahoo group!

30. Why doesn't SCVCC do more relating to SCHS?

SCHS would welcome any participation of SCVCC residents, as well as the surrounding community! The Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> forum was hopefully just a first step in getting more communication out to the community on all of the good things happening at our school. We welcome input and questions! We are hoping to get our own website redesign further along so that more info can be more easily available. We encourage community members who want to be kept posted on the school to join the PTSA yahoo group, "SilverCreekPTSA" and ESUHSD supporters yahoo group, "ESUHSDsupporters". If you attended the Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> event, you will automatically get any follow-up that comes out from that event, but the yahoo group will still be the best way for you to stay informed longer term.

31. Why doesn't SCHS do more to educate parents/students at the feeder schools about what is really going on there?

SCHS counselors and staff visit all of our major feeder schools. We work with the PTA at Chaboya to do presentations for parents and students in the spring. Additionally, we have parent/student orientation at Silver Creek in the spring. We offer class shadowing for any student interested in visiting our school.

Through the FAQs distributed prior to the Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> event, these Q & A's and future follow-up emails, we hope to provide helpful info, and as the redesigned SCHS website (<http://silvercreekhs.ca.campusgrid.net/home/front.html>) gets further along we hope to provide more info via that as well.

The school has its own newspaper called “The Raider Review” which is written and edited by students in journalism classes. An electronic copy of the most recent editions can be found on the school website at: [http://silvercreekhs.ca.campusgrid.net/home/raider\\_review.htm](http://silvercreekhs.ca.campusgrid.net/home/raider_review.htm) .

We welcome your suggestions as to the best way we can communicate to the community, please email us at [SilverCreekPTSA@sbcglobal.net](mailto:SilverCreekPTSA@sbcglobal.net) .