



REDEEMER LUTHERAN SCHOOL
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Dear Parent:

The following is a portion of the report from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (W.A.S.C) in regards to our accreditation, which we received and completed in the spring of 2007.

The section of the report includes both the areas of strengths and areas for improvement. As such we felt that it was important that we share this information with you. We at Redeemer are committed to strengthening and enriching all areas of our program.

Self Study Visiting Committee Report
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Redeemer Lutheran School
468 Grand Street Redwood City, CA 94062

April 23, 24, 25, 2007

Visiting Committee Members

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Chapter IV
PART A: QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL'S PROGRAM

Category A: Organization for Student Learning

A1. School Purpose Criterion

To what extent ...

- **has the school established a clear statement of purpose that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the institution?**
- **is the purpose defined further by adopted expected schoolwide learning results that form the basis of the educational program for every student?**

1.

Redeemer Lutheran School is a faith-based institution and the philosophy and mission statements reflect the religious foundation of the school. The educational goals and eight objectives further expand the school's philosophy and, to a certain extent, link the philosophy to the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results.

The ESLRs provide a more concrete and specific focus that combines the School's educational responsibility with core Christian values. They are disseminated through the Parent- Student Handbook, posted on the School's website, included in new and prospective parent mailings, and displayed in every classroom. There is a need to increase discussion around the ESLRs and formally integrate them into classroom teaching.

The school's ESLRs were developed in a collaborative process in the academic year 2000-2001. This process included participation and involvement of all segments of the school community, but were primarily the product of teaching staff. Even though the ESLRs were reviewed at the outset of initiating this 2006-07 Self Study, there was and is not currently in place a process that provides for an annual review of the ESLRs.

A2. Governance Criterion

To what extent ...

- **does the governing authority adopt policies which are consistent with the school purpose and support the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results for the school?**
- **does the governing authority delegate implementation of these policies to the professional staff?**
- **does the governing authority monitor results?**

Redeemer Lutheran School (RLS) is owned by Lutheran Redeemer Ministries (RLM). The governance structure has changed since the last WASC visit. In June 2005 the congregation voted and adopted a Policy Based Governance organization. In the new organizational chart, the School Board ceases to exist and the Board of Directors of RLM oversees all congregational matters including the school. A Principal's Advisory Board

was created to help as a recommending board to the principal. The principal is supervised by the Senior Pastor and is delegated authority by the Board of Directors to run the school. Policies developed by the principal and school must be consistent with the policies of the church. The principal, as chief school administrator, attends the monthly Board of Directors meetings as an ex-officio member. After a year and a half, the school is adjusting to and understanding the new governance process and procedures.

The ESLRs are written to be consistent with the school's mission, purpose, and goals as part of the RLM. School policies are updated on a regular basis with agreement by the staff. The principal evaluates the staff of the school and the Senior Pastor evaluates the performance of the principal. In addition, the principal meets with the Senior Pastor on a weekly basis.

A3. School Leadership Criterion

To what extent ...

- 2. does the school leadership make decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the school on student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results?**
- 3. does is the school leadership empower the staff?**
- 4. does the school leadership encourage commitment, participation and shared accountability for student learning?**

The principal as administrator empowers staff to develop their own lesson plans to implement the Core Knowledge curriculum. The staff is committed to help students achieve their full potential. Collaboration among teachers is encouraged and teachers in the middle school program work closely and collaborate on teaching responsibilities. These collaborative efforts are supported by periodically providing time at faculty meetings for discussion of curriculum, instructional strategies, and grade level articulation. At this time there is no formal process in place to ensure that specified bodies of knowledge and/or skills are acquired by students as they progress from one grade level to the next or that established consistencies are maintained as staff changes. The Self Study indicates that ultimate responsibility for school decisions is shared by the principal, the Senior Pastor, and the Redeemer Lutheran Ministries Board of Directors. There is a need to create plans and procedures that will strengthen and ensure broad accountability for student learning.

A4. Staff Criterion

To what extent ...

- are the school leadership and staff qualified for their assigned responsibilities?**
- are the school leadership and staff committed to the school's purpose?**
- does the school leadership and staff engage in on-going professional development that promotes student learning?**

Redeemer Lutheran School's (RLS) faculty is an integral part of the community and mission. Members of the teaching staff are college graduates and qualified for the respective responsibilities. Six members of the staff have a California Teaching Credential, three others are in progress, and one member holds a credential from Ohio. Only three members of the teaching staff are Called, synodically trained from one of the Lutheran colleges. It is clear that the staff is committed to the mission and purpose of the school. Staff development is given a high priority, with adequate funding for conferences, but not for continuing education (only one member of the staff holds a master's degree). While professional development priority, the development of written professional development plans are encouraged, but not yet completed. The entire staff regularly attends the California/Nevada/Hawaii District Conference and other conferences, workshops, and district-wide educational in-service meetings. The staff has some diversity with regard to age with the newest teacher in the second year and the most experienced teacher in the eighteenth year.

A5: School Environment Criterion

To what extent...

- **does the school have a safe, healthy environment that reflects the school's purpose?**
- **is the school environment characterized by a respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support, and high expectations for each student?**

Redeemer Lutheran School prides itself on having a safe and nurturing environment. The new facility promotes a sense of community that reflects the school's purpose. Clear policies for behavior are found in both the teachers' and parents' handbooks. The school's religious foundation is an important dimension for fostering emotional well-being and promoting cooperation and trust. The school principal has provided leadership that supports and enhances student self-esteem, mutual respect, a trusting environment, high expectations for each student, and open communication.

A6: Reporting Student Progress Criterion

To what extent...

- **does the school leadership and staff regularly assess student progress toward the school's expected schoolwide learning results?**
- **does the school leadership and staff reports student progress to the rest of the school community?**

RLS regularly reports student learning in the form of: progress reports, report cards, report to parents of results on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, parent conferences, sharing of student folders, administrator report to the Senior Pastor and Board of Directors, articles in Smoke Signals (the monthly school newsletter) regarding overall results of

student achievement, and informal talks with parents. Achievement is also shared in Round Redeemer (the church monthly newsletter) and by public recognition in weekly chapel services. Teachers regularly monitor student progress daily by checking items such as: homework, seat work, quizzes and tests, oral presentations, projects, and informal methods, such as observation of the students while they are involved in seat work and/or cooperative learning groups. While a uniform grading system exists, the method for determining student grades is given to the individual teacher.

RLS carefully monitors student progress. For students that demonstrate the need for additional help and monitoring, RLS had developed a system called Child Study Team. The purpose of the Child Study Team is to provide support and offer strategies to the classroom teacher who may need additional resources for children who are experiencing difficulties in the classroom. Difficulties that may be addressed include learning differences, behavioral issues or social/emotional issues.

RLS conducts follow up studies of graduates using a formal survey sent after completion of their eighth grade year. An additional graduate follow up survey is given during the second semester of the graduates' freshman year of high school to both the graduate and his/her parent(s); however the survey is not consistently conducted. RLS does receive feedback of an informal type in the form of telephone calls and letters when graduates have succeeded at a high level, whether academically, in sports or other areas. Additionally, on an informal basis, the teachers in the Middle School program regularly talk with past students about their current high school experiences as a gauge on how to better prepare the students in the future.

A7. School Improvement Process Criterion

To what extent ...

- **does the school leadership facilitate school improvement which is driven by**
- **plans of action that will enhance quality learning for all students?**
- **does the school leadership have school community support and involvement?**
- **does the school leadership effectively guide the work of the school?**
- **does the school leadership provide for accountability through monitoring of the schoolwide Action Plan?**

School improvement occurs due to the professionalism of the principal and staff, however, there is no formal process in place to direct and monitor school improvement. Much has happened recently with the construction of new classroom facilities. There has been significant increase in the availability of technology with the new building, which includes a computer lab.

In regards to school improvement, the administration has the support and approval of the entire school community; however, the level of involvement of all stakeholders needs improvement. The new action plans provide a framework for this increase level of all stakeholder involvement

School action plans have largely been developed by the administrator and staff. The administration and staff have had minimal input from students, parents, and other members of the school community since the previous accreditation. Monitoring of school action plans and whether the goals have been met is not discussed.

Areas of Strength

1. The ESLRs are widely disseminated in a variety of places.
2. Consistent, frequent formal and informal communication is maintained among stakeholders. Communication to parents of school events and student progress is frequent and consistent.
3. An atmosphere of care and support for students is clearly evident.
4. Two-thirds of the faculty members are credentialed and the remaining one-third are in a program to complete credential requirements.
5. The Child Study Team process provides support for students with learning differences in their educational endeavors.

Key Issues

1. Create a process of regularly scheduled and formal review of the ESLRs to ensure strong connection and support of the school's mission and purpose.
2. Establish a system for monitoring the instructional program to insure that students are actually achieving the ESLRs.
3. Establish a process for ongoing assessment that should include thorough data collection, disaggregation, and comprehensive analysis that will drive educational decision making.
4. The Action Plan should be revisited to ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to provide input, support, and ownership for the Action Plan.

Evidence Examined

1. ITBS
2. Classroom Observation
3. Interviews with staff, parents, and students
4. Self-study
5. Focus Group meetings
6. Examination of Evidence

Category B: Curriculum and Instruction

B1. What Students Learn Criterion

To what extent does' the school provide a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the school's purpose and results in student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results through successful completion of any course of study offered?

Redeemer Lutheran School is committed to the education of the entire child, which is evidenced by four main areas of the ESLRs - Spiritually; Academically; Socially, emotionally and physically; and Culturally. Redeemer Lutheran School's curriculum supports each of the ESLRs and in turn the mission of Redeemer Lutheran School. While the ESLRs are clearly defined, the ESLRs are not clearly and mutually understood by stakeholders. Meetings and interviews with students, staff and parents indicated a limited and varying degree of understanding and articulation.

The spiritual growth of each student is developed in numerous ways. Religion classes are a part of each grade's curriculum and focus on certain aspects and concepts of theology. RLS utilizes the Voyages and Young Peacemakers curriculums; in addition there is a focus on the teaching of church history, public worship, evangelism, fellowship, and services, Weekly memory assignments are expected in grades 1-8 using the Voyages Memory curriculum and Luther's Small Catechism. The students also participate in attending and leading Chapel services, participating in religious musicals and concerts, participating in school choirs, leading devotions and prayers in class, bringing home items to discuss with parents, and discussing various religious topics in class.

Teachers at RLS have adopted the "Core Knowledge Sequence: Content Guidelines K8". This provides a framework for a coherent, sequential curriculum; however the staff is struggling to resolve the issue between Core Knowledge and California Standards. Most subjects use the same publisher for their curriculum, for example the Saxon Math Series is used from Kindergarten through eighth grade. Teachers work together on various aspects of the academic program to ensure continuity and to prepare children as they progress to the next level. RLS utilizes the "National Education Technology" as a basis for the technology curriculum. Various field trips are used to enhance many areas of the curriculum.

A formalized process for curriculum and textbook evaluation and replacement needs to be established and clearly communicated to all stakeholders to insure consistent understanding.

RLS has both a written Graduate Parent Survey and Graduate Student Survey to help assess the ESLRs and curriculum with regard to preparedness for high school. RLS middle school teachers also have anecdotal evidence of recent graduates' high school performance. Often graduates are invited back to the eighth grade to talk about their high school experience.

The student growth in social, emotional, and physical arenas is demonstrated in the varied activities and projects in which the students are engaged. The opportunities to work cooperatively on long-term projects, such as the Science Fair and Ocean Week show goal setting, planning, and scheduling. The chance for student to be engaged in interscholastic sporting events builds positive attitudes and confidence through these group experiences. The group experiences foster emotional development both intrinsically and extrinsically. The Young Peacemakers program in fourth through sixth grades focuses on how to mediate real life experiences. Students in Kindergarten through third grade interact with the "special needs" children attending a local program called Developmental Pathways. Other opportunities for students to be involved in community service are being explored, however at this time the possibilities are limited due to various factors.

Physical Education is also an important portion of the students' entire growth. The purpose of physical education is to help students recognize, develop, and use their bodies to God's glory. Students increase in their understanding of the value of a healthy lifestyle and become aware of the positive and negative influences that affect that lifestyle. Group work encourages cooperation and develops students' social skills; individual work builds self-esteem. Students are engaged in skill building two days a week and utilizing these skills in group activities two days a week. Included in every class are aerobic exercise and calisthenics. Grades 4 through 8 use a curriculum that combines previously learned skills in sports activities.

While the majority of the student population of RLS is white (83.4%), the faculty has seen the need for having the students experience and understand various cultures, and are taught to respect all people as children of God. Students learn about diverse cultures through the celebration of holidays such as Chinese New Year, Cinco de Mayo, Women's History Month, and Black History Month. Students are exposed to various cultures in history, current events, literature, religion, music, and art classes.

While the new school has been infused with a wonderful amount of technology, the integration of the technology into the teaching curriculum and student learning has yet to be effectively implemented or developed. This is partly due to the fact that some of the technologies are still being set up or installed by volunteers from RLS and Redeemer Lutheran Ministries and partially due to the fact that adequate staff training has not occurred.

There is a developing program to include the fine arts and foreign language. RLS does have all students participate one of the three grade level musicals each year. RLS also has a hand bell choir and vocal choir. The visual arts are taught in all grades, being an elective in the middle school. Second grade participates in the Art in Action program, with plans to expand this to Kindergarten through third grade in 2007-2008.

B2. How Students Learn Criterion

To what extent ...

- **does the professional staff use research based knowledge about teaching and learning?**
- **does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results?**

The teaching staff at RLS is well versed in the field of education with the teachers bringing their own unique perspective to the classroom. With the diversity of age, experience, and colleges attended the teaching staff has a wide understanding of education theories utilizing three widely accepted theories about how students learn: the Behavioral, Information Processing, and the Cognitive or Constructivism. Most teachers use concepts from all three. Most of the staff also remains current the area of education theory and learning through the attendance at the Lutheran Schools Annual Conference, post-graduate work, workshops, and in-service opportunities. RLS fully supports and gives funding for all teachers to take advantage of individual professional growth opportunities.

Teachers design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school's purpose and ESLR results. Teachers understand that all students learn through using their senses and integrating in the brain messages received through the senses; thus, the more all of the senses are used in the learning process, the more easily students learn. The teachers employ different teaching methods to reach students' different learning styles. These methods include: audio, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic experiences.

The staff also understands that communication is essential to teaching and learning. There is an emphasis placed on communication between: Teacher-Student, Student-Student, Teacher-Parent, and Teacher-Staff. This communication is carried out in many ways including verbal, written, formal and informal, school-wide newsletters, etc.

Each teacher at RLS is creative and has a unique personality and teaching style, engaging students in different types of teaching as they progress through RLS. In order to accomplish the using all of the aforementioned theories, the teachers engage students in learning through active involvement; teachers utilize a variety of techniques to ensure that students are active learners. Used on a consistent basis are the following methods: cooperative learning, hands-on activities, discovery, homework, seat work, tests, oral participation, individual projects, group projects and self-assessment.

B3. How Assessment Is Used Criterion

To what extent ...

- **is teacher and student use of assessment frequent and integrated into the teacher/learning process?**
- **are the assessment results the basis for measurement of each student's progress towards the expected schoolwide learning results?**
- **are assessment results the basis for regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instruction?**
- **are the assessments results the basis for allocation of resources?**

Teachers and students use of assessment is frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process. Redeemer teachers utilize a variety of assessment measures. Some of these are: homework, quizzes and tests, standardized testing (ITBS), self-evaluation, teacher narrative, informal evaluation, class participation, the Child Study Team, report cards and graduate and exit surveys.

Homework is given on a daily basis from first grade through eighth. Starting in the third grade, assignment notebooks are used. Third grade through eighth grade post their daily homework assignments on the school website, however currently they have a temporary interruption in service. Parents are encouraged to check assignment notebooks and the website daily and students use the web site for assignments when forgotten or absent.

Assessment is reported through "Friday folders" (a weekly folder containing homework, quizzes, and tests) and students' grades, which are reported on mid-term progress reports and report cards which are sent home quarterly. Parent teacher - conferences are held during the first three quarters of the school year.

Modification of the curriculum on an individual basis is dealt with through the Child Study Team and the Student Study Team, which is a meeting where the parents of the student, the teachers, and the principal discuss the strengths, areas of concern, and upcoming actions that will be taken to assist the student. Following the meeting teachers implement accommodations that will encourage success. Follow-up meetings take place 3 weeks after the original meeting.

Standardized testing is administered during the third quarter to students in first through eighth grade; RLS uses the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). The purpose of these tests is to evaluate student growth from the previous year and to measure student level in his/her class, compared to students in our Lutheran Consortium, and on a national level. Teachers and the administration informally study the scores from the ITBS at the end of each school year to identify areas in which the curriculum needs to focus in the upcoming year. Significant variations in the yearly class core and composite scores are addressed and evaluated informally. This informal evaluation is valuable, however a system or process for disaggregating and analyzing ITBS data needs developing and implementing to aid in addressing, evaluating, and identifying curriculum needs.

Areas of Strength

1. Strong commitment to the development of young Christian citizens.
2. Clearly defined ESLRs.
3. Varied teaching approaches and theories utilized in the classrooms.
4. Child Study Team and the resulting Student Study Team.

Key Issues

1. Develop a formal system for disaggregating and analyzing ITBS data.
2. Develop a formal Curriculum/Textbook evaluation and replacement plan.
3. Develop a technology plan for integration of technology into the teaching curriculum, student learning, and staff training.
4. Provide more opportunities for community service for older students.
5. Articulation of the ESLRs to all stakeholders for understanding, comprehension and integration into the learning process.

List of Important Evidence

1. Self-Study
2. ESLRs
3. Written Curriculum
4. Surveys
5. ITBS test results
6. Classroom visits
7. Interviews
8. Focus Group

Category C: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

Cl. Student Connectedness Criterion

To what extent are students connected to a system of support services, activities, and opportunities at the school and within the community that meet the challenges of the curricular/co-curricular program in order to achieve the expected school wide learning results?

The students have many opportunities within the school and community to be supported in all areas. There are high expectations for behavior, work production and spiritual growth. The students have opportunities to participate in sports, field trips, community service and spiritual growth activities within the school and the church. They are well supported financially by the church. The staff has ensured that appropriate student academic interventions are in place.

The R block is a program to encourage good citizenship for grades 5-8. The students are encouraged by staff to obtain this letter block for each of the 4 years and the students actively work toward this. The assessment of attainment is determined by the staff on an informal basis through interaction with their students.

The Developmental Pathways program is an excellent way for younger students to gain a sense of empathy, leadership and sharing skills with others who have difficulty with social skills.

Student support is defined throughout the document concerning academic weaknesses. A planned intervention with the CST and SST teams is in place and a formal plan has been established. As the school discusses reinstating and implementing the peer tutoring program a plan should be established to determine peer tutors and to identify students in need of help. A thorough discipline plan is provided in the parent handbook to cover improper behavior, however a formal plan for emotional intervention seems to be lacking. Team members assume that the students know to come to them for help with personal issues; however the students seem somewhat hesitant that this is the course they would take. Referrals for students and or families for counseling was not evident.

The many activities for student support do impact learning. They build self esteem, a desire to try new things and to build on skills that are already present. Some of their support areas are mandatory such as the grade level plays and the science/fine arts fairs. Additional support activities are elective on the student's part.

Participation in and planning chapel services as well as singing in church allows the students to build a relationship and leadership within the church and to learn that the function of the church is for all not just the adults who attend-they can have some ownership.

Community service projects have been pursued but not instituted this year due to various limiting factors. Looking creatively at other ways to serve would be a worthwhile undertaking.

The student council has a role within the school to plan schoolwide activities, school dances and organize some fundraisers. The student council election process allows for the older students to identify their own leadership qualities and abilities.

Ocean week provides for cross curricular and cross grade relationship building especially during the culminating activity. The reading buddy program with 8th grade and kindergarten helps to foster good relationships that are positive within these two grades. The peer tutoring program that they would like to reestablish would help to build these relationships further and across a greater variety of grade levels. This Peer tutoring program would also build academic and leadership skills with the students.

Teachers are involved outside of school by providing students with after school academic help, coaching and directing plays. Teachers are also involved with student council as advisors. Sports coaching and cheer leading are other ways that teachers involve themselves with the students outside of the classroom.

C2. Parental/Community Involvement

To what extent does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to ensure parental and community involvement is integral to the school's established support system?

There are ample opportunities for parents to be involved and connected within the school community. The fact that many parents return for school wide activities after their children graduate attests to this. Parental involvement in the typical area of field trips, room parent and support in the classroom is evident. Parent Services Committee which acts much like a PTA with fund raising and social activity planning for parents typically has a core of about 20 parents to represent the school. Participation varies year to year depending on work schedules and other family priorities. Parents were involved somewhat with the self study and there was at least one parent on each focus group. Parents are evident around campus early in the day and at the end. They were supportive of the teachers and of the principal, speaking emotionally about the impact the school and staff has had over the years on their families. Parents feel empowered to approach teachers with issues concerning their children and that they are welcome to be present on campus. This has helped to foster a family atmosphere for all stakeholders.

Areas of Strength:

- The Developmental Pathways program for K-3 grades, in which RLS children interact socially with "special needs" children from the community.
- The congregational support of the school
- The CST and SST referral program
- Communication with parents
- Student council
- Extracurricular activities in the area of sports, in fine arts and science fairs

Key issues:

- Although the concept of community service is in place more time needs to be devoted into finding opportunities in which the children can participate.
- Re-establishing the peer tutoring program across grades levels with attention given to establishing a plan for tutors as well as those in need of intervention.

Evidence examined:

- Self study
- Evidence binders,
- Visits in classrooms
- Parent visits
- Student visits
- Focus groups
- Parent interviews
- Student interviews

Category D: Resource Management and Development

D1: Resources Criterion

To what extent are the resources available to the school sufficient to sustain the school program and effectively used to carry out the school's purpose and student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results?

The Principal has primary responsibility for resource allocation. A preliminary budget is prepared by the principal and is presented to Redeemer Lutheran Ministries (RLM) Board of Directors for pre-approval in January to set tuitions rates. During the spring semester faculty give their input about budgetary needs and requests. The budget is further refined and in June it receives final approval by the Redeemer Lutheran Ministries (congregation). The school is primarily tuition dependent for funding. Additional monies are derived through church tuition grants, outside grants, gifts, and fees from the extended care program. The school has the long term objective of increasing enrollment to desired levels in each classroom. The school projects that a stable student population would make the school financially self-sustaining. This would insure continuity in school programs and resources to support student learning.

Institutional funds are handled through the central accounting system under RLM. A formal audit is conducted annually which includes the school and the school reports that no abnormal expenses were determined.

A top priority of the school is the hiring, nurturing, and retaining of well-qualified staff. The district office in Livermore is an important source for recruiting teaching candidates. To help provide support and a smooth transition, new employees are paired with an experienced staff member as a mentor during the new employee's first year. New faculty members also attend the District's New Teacher program and join the entire staff for a three day Lutheran Education Conference.

The 2006 academic year began in a new school facility and consolidated campus. The new facility houses K -8 classrooms as well as additional rooms and space that enhance student living and learning. The opportunity for technology use is impressive. An overall plan should encompass the areas of maintenance, replacement, software, and professional development. New materials and textbooks are purchased by the principal or administrative assistant in accordance with the budget and important curricular developments.

D2: Resource Planning Criterion

To what extent do the governing authority and the school execute responsible resource planning for the future?

With the completion of the new school facility, the RLM Board of Directors began plans to renovate and remodel the old school building for administrative offices and teacher

work space. This construction will be scheduled without major interruption to the overall school's operation. There is no longer a school library and the book collection has been disseminated to the classrooms. Plans are underway to provide a small central book collection area to provide some degree of library skill experience. However, a need still remains to expand and enhance student opportunities to develop library skills.

Families seek to enroll their children in Redeemer Lutheran School because of its reputation communicated primarily by word of mouth. Other marketing strategies include advertisements, outreach to potential kindergarten students through preschools, a website, and visibility through the Yellow Pages. The school, in consultation with an outside marketing firm, is creating a new school brochure to be primarily disseminated to prospective new families. Currently families who refer a new student receive a \$300 tuition credit. This program has successfully brought new families and students into the school community.

Church members are offered a member-discount tuition rate for their children. In addition, the church provides financial assistance to qualified families and the church provides the property to the school free of charge.

Areas of Strength

1. The school and administration recognizes as a top priority the hiring and nurturing of a well qualified staff.
2. A state-of-the-art facility was completed in August 2006 resulting in along awaited improved and consolidated campus.
3. A professionally created brochure is being created to help advertise the school with the ultimate goal of increasing community interest and student applications.

Key Issues

1. Complete all current construction and related emergency procedure plans.
2. Complete remodeling plans and upcoming related Phase II construction projects.
3. Create and maintain a stable student population by developing an on-going program to increase student enrollment and retention.
4. Provide a sequential grade-appropriate program for students to develop and use library research skills.
5. There is a need for the school to review and update the existing Technology Plan to thoroughly address the schools needs as they currently exist.

Evidence Examined

- Self Study
- Observations
- Focus Group meetings
- Parent meetings

- Interviews with Staff
- Review of Fiscal Documents
- Classroom Observations

PART B: Schoolwide strengths and schoolwide critical areas for follow-up.

General Comments:

The Visiting Committee, through a process of review of the Self Study, meeting with Focus Groups, observations and interviews, has identified several major areas of strength that have a schoolwide impact on the enhancement of student learning. These are listed below in the section titled "Schoolwide Areas of Strength". Also, the Visiting Committee has identified several Critical Areas of Follow-up. These are such that they support and strengthen several areas already identified in the Action Plan.

Schoolwide Areas of Strength:

1. The school has provided a new facility with a state of the art educational setting in which students can learn.
2. The school principal, parents and staff have successfully created a high trust environment in which students feel known, nurtured, cared for and supported in their personal and academic growth and connectedness with the school.
3. Two-way school to home, and home to school, communications are diverse, frequent and effective in their support of student learning.
4. The school has established as a priority attracting and retaining high quality staff to provide effective instruction and learning experiences for students.
5. A clearly stated set of ESLRs has been developed and widely distributed to the school community.
6. The school has the availability of a wide array of technological tools to help and support student learning.
7. The school purpose is clearly defined and supported by ESLRs.
8. The Developmental Pathways program provides students in Kindergarten through third grade the opportunity to interact with, and support, students with special needs.

Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-up

1. An immediate need exists to address, resolve, and complete curricular alignment needs in all areas and at all grade levels in order to provide students with a continuity and coherency in learning experiences as they transition from one grade level to the next (e.g., issues around Core Knowledge curriculum and California Standards).
2. The school needs to develop and implement a more formalized process that will ensure regular and scheduled gathering and analysis of appropriately disaggregated

student achievement data. This process should be used to support educational decisions and related budget allocations that are data driven and designed to enhance student learning and achievement.

3. There is a need for the school to develop and implement effective measures to assess student learning and appropriate mastery of ESLRs at each grade level (e.g. rubrics or performance standards and requirements illustrative of the required levels of skill and/or knowledge).
4. There is a need to increase structure and formality of school improvement process and procedures in order to infuse on-going school improvement as a part of the school's culture.
5. A professional development plan is needed that is focused upon identified needs in curricular areas as well as enhancement of instructional expertise and strategies that support student learning experiences.
6. There is a need to review and revise the schoolwide technology plan in order to address the need for ongoing maintenance, upgrades, expansion, related professional development, and student use of technology to support student learning.
7. A formal process and procedure is needed that will ensure regular and scheduled review of the curriculum and textbook replacement cycle in order to ensure students' access to the most current and effective learning experiences.
8. The school needs to put in place measures that will ensure the maintenance of appropriate and desired levels of student enrollment. This is needed in order to ensure stability of programs and the availability of adequate resources to provide programs that support student learning and personal growth.
9. There is a need for the school to review and revise the action plan to address and incorporate the recommendations provided by the WASC Visiting Committee Report and to ensure that the Action Plan areas selected are those that will have the greatest impact on improving student learning and achievement. Attention should be given to the recommendations provided in the School Improvement Section (Chapter V) of the Visiting Committee Report.

Chapter V

ON-GOING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Does the Action Plan address the Critical Areas of Follow-up?

The schoolwide Action Plan was developed based upon areas that were identified by the school as growth needs within the Self Study. The school has identified eight areas as Critical Areas of Follow-up and these are addressed in the school's Action Plan. The eight areas are as follows:

1. Staff and Faculty Handbook should be updated and modified to reflect the most modern and current policies and guidelines.
2. Administration and teachers should create a process for regular review and/or revision of the school purpose and ESLRs based on global and local needs.
3. Principal should create a Curriculum Advisory Committee, to meet quarterly, to support the achievement of the ESLRs.
4. The faculty should adopt one of the four ESLRs sections for a yearly in-depth focus.
5. Create individual grade level pamphlets that align Core Knowledge and California standards.
6. Re-establish peer tutoring program.
7. Finish creating, implementing and practicing an Emergency Preparedness and Disaster plan.
8. To establish an on-going follow-up process to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the schoolwide Action Plan.

The school was not clear in their understanding of how to select goal areas for their Action Plan and rather than examining their Self Study findings to extract global areas of schoolwide impact they attempted to select specific items cited at the end of various criterion sections. This necessitates a need to review and revise the Action Plan in the immediate future.

Will the Action Plan enhance student learning?

There are several Critical Areas of Follow-up selected by the school for inclusion in the Action Plan that do not readily lend themselves to improving student learning or measuring their accomplishment related to student learning. These are Action Plan items as follows:

1. Staff and Faculty Handbook should be updated and modified to reflect the most modern and current policies and guidelines.

While this may be a practice that is good to address annually, it does not address how student learning will be enhanced or measured as a result of accomplishing this goal.

2. Administrators and teachers and teachers should create a process for regular review and/or revision of the school purpose and ESLRs based on global and local needs.

This is a commendable practice, but the goal does not mention improving student achievement nor is the assessment technique clear about measurement progress towards an ESLR achievement.

3. Principal should create a Curriculum Advisory Committee, to meet quarterly, to support the achievement of the ESLRs.

While this perhaps could have been structured to measure student achievement of ESLRs, the action steps and means of assessment do not clearly specify how improvement will be measured. Growth is mentioned, but how it will actually be measured remains unclear.

7. Finish creating, implementing and practicing an Emergency Preparedness and Disaster plan.

Again, while this is a needed process and procedure to have in place, perhaps this item would be more appropriately addressed as a part of general school administration tasks rather than an Action Plan item.

8. To establish an on-going follow-up process to monitor implementation and accomplishment of the schoolwide Action Plan.

This particular item is a positive step to ensure achievement of the Action Plan, however, again it is not clear in what way(s) overall student achievement will be impacted or measured.

There are three Action Plan items that do lend themselves readily to enhancing student achievement and are such that effective measurement tools could be put in place. These are as follows:

4. The faculty should adopt one of the four ESLRs sections for a yearly in-depth focus.

This goal would provide an opportunity to measure student growth and progress toward mastering of ESLRs. What is needed is a means of effectively measuring student progress.

5. Create individual grade level pamphlets that align Core Knowledge and California standards.

The rationale provided in the Self Study is to meet the need to make this available to parents, and thus the method of assessing progress was given as "checking in with teachers at staff meetings". This particular item could have a direct impact on student

learning if the rationale were to include "support students' learning experiences by implementing a curriculum that is thoroughly aligned in all areas at each grade level". Subsequently, effective measures could be developed and implemented to effectively measure the impact of this accomplishment on student success over time.

6. Re-establish peer tutoring program.

This particular item does lend itself to having a direct impact on student learning and is measurable. The Action Plan delineates that the means of addressing progress will be through student achievement scores and tests and assignments, however the rationale given for reestablishing this program indicates an identified desire on the part of staff to increase student self-esteem and sensitivity towards other students.

The Action Plan is organized in a format that includes all of the following components:

- Statement of area(s) for improvement (or goal)
- Rationale for selecting the area for improvement
- ESLRs being addressed by this area
- Specific steps to be taken to accomplish the goal
- Target timelines which include beginning date, ending date, and descriptive comments (if needed)
- Position/person responsible (and assistants)
- Resources needed
- Ways of assessing progress
- Means of monitoring progress and reporting to stakeholders

The inclusion of all of the above components will support the likelihood for' accomplishing these goals. In addition, it is congruent with other schoolwide plans and initiatives. In terms of being "user friendly" and easily understood, a need exists to provide additional explanation in several areas in order to allow all persons to have the same understanding of what is intended. This is particularly apparent in the area of "Ways of Assessing Progress."

An area of the Action Plan that needs to be strengthened is the area of "Ways of Assessing Progress" and impact of the accomplishment of various goals as related to the enhancement of student learning and achievement.

There is also a need to re-examine the various selected goal areas and identify how student achievement will be improved by accomplishment of these goals and how this will be measured. The school will profit by reviewing their Self Study findings in an effort to identify areas that lend themselves more readily and directly towards enhancing student learning and achievement and then consider including these as Action Plan Goal Areas and perhaps shifting some of those currently identified areas that more readily lend themselves to general administrative tasks.

There are several Action Plan areas that may be combined under one more global goal statement. For example, the items #2, 3, and 4 (p. 32 of the Visiting Committee Report) all deal in some way with ESLRs. A more global statement such as: "Create and implement a plan that will enhance student learning and ensure measurable accomplishment of the ESLRs" would provide the opportunity to include items #2, 3 and 4 as a part of this larger goal.

The Action Plan is reasonable and feasible in terms of existing resources. The Action Plan was developed with very limited participation and thus a need exists to expand stakeholder involvement in the development process in order to build a wider base of stakeholder support and commitment. Factors that support school improvement include the commitment of the staff to the WASC process which is focused upon continuous improvement. The school wide Action Plan includes a section that is focused entirely upon the establishment of an on-going follow-up process to monitor implementation of the entire Action Plan. The framework for the process is outlined in the Action Plan and provides a sound basis for accomplishment of the Action Plan. One addition that would strengthen this area is to include the development of an annual report addressing accomplishment of various identified areas for growth and follow-up.

An impediment toward achievement may be staff turnover. Fifty percent of the current staff is new to the school since the last full Self Study. If this pattern of staff turnover continues it will present challenges related to accomplishment of the Action Plan. In addition, various timelines may need to be re-examined and modified to ensure appropriate time is allowed to facilitate thorough and effective completion of various tasks.

It is important that the school immediately examine and address these areas described above and review and revise the Action Plan accordingly in order to enhance its positive impact on student learning and to facilitate successful implementation.