

# **SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

## **WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

**FOR**

# **HIGHLAND HALL**

**17100 Superior Street**

**Northridge, CA 91325**

**March 7-9, 2011**

### **Visiting Committee Members**

Bob Curley, Chairperson  
WASC Representative

Elizabeth Anderson  
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## Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

**Briefly summarize the most critical information from the student/community profile that impacts the school. Include the following:**

- Brief description of the students and community served by the school
- School's analysis of student achievement data
- Other pertinent data

**→ Note: The entire profile does not need to be included but insert or attach pertinent charts/graphs on student performance.**

**Comment on significant findings revealed by the profile and/or pertinent items that were not included in the profile.**

The Highland Hall school community is composed of approximately 340 students, from preschool to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The student body exists in three main schools; the Early Childhood Center – consisting of two kindergarten classrooms, two nursery classrooms and one Parent and Child classroom; the Lower School – consisting of eight classrooms of 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students; and the High School, with an enrollment of about 100 students in grades 9 - 12. Students and families represent the following cultural groups: African American, Armenian, Israeli, Chinese, Hispanic, Indian, Japanese, and Native American. The parent body represents more than 25 countries. Many children enter the early childhood center as non-English speakers.

Highland Hall attracts parents who are very interested in self-education and who immerse themselves in the life of the school. Parent involvement includes: participation as members of the Board of Trustees, as Parent Association Officers, on various committees, and in the classroom. In addition, parents help as room representatives for each class, in the school store, in the various community festival and fundraising events, and as class event organizers. The Winter Festival in December, which features holiday crafts, entertainment, and excellent food and the May Faire that features a Maypole, crafts, musical entertainment, food and activities, are a couple of schoolwide events sponsored by the Parent Association. Additionally, parents are involved in major fundraising activities that provide resources to benefit the school.

Highland Hall, established in 1955, was the first Waldorf School in the western United States. The school is a full member of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA), is accredited by AWSNA and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), and is a full member of WECAN. The Highland Hall campus is located on an 11-acre, tree-studded hilltop in a lovely residential neighborhood. The natural beauty of the campus offers opportunities for long walks on its wandering trails under the shade of trees. Its facilities have grown to include a number of permanent classrooms at the kindergarten and high school level to supplement the modular buildings that make up the lower school facilities. Recently a pre-fab gymnasium was granted permanent status to support high school sports and school activities. There are plans to further enhance the facilities with additional capital campaigns.

Student progress is measured and documented annually by the teacher via student reports. Teachers carefully observe the strengths and challenges of each child in their learning experience, and a written evaluation is made each child in every subject that they are taught.

The faculty has identified key indicators of adequate progress at each grade level of the Lower School in the areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Arts, Work Habits, and Social Skills. In the

primary grades between 80% and 90% of the students were at or above developmental expectations of the faculty. Conversely, 10% to 20% were identified as needing ‘support’ or ‘strong support.’ In the upper primary grades, 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 85% to 90% of the students were identified as at or above expectations in Language Arts, Mathematics, the Sciences, and Sensory Motor skills. Two student groups in specific content areas emerged as significantly below this average percentage: almost a third of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students scored below expectations in Language Arts and one-fourth of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students demonstrated a beginning understanding of Mathematics. The percentage of students at or above expectations was particularly high in the Sciences and the current 5<sup>th</sup> grade group of students.

In relationship to Foreign Language, the number of students performing at or above expectations in German dropped from 90% to 85% from 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade, with a greater drop in the areas of writing and grammar. In Spanish, there was a greater drop in the percentage of students requiring additional support; the percent proficient dropped from 95% to 80% from 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade. These statistics reflect the current performance of the student body of the Lower School and do not indicate trends in instruction or student growth.

The statistics on high school students have been collected over the last six to ten years and indicate trends over time. During this time frame about 85% of the high school seniors have met the University of California a-g Requirements. A comparison of Highland Hall SAT scores to the national average show that Highland Hall students score consistently above the national average in Reading and Writing, but lower in Math. Regardless, over 90% of the Highland Hall seniors matriculate to College or University upon graduation.

## **Chapter II: Progress Report (suggested length: 2 pages)**

- **Briefly comment on the school's major changes and follow-up process since the last self-study.**

Since the last accreditation, a leadership team has led the school to make progress toward many of the 2004 Major Recommendations, yet many recommendations are only partially met. The most significant accomplishment occurred in the areas of facilities with the expansion of the Lower School and the erection of a new gymnasium.

- **Discuss how the school through its action plan has accomplished each of the critical areas for follow-up, including the impact on student learning.**

The following narratives indicate steps taken to address the 2004 Major recommendations.

### **2004 Major Recommendation #1**

*That the school continues to have clear, accessible communication as a top priority in all areas of school life.*

The school has made many gains in the area of communication. After appropriate consultations with parents and students, improvements to the Parent Handbook and weekly newsletter were made. The administration has improved and expanded the website to facilitate ongoing school communications to parents and the community. The quarterly newsletter to the community has also been expanded for communication purposes. The Administrative Director in conjunction with the Leadership Team clarified the Student Dismissal policy.

Though the school has made many advances in improving their communications and many specific vehicles for communication have been created, the school has not yet been able to create a broad communications plan for all areas of school life.

Administratively this area appears to be under sourced. One administrator is responsible for marketing, public relations, and communication, including website development and maintenance, newsletter publication and other publications. The website is well designed and communicates important information to the parents concerning the school's activities, events, programming and policies, but is a great deal of work. Due to the limitations of the server, significant time is wasted and there are limitations to what the website can offer. The Parent Association has created an independent website on another server in order to access more flexibility. Although this website is well designed and very supportive of the school, it is not under the management of the school, which is a concern.

The school has not adopted a comprehensive marketing strategy that informs their messaging to current and future parents, as well as the community.

Many parents have raised the concern that they do not know what the teachers are teaching or what their children are learning. Although there is a general overview of each grade listed on the website, parents feel they do not get enough detail concerning the goals and objectives. Now that the school has completed its guide of goals and objectives, the faculty needs to find a way to

communicate specifics to the parents in an appropriate way in order to ease significant parent concern.

Internally, communication in the school among the leadership, staff and faculty appears to be strongest between the Board of Trustees and the Leadership Team, although now the latter has been dissolved. There are concerns among the visiting team that the faculty and staff do not have sufficient organizational linkages to achieve the high level of collaboration demanded by a self-administered organization.

All of this cries out for the importance of developing a comprehensive communication plan with the same level of rigor the school used to create a building plan. This must be a priority. It is felt that this communication plan needs to incorporate adequate sourcing, consultation and buy in by all of the school's shareholders, and structural institutional conduits that will foster regular sharing and collaboration among all faculties, leadership bodies and administrative staff.

#### **2004 Major Recommendation #2**

*That the school creates a complete written curriculum guide clearly stating goals and objective measures of assessment in all subject areas in order to establish higher expectations for student achievement.*

The school has recently completed this written guide of the curriculum with clearly stated goals and objectives. A few members of the faculty have begun to realize the benefit of the guide, but it has not as yet been fully integrated as a tool for teachers planning, preparation, assessment and communication. This integration is a next step that the school needs to undertake in order for teachers, students and parents to realize the benefit from these measures.

#### **2004 Major Recommendation #3**

*That the school adhere to clear, consistently applied school-wide standards of behavior*

In its self study the school acknowledged that while improved, the school is still lacking in strong guidelines and consistency regarding discipline and academic excellence. Student discipline came up during the last accreditation process but the continued inconsistency towards discipline shows it has not been fully addressed. The visiting team recommends this recommendation remain in place and that significant progress be made on addressing these concerns by the accreditation deadline.

#### **2004 Major Recommendation #4**

*That the faculty engage in the diversification and renewal of the curriculum and of pedagogical methods to reflect the maturation of the North American Waldorf school curriculum that has been developing for the past decade.*

The school has not made significant progress on working from a school wide perspective on diversification and renewal of the curriculum. The visiting team recommends this recommendation remain in place.

### **Major Recommendation #5**

***That the school adopt a two-fold approach to facilities improvement:***

***As soon as possible evaluate the impact that the small sizes of the lower school classrooms have on the pedagogy and on enrollment, and recommend "sooner than later" improvements and renovations that will better support students learning. Such plans would become part of the school-wide Strategic Plan.***

***Continue with the momentum toward future buildings.***

The school has made significant progress in this area, including the expansion of the lower school classrooms, the erection of a new gymnasium, and has reached the final phases of plans for a new theatre. It is readily evident that teachers and children enjoy the extra space in the classrooms. The gymnasium has generated much enthusiasm for the children and the community and will prove a real asset for the school who no longer have to bus the children a significant distance to use a gym space.

The planning for the building projects went through many stages of rigorous investigation and consultation. In the preparation for the ground breaking for the theatre, the school rallied community support from the Hard Rock Café to move an older tree from the building site to another place on the grounds. This initiative underscores to the children the ecological values of respecting the earth that the school holds. Given the current financial position of the school, however, the board has recently made the decision to temporarily put the theatre building project on hold.

### **Major Recommendation #6**

***That the school builds a leadership culture that encourages its stakeholders to assert leadership where and when appropriate; that the school empower its leaders to lead. This could be achieved through study and research with the goal of building a healthy governance culture in which collaborative leadership and followership emerge and are supported in service to the school.***

The school has made a significant effort to develop a leadership culture and to create clear structures that would give authority to leaders to lead. The Board of Trustees has articulated it role clearly and mandated authority to a Leadership Team to manage the pedagogical affairs of the school along with an Advisory Council as consultative body. Mandate groups have been established with clear purposes and goals and have been active and functioning. A consultant has been engaged and studies undertaken to shift the culture of the members of the school and these efforts have had some effect in shifting support for strong empowered leadership and a more articulated management structure.

A little over two years ago, Advisory Council folded of its own accord, due to lack of membership and interest. Its responsibilities were apparently given to the full faculty to be carried out during their meeting, but the leadership descriptions given to parents still name the Advisory Council, and it does not appear that this transition was formal.

The Board of Trustees has established a strong communication with the Leadership Team with regular and appropriate oversight within the Carver model of governance the school uses. The

Board of Trustees has taken a posture of promoting collaboration and transparency as much as possible, and this is a strength for the school. The working relationship between the Board of Trustees and the Leadership Team began to undergo a change starting in the summer of 2010, precipitated by a series of crisis.

In June of 2010, the school experienced a crisis that precipitated the loss of enrolment, revenue and a more active participation in school management by the Board of Trustees. The Membership of the Leadership Team dwindled in the fall with no one willing to step into the position. Two class teachers were dismissed in the fall, one of whom had been a former Leadership Team member. The Board of Trustees began work on creating a position of Pedagogical Chair who be empowered with time and authority to manage the pedagogical affairs of the school. In February, consultation with some faculty took place regarding the job description of the Pedagogical Chair. A week prior to our visit, the Leadership Team was disbanded by the Board of Trustees and an interim management team called the Interim School Council (ISC) was formed with authority to lead while the search for a Pedagogical Chair is undertaken. The school's expectation is that the Pedagogical Chair will be hired within 4-6 months.

Although the school has undertaken much work in this area, a significant amount of distrust is present in the faculty. Conversations are characterized by “us” and “them” language. Individuals and faculties are talked about as “the problem”. Real resistance to authority and empowered leadership exists in individuals and pockets of the school. There has also been an uprising of parent discontent, with major concern that the school is not managing itself or the delivery of the curriculum clearly and effectively. An enrolment decline of nearly 12% over the summer and fall of 2010, and indicators of an enrolment drop for next year of the same magnitude show this has had a profound effect on the school's ability to retain families. The financial crisis resulting from this, both present and projected, has raised tension, allowed fears and insecurities to rise up, and placed more urgency and stress on the school's situation.

Several factors can be named that have contributed to the failure of the management model that has been in place for the past four years.

First, an overarching plan was not created for this area. There is a stark contrast between the due diligence under taken for the building projects on campus, and the “building” of leadership culture and structure.

Second, there does not seem to be consciousness through a critical mass of the organization regarding the developmental stage the school is in. The change that Highland Hall is seeking to make in the organization is part of the natural development of Waldorf schools and other non-profit organizations who grow and become more complex. They are moving out of a pioneering phase and into an institutional phase in order to be able to sustain the activity that is core to their mission – teaching the children. It is not clear that they are conscious of what is demanded in the change, or of the dynamics of organizational change.

Third, leadership has not been adequately empowered. Evidence of the school remaining in the pioneering stage can be seen in that very little time was allotted (only relief from duties) to the

Leadership Team in order to carry out its work, which included the expectation of 6-8 hours in three weekly meetings, meeting weekly with the Advisory Council, meeting and reporting to the Board of Trustees, along with all the other meetings needed with their faculties and the whole faculty, along with the duties of their full time work. It is a wonder that the Leadership Team lasted as long as it did, and no surprise that no one wants to step into this position.

Fourth, there has not been the formation of leadership positions and teams in the individual faculty groups (ECC, LS, HS) to support the work of the faculty, increase internal communication, collaboration and effectiveness. The result has been poor levels of communication, collaboration and the cultivation of distrust. Conflicts are elevated too quickly to the Leadership Team, causing implosions in their time. Significant issues being resolved outside affected faculties, which have feed anti-authority sentiments. Issues and conflicts within faculties have not been transparently addressed or managed, resulting in intervention from the Leadership Team and mandate groups. In the absence of this sectional leadership, the visiting team has found it difficult and cumbersome to assess the work that is going on in faculties.

Fifth, the staffing of committees and leadership positions has been based on personalities, not competencies. This is not to say the people in these positions are not competent. The Highland Hall faculties, as a whole, exhibit a broad expanse of experience and competence. There are not, however, articulated competencies required of leadership positions in a written form that guides selection or a screening process before people are chosen for this position.

Sixth, the staffing of the Leadership Team and committees has not taken into account representation of each faculty to ensure ownership and a high degree of collaboration between of the activity of leadership, committees, and faculties. Lack of representation in committees that deal with personnel issues have resulted in high degrees of mistrust and resentment in the way faculty are assessed, mentored and evaluated. Concern has also been expressed that when teachers have been removed, the usual supports surrounding the children and new teachers in this time of transition were not sufficiently in place.

Seventh, there has not been adequate training for leaders to develop the specific capacities required of strong collaborative leadership. Although the faculty exhibits a broad expanse of experience and competence, they don't know what they don't know. Individuals in leadership and leadership teams require both time and training in order effectively manage individuals and group.

Eight, the job description of the AC states that it *"is a group composed of teachers and staff dedicated to the Highland Hall Waldorf School and the philosophy that lies behind the education."* The visiting team wonders how a group could be selected out of the faculty staff on this basis and why it would not be a high expectation that everyone who works at Highland Hall is *"dedicated to the Highland Hall Waldorf School and the philosophy that lies behind the education."* ?

Finally, one of responsibilities of the Advisory Council is for developing a consciousness of the being of the school. The care for the Being of the school has not been consciously held since the dissolution of the Advisory Council, and it is unclear where this is happening.



**2004 Major Recommendation #7 – *That the faculty and College collaborate on examining and renewing the role of the College within the school. The Visiting Committee recommends that the school study its biography and history, and, in consultation with the Pedagogical Section, effect a rededication and re-inspiration of the College.***

This work was done, but needs to be resolved in the pedagogical management plan.

**2004 Major Recommendation #8 - *That the Board directs the creation of a strategic plan that addresses new facilities, development, funding, facilities improvement and maintenance; such a plan to include timelines, reporting, and persons responsible.***

This goal has been accomplished and is successful and ongoing. This work has truly assisted the school in creating long-term plans and goals. It was the first ever and did not sit on a shelf gathering dust. By combining strategic planning and the accreditation self-study process the school has established an ongoing process for planning and growth and uses it.

### **Chapter III: Self-Study Process (suggested length: 1-½ pages)**

Include a copy of the school's expected schoolwide learning results.

Comment on the school's self-study process with respect to the parameters and accuracy.

- The involvement and collaboration of all stakeholders in the self-study.
- The clarification of the school's purpose and the expected schoolwide learning results.
- The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning in relation to the criteria and the expected schoolwide learning results.
- The development of a schoolwide action plan that integrates subject area/program and support plans to address identified growth needs.
- The development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the plan.

The Expected School Wide Learning results were updated during the 2009-10 school year. Several whole school meetings were held to review, edit, and update. Minor alterations were made to the original goals. The Leadership Team approved the improvements.

Expected School Wide Learning Results (reviewed and updated in October 2009)

#### **I. Moral/Spiritual: Graduates will have the tools to continue their moral and spiritual development. They will:**

- A. Have confidence in their abilities
- B. Be able to make life choices according to their own views, values and goals
- C. Be able to identify and pursue their goals for moral/spiritual development
- D. Be aware of the importance of harmonizing their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects

#### **II. Thinking: Graduates will be proficient in a broad spectrum of thinking skills, including:**

- A. The ability to assimilate, analyze, and organize information for themselves and others
- B. The ability to resolve problems and situations involving multiple ideas or aspects
- C. The ability to look beyond the immediate and see the 'big' picture
- D. The ability to form new questions through active imagination

#### **III. Communication: Graduates will demonstrate effective and creative communication skills. They will be able to:**

- A. *Organize and develop ideas and present them in clear, correct verbal and written form*
- B. Express themselves creatively in at least one art form
- C. Listen to others with interest and compassion

#### **IV. Social: Graduates will demonstrate the ability to create, maintain, and nourish healthy relationships. They will:**

- A. Be able to accept and work with people of different backgrounds, cultures, temperaments, and levels of capacity
- B. Have appreciation for others' efforts and achievements and each individual's unique value
- C. Have an awareness of the power of individuals and groups to create change

**V. Orientation/Will: Graduates will have developed the capacities to make significant contributions to the world.** They will be:

- A. Oriented in time and place and interested in the world
- B. Be able to take initiative and positive action
- C. Be able to enter and meet the adult world with a conscious ability to trust, balanced with discernment
- D. Committed to lifelong learning and a development of their highest capacities

The school went to great length to involve parents and faculty and staff members on the self-study. The process began in detail almost 2 years ago with the formation of the teams to review various portions of the school's program. There was an extensive commitment of time and energy from many full time faculty and staff. The previous curriculum descriptions were updated and gathered into curriculum guide books, educational goals were created, and assessment measures were written and implemented for most almost every subject and class. Most faculty members participated in at least two groups during this process, a discipline specific group, and an area of the school group. The majority of this work was accomplished during regular faculty meetings as well as a few special meetings. The strengths and areas of growth seem to accurately represent the findings of the Visiting Committee. The Visiting Committee met with the teams responsible for each section of the Self Study. High School students did not seem to be involved in the Self-Study process. The school's expected schoolwide learning results accurately describe goals the core instructional program and school's philosophy.

However, staff dynamics and lack of support to the school's leadership model has limited the school's ability to conduct a comprehensive, coordinated assessment of the school's program and student progress.

A schoolwide action plan needs to be developed in conjunction with work on interpersonal development and an effective leadership model to effectively address identified growth needs.

The lack of a working leadership model significantly limits the accountability and monitoring of progress on the action plan.

## **Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program**

### **Part A: For each section:**

- I. Purpose, Goals, and Philosophy**
- II. Educational Program, Activities, and Student Services**
- III. Governance, Administration, Finance, and Law**
- IV. Personnel**
- V. The School Community**

**Provide a brief summary analysis of what currently exists and its impact on student learning and commendations and recommendations for each of the five sections.**

#### **I. Purpose, Goals, and Philosophy**

The Highland Hall Waldorf School offers its students a diverse and holistic Waldorf curriculum, offering sciences, math, fine arts, humanities, applied arts, eurhythmy, music and physical/movement/outdoor education, as shown in their document by grade and discipline. Balance and integration of subjects is considered as the school strives to meet the developmental and age appropriate needs of each student in grades 9 through 12. The school's strong tradition of excellence stems from a dedicated faculty and staff, engaged students, and committed parents.

The school strives to ensure that all students have developed capacities of feeling, thought and will, in order to be successful in their personal endeavors after graduation and throughout life. Highland Hall's vision is to be exemplary in providing Waldorf education, in modeling organizational self governance, and in fostering healthy human relationships and a spirit of service to others.

Highland Hall's mission is to guide students from nursery age through high school in the unique Waldorf curriculum, striving to endow each student with capacities and discernment in thought and action, a joy of learning, and a sense of wonder and a reverence for life

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) Implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum from nursery school through grade 12 that meets the academic, social, and developmental needs of each student and prepares him for success after graduation (conferences with staff and alumni parents, observations of classes).
- 2) Having a strong and diverse program that includes academics, art, gardening, music, eurhythmy, drama, etc. (Self Study pp. 43-73; conferences with lower school and high school students; conferences with teachers and parents; observations of classes).
- 3) Strong, experienced teachers dedicating to teaching the whole child (Self Study pp. 87-91; conferences with lower school and high school students; conferences with teachers, administration, and parents; classroom observations).
- 4) Development and adherence to a clear Mission to guide students from nursery age through high school in the unique Waldorf curriculum, striving to endow each student with discernment in thought, action, a joy of learning, and a sense of wonder and reverence for life (Self Study pp. 3; conferences with lower school and high school students; conferences with teachers, administration, and parents; classroom observations).

- 5) Active tuition assistance program that allows a more diverse student population to be served by the school (Self Study pp. 92-98; conferences with administration and committees).

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the current leadership model has broken down over a couple of years (dissolution of the Advisory Council) and the Leadership Team was recently replaced with an Interim School Council, the school take immediate action to create an overarching management plan that builds leadership, communication, and decision-making, and conflict resolution structures that are representative of the mutual interest of stakeholder groups, within the school and parent community (Self Study pp. 79-84; conferences with Board members, faculty and staff; ISC Mandate).
- 2) That the school under the pedagogical leadership diversifies and renews the curriculum and pedagogical methods to reflect the maturation of the North American Waldorf school curriculum. A couple of examples could be the integration of technology and multicultural studies at the high school (Self Study pp. 79-84; conferences with teachers, administration, parents, and committees).
- 3) That the school defines the roles and responsibilities of the Board, administrative staff, pedagogical leadership, faculty and staff and that a commitment is made for all stakeholders to fulfill their roles and carry out their responsibilities. (Self Study pp. 79-84; conferences with Board members, faculty and staff)
- 4) That the teachers create a more consistent and thorough system for comparing rubrics, analyzing data, and sharing ideas (Self Study pp. 48-69; conferences with high school students, teachers, administration, and parents).
- 5) That the school develops cohesive, coherent organizational self governance that models healthy human relationships and is in line with the school's Vision (Self Study pp. 3; conferences with teachers, administration, parents, and committees).
- 6) That the Board of Trustees review their actions as they have taken on an intervention role in school management over the past year, along with newly formed job descriptions to determine if they are consistent with the Carver model of governance out of which they operate, and out of this review, create and clearly communicate a Crisis Response Plan in the case that an intervention is needed in the future. That the Board of Trustees focuses on the financial needs of the school such as bringing in non tuition income through gifts and grants. (Self Study pp. 79-84; conferences with administration, Board members; Board minutes June, July; ISC Job Description)

## II. Educational Program

**Early Childhood Educational Program:** At Highland Hall the children's days are filled with both structured and unstructured activities that exercise powers of imagination. To begin academic study at this time would be to rush them through that period of life when their proper work and most effective way of learning is through imitation and imaginative play. Watercolor painting, drawing, handcrafts, beeswax modeling, baking, puppet shows, and other artistic activities open the young child to the wonders of creativity, while circle games, Eurhythm, and healthy outdoor play increase physical strength, agility, and grace. At this time of life, it is also important that young children feel secure in their surroundings. It is the feeling of security that

allows them to explore their environment, let their natural curiosity develop, and begin the lifelong process of engagement with the world. The teachers work to incorporate and plan activities that will nurture and facilitate the development of these four important senses:

- The sense of life
- The sense of balance
- The sense of self movement
- The sense of touch

At early childhood orientation the teachers give a comprehensive overview of Waldorf education based on Rudolf Steiner's view of human development and Highland Hall, and speak in depth about the play curriculum that is the foundation for the education of young children. During interviews, the teachers and the parents assess whether there is a match between the school and the family. Parents need to support the program for the achievement of the expected school wide results.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The early childhood faculty for the development of an assessment process from nursery to kindergarten that not only helps assess the child but also confirm the effectiveness of the program. (WECAN p 9; Evidence binder; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Reporting Student Progress )
- 2) The Early Childhood faculty for the use of a written report at the end of the year shared with the first grade teachers and parents. (Conversation with early childhood teacher; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Reporting Student Progress)
- 3) The Early Childhood faculty for their commitment to the development of a healthy community and faculty's work to foster open and clear communication between parents and teachers as well as among teachers themselves. (WECAN p 6; Conversation with parents; Conversation with early childhood teachers; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning)
- 4) The Early Childhood faculty for working to create an environment of beauty, warmth, order, and form in their classrooms allowing the children to play in freedom as they are held gently, surely, and with care, their spiritual natures recognized, their instincts for creative play realized. (Classroom observations; campus observations; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, School Environment)
- 5) The Early Childhood faculty for increasing their level of understanding of integrative movement to effectively include it in morning circle with their students. (WECAN p 9; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff; WASC Criteria; Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, How Students Learn)
- 6) The early childhood center faculty for their connection to colleagues in the region and active participation in regional gatherings. One teacher volunteers as the WECAN representative for the Southern California region. ( WECAN p 9; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, School Improvement Process)
- 7) The site administration and leadership for providing the early childhood center strong, experienced, lead teachers, who work effectively together to provide a quality Waldorf

program for the children.(WECAN p 8; conversation with early childhood faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)

- 8) The Early Childhood faculty for their commitment to regularly attend conferences and workshops to further enhance and develop their understanding of the young child as well as availing themselves of written materials, including but not limited to, Waldorf resources. (WECAN p 5; Conversations with early childhood faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff).

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the site administration and leadership in collaboration with the early childhood center faculty and staff develop plans to increase future Kindergarten enrollment (WECAN p 4; conversations with resources committee; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resource Planning)
- 2) That the site administration and leadership, with the early childhood center faculty and staff write their fully formed curriculum (School report p 44; Conversation with admission director; Conversation with early childhood faculty; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, What Students Learn)
- 3) The site administration and leadership develop a calendar that includes regular pedagogical discussions with other areas of the school (School report p 44; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, School Leadership)

**Lower School; Grades 1 - 8:** The content of each grade level in the lower school (Grades 1-8) thoroughly reflects the scope and sequence of all pertinent disciplines of study. This content is verifiable in the written curricula for each grade, observation in the classrooms, perusal of lesson books, and is demonstrated in projects and performances. Varied methods of presentation address multiple learning styles and levels of abilities in the school children. The campus, with its many open spaces, offers opportunities for experiential learning and outdoor activities. The program includes a balance of language, math, natural science, social science, humanities, fine arts, practical arts, performing arts, physical education and practical work experience as is appropriate for the age, needs, and abilities of the students.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The dedicated teaching staff, with broad representation of strengths and gifts, for bringing a full curriculum to the students. (School Report pp 44-45; classroom observations; conversations with teachers; WASC criteria, Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 2) The stability and longevity of both the school and faculty as a source of strength. (School Report pp 19-21; evidence binder; WASC criteria, Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 3) The utilization eleven acre campus to support diverse activities and opportunities for learning. (School Report p 3-4; observation of campus; WASC criteria: Organization for Student Learning, School Environment)
- 4) The site administration hosting the teacher training program which shares the campus and provides many mutually beneficial opportunities for teacher development. (School Report p 87; WASC criteria: Resource management and Development, Resources)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the site administration, leadership, and class teachers jointly examine the After-School-Care program staffing, equipment, and facilities support. (School Report p 45; Conversations with Faculty and Staff; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 2) That the site administration, leadership, and class teachers seek ways to create more alternative small teaching spaces, spaces for meetings and places for storage to facilitate teaching, collaboration, and resources to successfully implement Waldorf methods. (Observation; conferences with teachers; WASC criteria, Resource Management and Development, Resources)
- 3) That the site administration, leadership, and class teachers create and utilize more Waldorf-compatible types of educational support (Conversations with faculty and parents; WASC criteria: Organization for Student Learning, School Improvement Process)
- 4) That the site administration, leadership, and class teachers implement communication of instructional program, educational activities and findings to the entire faculty. (School Report p 45; Conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 5) That the class teachers define their roles and responsibilities and commit to fulfill these roles and responsibilities. (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff)
- 6) That in the organizational plans there be an emphasis of the institutional communication structures that link the various leadership entities and promote collaboration and cooperation (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff)
- 7) That the Lower School take an active role to address feelings of mistrust, disenfranchisement and concerns about interpersonal development, and communication that exists within the faculty and staff and extends to interactions with the Board of Trustees and parent community. (conferences with staff, individual teachers, faculties, leadership team members)
- 8) That the site administration, leadership, and class teachers jointly review the need for increased hours for the school counselor to further support students who are struggling with the curriculum.(School Report p 46; Conversations with parents and faculty; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 9) That the administration, leadership, and class teachers jointly improve play yards with more and varied equipment (School Report p 44; observation; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resource Planning)

**High School:** The Highland Hall Waldorf School offers its high school students a diverse and holistic Waldorf curriculum, offering sciences, math, fine arts, humanities, applied arts, eurhythmy, music and physical/movement/outdoor education, as shown in their document by grade and discipline. Balance and integration of subjects is considered as the school strives to meet the developmental and age appropriate needs of each student in grades 9 through 12.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The high school faculty for implementing a curriculum that balances core academic subjects, music, fine and applied arts, movement/physical/outdoor education and life skills. (School



Report pp 47-48; classroom observations; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, What Students Learn)

- 2) The site administration and leadership for securing a strong core of devoted, caring and experienced faculty who work diligently and harmoniously together. (Classroom observations; discussions with high school faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 3) The high school faculty for holding regular meetings which include a child study, observations of students, pedagogical sharing, and attending to pressing business and housekeeping questions and decisions. (School Report p 47; conference with high school faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 4) The high school faculty for striving to integrate many of the subjects around the theme of the main lesson. (School Report p 46; classroom observations; conversations with students; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, What Students Learn)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the high school faculty actively continue to create opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration among teachers. (Interviews with high school faculty; classroom observations; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, How Students Learn)
- 2) That the site administration and leadership, in collaboration with the high school faculty, clarify its facility needs and vision, particularly surrounding fine arts, eurythmy, music, and the science classes. (Conferences with high school faculty; classroom observations; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resource Planning)
- 3) That the high school faculty work collaboratively to organize and maintain each classroom to avoid clutter and unnecessary items, so that the high level of teaching and learning is supported by the physical environment. (Conferences with high school faculty; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resource Planning)
- 4) That the site administration and leadership, along with the high school faculty, place emphasis on service learning and community outreach to allow participation by all high school students. (School Report p 48; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)

**Language Arts:** The language arts curriculum has remarkable breadth and depth throughout the school, (nursery through 12<sup>th</sup> grade) enlivened by each teacher's constant adaptation and renewal of the curriculum indications given by Rudolf Steiner. The curriculum overview for each grade addresses the appropriate stage of development for students. Each teacher strives to create presentations, assignments and assessments, in an age appropriate manner, based on the three-fold model of the human being (thinking, feeling, and willing). The Waldorf curriculum in itself is culturally diverse, presenting the whole world and its cultures through mythology and literature as well as geography and history. The Curriculum Guide demonstrates the inclusion of reading, writing, drama, speech, and the allied arts.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The high school faculty for actively working together to deliver a quality program to the students (School Report p 49; Conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 2) The site administration and leadership, along with the faculty, for implementing a rich tradition of drama curriculum throughout the grades synthesizing mythology, literature, and speech and bringing the language arts curriculum to life, thereby strengthening students' confidence, collaborative skills, and clarity of speech. (School Report pp 49-51; classroom observations; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, How Students Learn)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That individual teachers share information learned through conference attendance with the entire faculty to improve instruction. (School Report p 50; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)
- 2) That the site administration, leadership, and class teachers jointly select and share a program with the faculty that would help improve individual student writing skills (School Report pp 49-51; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 3) That the site administration, leadership, and class teachers jointly develop a template for parent-teacher conferences to help faculty provide uniform feedback to parents. (School Report p51; conversations with faculty and parents; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Reporting Student Progress)

**Mathematics:** Highland Hall has a deep and broad mathematics curriculum that provides a great deal of flexibility, especially in the early grades, for teachers to meet each student appropriately for the stage of development. The curriculum is based on the original Waldorf curriculum as laid out by Rudolf Steiner, and covers all of the State of California math content standards. In addition, the high school curriculum exceeds all University of California requirements. Instruction at all levels involves a variety of approaches that engage students in learning through auditory, visual and kinesthetic means.

The main method of assessment used by teachers for improvement of the teaching/learning process comes from daily observation of student reactions and learning in the classroom. The assessments are used extensively to alter and improve instruction approach and timing.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The site administration and leadership, along with the math faculty for creating math curriculum and methods of instruction that do an excellent job of helping those who are struggling. (School Report pp 52-53; conversations with math faculty; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, What Students Learn)
- 2) The site administration and leadership for creating a strong curriculum that teaches students in a developmentally appropriate and effective manner. (School Report pp 52-53; Curriculum guide; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, What Students Learn)

- 3) The math faculty for arranging for access to the best thinkers and teachers of math within the worldwide Waldorf community for onsite visits and conferences with these leaders. (School Report p 52; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, How Students Learn)
- 4) The High School Math Department for implementing a rigorous set of student learning objectives and an assessment process that examines practical ability, understanding and confidence for each student. (School Report p 53; conversations with math faculty; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, How Assessment is Used)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the site administration and leadership ascertain how the math curriculum and methods of instruction could be more effective in challenging high performing students who are ready to move to the next level, ahead of the rest of the class. (School Report pp 52, 54; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, What Students Learn)
- 2) That the class teachers and the high school math department collaborate on a more effective basis to ease the transition in terms of the math curriculum from the lower grades through middle school and high school. (School Report P 54; conversations with math faculty; conversations with parents; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, What Students Learn)
- 3) That the site administration and leadership develop a plan to include discussion of the math curriculum and student progress in the back-to-school conferences (School Report p 54; conversations with parents; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Parent/Community Involvement)

**History/Social Studies:** The school's purpose and student goals are heavily weighted towards development of social competence and a deeper understanding of humanity. The history curriculum addresses these issues on many levels and through numerous experiential media serving varying learning styles in students. Some of these media include dramatic arts, fine arts, physical education, art history, artistic expression, reading, story-telling, creative writing, essay writing, note-taking in lectures and writing compositions.

Both the process and the content address many forms of learning: thinking (e.g. cognitive), feeling (e.g. affective), and willing (e.g. psychomotor) in an age appropriate manner in such ways as through dramatic plays, field trips, creative writing assignments, illustrating the Main Lesson Book, individual and group projects, story-telling, lectures and biographical stories of historical figures.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The site administration and leadership for creating a comprehensive history curriculum that is highly aligned with developmental benchmarks. (School Report pp 54-57; classroom observations; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, How Students Learn)
- 2) The site administration and leadership for development of a highly articulated, developmentally appropriate and transdisciplinary approach as the vehicle for teaching the

social studies/history curriculum. (School Report pp 54-57; classroom observation; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, What Students Learn)

- 3) The site administration and leadership for providing an experienced, enthusiastic faculty who share resources and ideas. (School Report p 57; classroom observations; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the site administration and leadership seek ways to aide the faculty to work to increase consistency in the sharing of student achievement and curriculum assessment criteria among colleagues. (School Report p 57; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 2) That the site administration and leadership establish a teacher resource library that is centralized thus improving resource and equipment storage and accessibility. (School Report p 56; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)
- 3) That the site administration and leadership develop plans to strengthen the study of Asian, South American and African cultures. (School Report p 57; conversations with lower school faculty; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, What Students Learn)
- 4) That the site administration and leadership study and determine if there are an adequate number of History faculty to adequately deliver the curriculum. (School report p 57; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 5) That the site administration and leadership study and implement ways for history to be incorporated into some track classes as a way to deepen content for students. (Conversations with student and faculty; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, What Students Learn)
- 6) That the humanities department work to identify when and how geography is woven into the curriculum, thus helping students with awareness of the world. (Conversations with students and faculty; WASC Criteria: What Students Learn)

**Science:** The study of science develops the student's capacities to observe keenly and to think clearly about the world in which they live. Instead of giving concepts at the beginning of a lesson, an experience of the physical of chemical phenomenon is created and using their senses, students draw their own conclusions of the experiment. Keenly observing, re-imagining a phenomenon, articulating the observations, integrating experiences with others to find relationships of the observation, are activities that many leading scientists practice, often working collaboratively with others.

The curriculum is based on a holistic approach through hands on, phenomenological learning. The teaching methodology is based on the concept of layering: first an introductory exposure, then repetition leading to a deepening of content over the years

Instruction at all levels involves a variety of approaches that engage students in learning through auditory, visual and kinesthetic means. Teachers design and implement a wide variety of learning experiences to the highest extent of their ability.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The experienced science faculty for ongoing collaboration between teachers which helps students learn the subject content. (School Report p 60; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 2) The science faculty for providing flexibility in the curriculum that allows students to learn developmentally appropriate information. (School report pp 58-60; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, How Students Learn)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the site administration and leadership investigate ways to provide new lab facilities for science classes for 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, giving adequate space and supplies to help the students learn concepts being presented. (School Report pp 58-60; conversations with science faculty; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)
- 2) That the site administration and leadership, along with the science faculty, evaluate the present media & technological resources available for use in 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade classes. (School Report p59; conversations with science faculty; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)
- 3) That the site administration and leadership work for clear consensus on the chemistry curriculum (7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>) with dialog and support from the Math Department. (School Report p60; conversations with science faculty; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, What Students Learn)

**Foreign Language:** The acquisition of reading, writing, and speaking skills in the foreign progresses in an age appropriate manner through the grades. Working with the various learning styles and temperaments involves an orchestration of the threefold lesson (engaging the feeling, thinking and will of each child). Such work includes artistic activity, recitation of poetry, and question/answer format

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The foreign language faculty for excellent use of the resources provided, aiding them to deliver content using a variety of instructional approaches. (School Report p 61; classroom observations; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)
- 2) The foreign language faculty for conducting effective and cohesive departmental meetings. (School Report p 61; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, staff)
- 3) The foreign language faculty for providing a workshop at the beginning of the year to support new students and students with learning challenges (School Report p 61-62; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 4) The foreign language staff for working cooperatively with the class teachers to balance foreign language plans with the classroom content.(School Report pp61-62; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, What Students Learn)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the site administration and leadership investigate the addition of a twelfth grade language class as preparation for SAT II tests in Spanish and German. (School Report p 62; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 2) That the site administration and leadership investigate additional funding for classroom materials and for cultural development via outside speakers. (School report p 62; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)
- 3) That the site administration and leadership investigate facilities for a language lab, classroom, and storage to better help the students learn the languages being taught. (School Report p 62; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)

**Music:** The music curriculum contains a great deal of depth and breadth based on current research and thinking. Music is a part of the daily activity in every grade level. In the early childhood center, music is brought during circle time primarily. Students take both singing and instrumental classes during most of grades one to twelve. All students get frequent chances to participate actively in music classes and to take part in high quality performances in the community. Teachers use different approaches in classes, allowing for appropriate development for the various ages and which accommodate students with different learning styles.

The teachers address the “four temperaments” in each lesson. In lay terms, these are happy, sad, assertive, and tranquil. The faculty incorporates various warm-up exercises, learning to read music, sight reading, and performing on a regular basis.

Teachers assess students on a daily basis, with questions such as: are they in class, ready to learn? Are the students engaged in the lesson? Are they following along with the music? If singing, are their mouths open, and is the tone audible? If required to bring an instrument, are they coming to class with the appropriate supplies? If daily assessment shows that the students are not progressing well, the teacher might select an easier or more appealing piece for the students to study. In some instrumental classes, students are required to practice each night, and return the practice sheet signed by their parent on a weekly basis. Written evaluations or progress reports are sent to the parents.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The site administration and leadership for a broad music curriculum rich in cultural diversity and encompassing vocal and instrumental mediums. (School Report pp 63-64; classroom observation; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, What Students Learn)
- 2) The large, highly trained music faculty for helping each student to learn and enjoy music. (School Report pp 63-64; observations; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, What Students Learn)
- 3) The faculty, students and staff for offering quality concerts and recitals to be enjoyed by the school community. (School Report p 64; exhibits; conversations with school personnel; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: What Students Learn)

- 4) The site administration and leadership for providing an instrumental music room where students are able to practice together and prepare for performances. (School Report p 64; observation; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)
- 5) The music faculty for incorporating Waldorf elements into a program for all students in grades 1 through 12 (School Report p 63-64; observation; conversations with faculty, staff, students, parents; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, What Students Learn)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the site administration and leadership work with the music faculty to resolve scheduling issues for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. (School report p 65; conversations with music faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 2) That the site administration and leadership implement the acquisition of a few Orff instruments included a cart, to be accessible for lower school singing classes (School Report pp63-65; conversations with music faculty; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resource Planning)
- 3) That the faculties responsible for singing instruction communicate needs more effectively to improve overall student instruction. (School Report p 65; conversations with music faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 4) That the site administration and leadership investigate the creation of a large choral space for student rehearsal. (School Report p 65; conversations with music faculty; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resource Planning)
- 5) That the site leadership work with the music department faculty to help schedule meetings at least once per semester to foster sharing of concerns and plans. (School Report p 65; conversations with music faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 6) That the site administration and leadership investigate the possibility of providing participation in the hand bell choir to the lower grades (School Report p 65; conversations with music faculty; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, What Students Learn)
- 7) That the music faculty create a file of outside research and findings concerning music methodologies that is available to share with parents (School Report p 65; conversations with music faculty; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Parent/community Involvement) throughout the grades synthesizing mythology, literature, and speech and bringing the language arts curriculum to life, thereby strengthening students' confidence, collaborative skills, and clarity of speech. (School Report p 49; classroom observations; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, What Students Learn)

**Movement – Eurhythmymy and Physical Education:** To a great extent, the teachers design and implement a variety of instructional approaches and learning experiences that engage students consistent with the school's purpose and student goals.

For example, when introducing a new game or performance piece, orientation is often begun through:

1. An imagination, a story, or picture. A next step might incorporate

2. Verbalization and abstraction.
3. A visual component may be added as demonstration.
4. The kinesthetic element, sometimes in slow motion is added to the learning process.

The slower learners may need an additional and varied approach.

Both in eurhythmym and physical education, children with diverse skills are addressed through a differentiated performance and sports offering. These include extra-curricular team activities.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) Faculty members for exhibiting an understanding of Rudolf Steiner's indications for the relevant disciplines. (School Report pp 65-67; classroom observations; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, How Students Learn)
- 2) The instructional staff for designing and implementing a variety of instructional approaches and learning experiences that engage students at a high level of learning. (School Report pp 65-67; classroom observations; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff; Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, How Students Learn)
- 3) The site administration and leadership for supporting the New Gym and the future Performance Arts Theater which will open up new possibilities both for Eurhythmym and Physical Education. (School Report p 67; school site observation; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)
- 4) The site administration and leadership, along with the faculty, for involving 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in yearly southern California Waldorf School athletic events which showcase the curriculum as well as capacities of the athletes. (School Report p 67; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 5) The site administration and leadership for support of a strong middle school after school sports program. (School Report p 67; conversations with administration and faculty; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 6) The site administration, leadership and faculty for including archery, fencing and folk dancing as part of the program for specific grades thus giving students the opportunity to explore additional forms of physical exercise. (School Report p 67; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, What Students Learn)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the site administration and leadership review the number of staff in place in the eurhythmym and movement departments so that students are able to safely and successfully participate in the programs provided. (School Report p 67; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 2) That the site administration and leadership evaluate the feasibility of more student eurhythmym performances throughout the year as well as inviting other performance groups to the school for performances. (School Report p 67; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 3) That the site administration and leadership investigate the creation of more available space for eurhythmym performances. (School Report p 67; conversations with faculty; observation of classes; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resource Planning)



- 4) That the site administration and leadership work toward and implement the upgrading and improving of the play areas including leveling, drainage and the planting of grass to provide more appropriate play area for the students along with equipment sheds located near games classes. (School Report p 67; campus observation; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resource planning)
- 5) That the movement and eurythmy department schedule meetings where a systematic review of curriculum within lower and upper school on a regular basis throughout the school year to plan to better meet the needs of individual students. (School Report p 67; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)

**Practical & Fine Arts:** Current research underscores the importance of developing handwork skills in fostering brain development. This program of hands-on-learning develops thinking, feeling and willing in the student and inculcates many virtues: patience, perseverance and reverence, among many others. The program extends from nursery through high school. The Practical and Fine Arts curriculum often supports the Main Lesson curriculum in an experience of the extension of the intellect into physical forms. The curriculum develops the imagination, feeling and will of each student and approaches different styles of learning.

Teachers are constantly accessing the progress of the children since the practical and fine arts are interactive disciplines. As there is a material product made by the student, the opportunity for assessment is clear and teachers provide direction and feedback during every class. Teachers tailor their assessments to individual capacities. Teachers use written rubrics to assess skills and compose year-end reports for each student. The results of ongoing monitoring are taken into account when planning subsequent lessons.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The caring faculty of gifted, committed artists striving for self growth and professional development which helps the students progress through appropriate developmental levels. (School Report pp67-69; observation of faculty and students in classrooms; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 2) The site administration and leadership their long years of support for a strong practical and fine arts program that is exhibited in both the high quality of materials provided along with the fine facilities for woodworking, sculpting, blacksmithing. (School Report pp 67-69; observation of facilities; observation of classes; conversations with students; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)
- 3) The practical and fine arts specialists who bring/present these arts to the students for being tremendously supportive of each other as they share both insights and encouragement. (School Report p 69; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 4) The practical and fine arts faculty for the beauty and the skillfulness displayed in the work that the students produce, serving as a reflection of the depth of the curriculum and teaching. (Observation of student work examples; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, What Students Learn)
- 5) The practical and fine arts faculty for helping students complete projects through the use of constant and regular assessment. (School Report p 69; WASC Criteria: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, How Assessment is used)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the site administration and leadership investigate the feasibility of the expansion of the Gardening Program to make it available to all the grades. (School Report p 69; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)
- 2) That the site administration and leadership with input from the practical and fine arts faculty, work to ameliorate the limited storage and undesignated handwork classroom space . (School Report p 69; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)
- 3) That the site administration and leadership investigate ways to produce culturally inspiring classes and exhibits for the entire community. ((School Report p 69; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 4) That the site administration and leadership investigate the Development of a stage crew program to support the theatre arts program. (School Report p 69; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)

**Student Activities:** The school offers various activities programs that can be grouped into four basic areas. These are:

- Drama, music and other forms of artistic expression which promote self confidence, collaborative learning and provide periods of focused concentration
- Physical activities and athletics that are all-inclusive, based on team building, sportsmanship and individual effort rather than accomplishment.
- Service opportunities that are actively supported by individual classes and founded on the school values of respect for the environment, respect for the community and committed service to those less fortunate.
- Community events such as faires and holiday celebrations which provide creative outlets, leadership opportunities and promote community spirit

In addition, the school has an After School Care (ASC) program that is a non-curriculum, fee based, child guardianship service available to all families in the parent body. The school also has a high school foreign exchange program .

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The site administration and leadership for offering a wide variety of activities in the areas of the arts, physical education/sports, and service to the community. (School Report p 70; Conversations with faculty, students and parents; classroom observations; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 2) The site administration and leadership for providing an opportunity for students at all grade levels to participate in all areas of activities. (School Report p 71; Classroom observations; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 3) The parents for their active participation in student activities evidenced by their attendance at musical and drama events, sporting events and volunteering for fundraisers within the

classes, the fairies and holiday celebrations. (School Report p 72; conversations with parents; school website; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Parent/Community Involvement)

- 4) The high school students for initiation of an Arts Share Program allowing students from 7<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade to see the work of the high school students' art blocks and art electives (School Report p 72; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 5) The site administration and leadership for scheduling high school concerts where more than one discipline is able to share their semester's work in a combined performance venue. (School Report p 71; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, School Leadership)
- 6) The site administration and leadership, along with the physical education faculty, for helping middle and high school sports teams belong to leagues with other schools giving students a chance to compete in a public venue. (School Report p 71; conversations with coaches; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 7) The Site administration and leadership, along with the music department, for providing opportunities for the high school hand bell choir to perform off campus at private or public venues. (School Report p 71; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 8) The high school students for initiating school dances (for high school only) that became popular, well-attended events on campus. (School Report p 71; conversations with students; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the site administration and leadership develop/institute a community service program for high school students. (School Report p 72; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Parent/community Involvement)

**Student Services and Auxiliary Programs:** The school provides access to program support to varying degrees, which is believed to be adequate. There is a part-time School Counselor, a part-time High School Student Support Manager, a part-time College Counselor, a full-time Educational Support Teacher, and the Care Committee which works with mainly lower school students and families.

A hot lunch program is available through the Parent Association. After school snacks are provided by the After School Program and are healthy, well prepared and offer a good variety of foods. Transportation services are provided by a third party and have been satisfactory. The school is very conscientious about communicable diseases and communicates effectively with the parent community about outbreaks. Children are monitored by their teachers for signs of illness and are sent to the office if illness is present or suspected.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The site administration and leadership for ensuring that students use the counseling services offered by the Care Program as well as college counseling. (School Report pp 72-74; conversations with school counselor; conversations with students; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 2) The school faculty and class sponsors for developing close relationships with their students, helping them gain the confidence to seek help when needed. (School Report pp 74-75; conversations with students; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the site administration and leadership, along with the school counselor, investigate and implement improvements to the middle and high school drug and alcohol program. (School Report p 75; conversations with school counselor; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 2) That the site administration and leadership evaluate creation of more time for the school counselor and the college counselor to meet, coordinate and follow-up with students, parents, sponsors and service providers when they are involved. (School Report p 75; conversations with counselors; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)
- 3) That the site administration and leadership, with the school counselor and faculty, develop methods for more consistent and timely identification of learning challenges in the early grades and implement and support management/coordination of appropriate interventions. (School Report p 75; conversations with counselors and faculty; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Student Connectedness)
- 4) That the site administration and leadership create a better program to educate parents in ways to be more involved in meeting the needs of their children at various developmental stages. (School Report pp 74-75; conversations with parents and faculty; WASC Criteria: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth, Parent/community Involvement)
- 5) The site administration and leadership examine the use of the off-campus caterers for the high school students who offer sodas and fast food that is not conducive to student health or classroom management. (School Report p 75; observations of lunch program; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, School Environment)

### **Overall Educational Program**

**Student Assessment:** Because the lower school class teacher stays with the child for longer than one year (in some cases up to eight years) the teacher has a more accurate understanding of each student's abilities and challenges. Highland Hall does not participate in any standardized testing and thus does not publish student achievement scores. Highland Hall views each student as an individual rather than a number or percentile. In the lower school, children do not receive letter grades; however, there is frequent and ongoing assessment of student progress that is shared with the student, faculty and family. Assessments are made after each subject block at every grade level and are shared in an appropriate way with the student, family and faculty. Students in high school do receive letter grades.

There are ongoing informal and formal assessments based on teacher observations, students' main lesson books, quizzes, homework assignments and oral presentations. There are parent-teacher conferences mid-year and extensive year-end written reports.

Teachers may have age-appropriate conversations with the younger students about their progress. By around fourth grade, students receive feedback on tests, quizzes, projects and reports. The teacher gives comments on in-class essays and other written work. Students may be called upon to self-assess their main lesson book-work and projects. In some cases, middle school teachers compose block or mid-year reports.

In the high school, quizzes, tests, written assignments, oral participation and attendance are used for assessment. In the daily academic classes, periodic progress reports are given to the students and parents. If a student is doing unsatisfactory work (D or F) a note is sent home to the parents and sometimes followed up with a phone call. Student assessments at the end of high school blocks give teachers feedback that helps point out more and less effective methods of teaching..

Teacher and student use of assessment is frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process. In the lower school, specialty teachers and class teachers meet on a regular basis to discuss the assessments of students and develop a plan to encourage their progress.

### III. Governance, Administration, Finance, and Law

The recent history and state of Highland Hall's governance and administration is outlined in detail in Chapter II; the Progress Report. An effective model for governance and communication is the heart of effectiveness for Highland Hall to move forward on its action plan.

Currently, Highland is in a stable position with its finances. However, over 90% of its operating budget comes from tuition. A recent drop in enrollment, from 390 in June 2010 to currently 340, and an expected drop next year to 310 will be cause for the Highland Hall to review its programs, services and staffing. In January of 2011, the staff worked through a collective problem-solving forum that resulted in a 5% payroll reduction for full-time faculty and staff.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The administrative staff is competent and cohesive. (conferences with Administrative staff)
- 2) The Board is actively promoting collaboration at the school site and is committed to transparency and open communication. (conferences with Board of Trustees chair and individual board members)
- 3) The board, faculty and staff of Highland Hall through study and leveraging of outside expertise have developed and implemented other leadership and governance structures and are pursuing additional models to increase effectiveness. (Self-Study Progress Report pp. 26-7,35-6,Governance report 1-29,conferences with staff, Board members, administration)
- 4) The school has been involved in a highly professional planning and implementation of a strategic plan that addresses new facilities, development, funding, facilities improvement and

maintenance, adding a new gymnasium as well as being on the threshold of a new theatre. (Self-Study Progress Report pp.30-35; conferences with administrators and staff)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the school take an active and immediate action to address feelings of mistrust, disenfranchisement and concerns about interpersonal development, and communication that exists within the faculty and staff and extends to interactions with the Board of Trustees and parent community. (conferences with staff, individual teachers, faculties, leadership team members)
- 2) Given that the current leadership model has broken down over a couple of years (dissolution of the Advisory Council) and the Leadership Team was recently replaced with an Interim School Council, the school take immediate action to create an overarching management plan that builds leadership, communication, and decision-making, and conflict resolution structures that are representative of the mutual interest of stakeholder groups, within the school and parent community. (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff; ISC Mandate)

Under this large category of leadership are some specific aspects that need to be addressed. The following recommendations are meant to be accepted and implemented in their entirety as a coordinated set of principles, not implementing a few at the expense of others,

- Within these structures the roles and responsibilities of the Board, administrative staff, pedagogical leadership, faculty and staff are defined and that there is a commitment for all stakeholders to fulfill their roles and carry out their responsibilities. (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff)
- the Board of Trustees review their actions as they have taken on an intervention role in school management over the past year, along with newly formed job descriptions to determine if they are consistent with the Carver model of governance out of which they operate, and out of this review, create and clearly communicate a Crisis Response Plan in the case that an intervention is needed in the future. (conferences with administration, Board members; Board minutes June, July; ISC Job Description)
- Within these structures the roles and responsibilities of the Board, administrative staff, pedagogical leadership, faculty and staff are defined and that there is a commitment for all stakeholders to fulfill their roles and carry out their responsibilities. (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff)
- That in the organizational plans there be an emphasis of the institutional communication structures that link the various leadership entities and promote collaboration and cooperation (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff)
- That the school develops criteria to fill these roles based on function, competency, with a conscientious effort to represent the

interests of the levels of the school (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff)

- That all leadership roles are supported with appropriate resources and time to do the work and build capacities. (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff; Leadership Team Job Descriptions, ISC Job Description)
  - That the school identifies and clearly describes leadership roles at various levels within the school, the ECC, Lower School, and High School. (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff)
- 3) That the school develop a comprehensive communication plan to foster clear consistent messaging, reporting of student information, parent education, faculty, staff and parent collaboration, thus enhancing the sense of ownership of all the stakeholders in the school. This plan needs to include adequately resourcing the development, implementation and maintenance of the plan. (Self-Study pp. 28-29; conference with faculty, Board, parents, Administrators in Communication, Development, Enrolment, Marketing)

#### IV. Personnel

Highland Hall seeks to hire trained Waldorf teachers who are prepared for their work. Recognizing that there are more positions open in the Waldorf movement than there are trained teachers, this is not always possible. With that said, the school ensures that hired teachers are prepared formally, or through an equivalent manner; that adequate and qualified support staff is provided; and that personnel policies are clear, effective, and understood. The school ensures that teachers have ongoing professional development and evaluation; that their orientation provides information that allows them to be successful at Highland Hall; and that their personnel records are maintained appropriately.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) The site administration and leadership for hiring a Human Resources Director who actively recruits appropriate individuals and provides orientation for teaching positions. (School Report pp 88-89; conversations with administration; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, School Leadership, Staff)
- 2) The site administration and leadership for hosting the Waldorf Institute of Southern California, one of the oldest teacher training institutes in the country, on site as well as funding continued Waldorf training of all teachers. (School Report p 90; conversations with administration; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, School Leadership)
- 3) The site administration and leadership for assigning all new hires an advisor (colleague) who meets with them weekly to answer questions that may arise about the functioning of this particular school. (School Report pp 87-89; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff/School Improvement Process)
- 4) The site administration and leadership for designating bodies which are actively working to coordinate professional development activities and dedicate resources to professional

development. (School Report pp 89-90; WASC Criteria: Resource Management and Development, Resources)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) The site administration and leadership for hiring a Human Resources Director who actively recruits appropriate individuals and provides orientation for teaching positions. (School Assessment, How Students Learn)
- 2) That the site administration and leadership develop job descriptions for positions lacking one so that there is an inclusive list of responsibilities and specific qualifications for the position, making it possible to determine how a candidate qualifies (School Report p 90; observations; evidence binder; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)
- 3) That site administration and leadership enable employees the ability to pursue the “Communications Overview and Grievance Process” to help facilitate clear, direct communication within the community when a concern or grievance arises. (School Report p 90; conversations with administration; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Governance)
- 4) That site administration and leadership improve the orientation process for new employees around pedagogical aspects of the school and Waldorf education (School Report p 90; conversations with faculty; WASC Criteria: Organization for Student Learning, Staff)

## V. The School Community

The Highland High Waldorf School community focuses on the students, but also includes its teachers, staff, parents, alumni, and local community. The school does not explicitly look to diversify its student population, but it is open to any families interested in Waldorf education. There is collaboration between teachers, educational support staff, and outside professionals as a part of the admissions process to determine whether the school can serve the child. The thorough application to gain admittance at Highland High Waldorf School is both nondiscriminatory and keeps with the school’s philosophy. The school’s dismissal policies are clearly stated in the Parent Handbook (but inconsistently enforced) and are consistent with the stated mission and philosophy of the school.

Clear and detailed information regarding tuition assistance is available on the school’s website, in the Parent Handbook, and on enrollment forms. The committee that oversees tuition assistance is comprised of faculty and parents who serve anonymously to review grant applications and determine each family’s demonstrated need with the help of a software program. Funds for tuition assistance come from tuition, annual giving, and other fundraising events. In 2006, Highland High Waldorf School hired a part-time Alumni Coordinator to strengthen alumni support for the school. In the future, the school would like to start using this new alumni network as a significant source of development revenue.

The school needs to create an organization and procedures for effective communication with, and involvement of, parents, students, alumni, and friends of the school in a way that is appropriate to its interests as well as the purposes and objectives of the school. Some parents have expressed concern that there is a need for formal guidelines for teacher communication with



parents, as well as more transparency in the areas of decision making regarding the Capital Campaign, whole school priorities, policy setting, faculty hiring, enforcement of standards, closed Board meetings, and the governance method currently employed. Existing policies and procedures that are written are confusing and non-intuitive for some families. A small group of parents is very actively involved, but the concern is that if more parents do not contribute their energies, then the volunteer fatigue in the current core group will increase.

Highland High Waldorf School utilizes community resources through outings, such as class trips in both the lower school and high school, and through visiting speakers, including recovering substance abuse addicts, a Holocaust survivor, and those provided through the Parent Educational Resource Committee (PERC). The school also host events like the Whole Children, Whole Planet Expo that relate strongly to its mission, and invites the local community to the Pumpkin Patch, the Winter Faire, and the May Faire.

On the recommendation of the last accreditation team that visited, Highland Hall is beginning to adhere to clear, consistently applied school-wide standards of behavior with limited buy-in from those empowered to enforce. The policy is written and distributed, but the onus lies on the individual teacher in most instances for consistency in enforcement. If the infraction is continuously repeated or more serious in nature, it can result in the student being sent home for the day, suspended, or expelled. The behavior policy articulates the school's desire to have a safe, nurturing environment reflective of the school's purpose and characterized by respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support, and high expectations for each student. Some parents are concerned that Highland High Waldorf School "slows things down" for children in the lower school and could hold a higher level of expectations.

The Visiting Committee commends the school for:

- 1) Highland High Waldorf School is a nurturing environment that is respectful of the individual child (School Report p 100; conferences with staff, individual teachers, faculties, leadership team members)
- 2) Core group of creative, hardworking parent volunteers (conferences with staff, individual teachers, faculties, leadership team members)
- 3) Admissions criteria and process is nondiscriminatory and keeps with the school's philosophy (School Report p 96; conferences with staff, individual teachers, faculties, leadership team members)
- 4) Sound procedures to provide financial aid (School Report p 97; conferences with staff, individual teachers, faculties, leadership team members)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

- 1) That the school evenly enforced discipline and high standards for academic excellence (School Report p 32 & p 100; conferences with staff, individual teachers, faculties, leadership team members)
- 2) That the leadership examine the feasibility of hiring an additional staff member to support daily schoolwide maintenance projects (conferences with staff, individual teachers, faculties, leadership team members)
- 3) That the room reps should begin to compile a resource book with information about the annual camping trips, outside speakers, what has worked, contact information, and other

outings to support the curriculum in each grade to be passed on to the next grades class. The book would grow from year to year with new ideas (School Report p 101; conferences with staff, individual teachers, faculties, leadership team members)

- 4) That the school examine the feasibility of implementing whole school 'pep assemblies' to share what's being taught, highlight students, staff, sports teams, etc. for their work. (School Report p 101; conferences with staff, individual teachers, faculties, leadership team members)
- 5) That the administration increase work with alumni students and families to support developmental program (School Report p 97; conferences with staff, individual teachers, faculties, leadership team members)

**Part B:**

**Synthesize the commendations and recommendations from all sections into major commendations and major recommendations.**

**Major Commendations**

1. The faculty is committed to students and possesses a strong knowledge of Waldorf pedagogy; they have a depth of experience and longevity with the school. (conferences with staff, teachers students; classroom observations)
2. The curricular program reflects the core values and philosophy of Highland Hall and Waldorf Education. (Curriculum overview – Self Study; observation of buildings and grounds; observation and conversation with faculty and staff)
3. The facilities and campus are beautiful and have potential for future growth and enhancement to broaden and strengthen the curricular program. (observation of buildings and grounds)
4. The administrative staff is competent and cohesive. (conferences with Administrative staff)
5. Many faculty and staff continue to be optimistic and passionate about Highland Hall, with many people going beyond the call of duty for the well being of the school. (conferences with individuals who have served in leadership, and individual staff and faculty discussions)
6. The Board is actively promoting collaboration at the school site and is committed to transparency and open communication. (conferences with BOT chair and individual board members)

7. The board, faculty and staff of Highland Hall through study and leveraging of outside expertise have developed and implemented other leadership and governance structures and are pursuing additional models to increase effectiveness. (Self-Study Progress Report pp. 26-7,35-6,Governance report 1-29,conferences with staff, Board members, administration)
8. The school has been involved in a highly professional planning and implementation of a strategic plan that addresses new facilities, development, funding, facilities improvement and maintenance, adding a new gymnasium as well as being on the threshold of a new theatre. (Self-Study Progress Report pp.30-35; conferences with administrators and staff)

## Major Recommendations

1. That the school prioritizes the following major recommendations into a Schoolwide Action Plan as described on page 55 of AWSNA/WASC Evaluation/Accreditation guide and submit the plan to WASC and AWSNA by June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011.
2. That the school take an active and immediate action to address feelings of mistrust, disenfranchisement and concerns about interpersonal development, and communication that exists within the faculty and staff and extends to interactions with the Board of Trustees and parent community. (conferences with staff, individual teachers, faculties, leadership team members)
3. Given that the current leadership model has broken down over a couple of years (dissolution of the Advisory Council) and the Leadership Team was recently replaced with an Interim School Council, the school take immediate action to create an overarching management plan that builds leadership, communication, and decision-making, and conflict resolution structures that are representative of the mutual interest of stakeholder groups, within the school and parent community. (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff; ISC Mandate)

Under this large category of leadership are some specific aspects that need to be addressed. The following recommendations are meant to be accepted and implemented in their entirety as a coordinated set of principles, not implementing a few at the expense of others,

- Within these structures the roles and responsibilities of the Board, administrative staff, pedagogical leadership, faculty and staff are defined and that there is a commitment for all stakeholders to fulfill their roles and carry out their responsibilities. (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff)
- the Board of Trustees review their actions as they have taken on an intervention role in school management over the past year, along with newly formed job descriptions to determine if they are consistent with the Carver model of governance out of which they operate, and out of this review, create and clearly communicate a

Crisis Response Plan in the case that an intervention is needed in the future. (conferences with administration, Board members; Board minutes June, July; ISC Job Description)

- Within these structures the roles and responsibilities of the Board, administrative staff, pedagogical leadership, faculty and staff are defined and that there is a commitment for all stakeholders to fulfill their roles and carry out their responsibilities. (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff)
  - That in the organizational plans there be an emphasis of the institutional communication structures that link the various leadership entities and promote collaboration and cooperation (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff)
  - That the school develops criteria to fill these roles based on function, competency, with a conscientious effort to represent the interests of the levels of the school (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff)
  - That all leadership roles are supported with appropriate resources and time to do the work and build capacities. (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff; Leadership Team Job Descriptions, ISC Job Description)
  - That the school identifies and clearly describes leadership roles at various levels within the school, the ECC, Lower School, and High School. (conferences with Board members, faculty and staff)
4. That the school develop a comprehensive communication plan to foster clear consistent messaging, reporting of student information, parent education, faculty, staff and parent collaboration, thus enhancing the sense of ownership of all the stakeholders in the school. This plan needs to include adequately resourcing the development, implementation and maintenance of the plan. (Self-Study pp. 28-29; conference with faculty, Board, parents, Administrators in Communication, Development, Enrolment, Marketing)
  5. That the school under the pedagogical leadership diversifies and renews the curriculum and pedagogical methods to reflect the maturation of the North American Waldorf school curriculum. A couple of examples could be the integration of technology and multicultural studies at the high school. (Self-Study Recommendation Progress Report p. 30)
  6. That the school under the pedagogical leadership fully implements their curricular guides and educational goals and objectives and aligns a variety of assessments to goals and uses student results to self-reflect and assess curricular and instructional strength. (conferences with faculty, staff and parents)
  7. That the school consistently implements the school wide standards of behavior. (Self-Study Recommendation Progress Report p. 30)

## Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

- **Include a brief summary of the schoolwide action plan**

The school's drafted action plan will be significantly revised in light of recent changes in the school's governance structure. Prior to the dissolution of the school's leadership team and the appointment of the Interim School Council, the WASC Coordinator had drafted an action plan in accordance with the WASC/AWSNA cooperative agreement and will finalize it when the school receives the Visiting Team's recommendations.

The action areas identified in the school-wide action plan are the educational program (math, science, student support services, and diversity/multiculturalism), assessment, general communication, governance development, financial resources, and facilities construction. There is a need for lower grade and high school teachers to collaborate to update curriculum in math, chemistry, and multiculturalism and to extend instruction time in these disciplines. More communication and transparency from all teachers regarding assessment and recording, disaggregating, analyzing, and tracking data would be helpful to the ongoing learning of students.

Parents desire more communication with teachers concerning student academic status and progress, with administration concerning school facility plans and goals, as well as current Waldorf philosophies for parenting and child development. Governance currently is in the hands of the Interim School Council and the school is looking to the hiring and development of a Pedagogical Chair to organize and distribute leadership responsibilities and oversee accountability and consistency in the curriculum and discipline. There are also concerns to revisit the school's long term vision, associated resource development plan, and facilities construction.

The current draft of the school action plan needs to be updated to reflect the major recommendations summarized in Chapter IV. The major areas of improvement identified in the draft are valid, but cannot be adequately addressed without first overcoming organization and governance issues. With declining enrollment and the present morale of all stakeholders involved, there is not sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and system-wide, including the allocation of resources. If there is a strong, cohesive movement from a group involving input from all stakeholders that can handle organizational and governance issues at the school, student learning will be enhanced by the steps in a "user-friendly" action plan integrating all major school initiatives.

The existing factors, a strong group of individually talented and trained teachers, a supportive and hardworking administration, and a solid core group of involved parents, all need to communicate effectively with transparency and accountability to support school improvement. As stated above, the school will need to overcome the organization and governance obstacles impeding them from focusing on other action areas central to improving student learning. The newly formed Interim School Council will be charged in the short term with the follow-up and monitoring of the schoolwide action plan before transferring the responsibility to the school's as yet hired Pedagogical Chair and pedagogical governing body.