SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS,
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

FOR

South Hills Academy

1600 E. Francisquito Ave.

West Covina, CA 91791

January 24-27, 2021

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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:

1. **Brief description of the students and community served by the school**
2. **School's analysis of student achievement data**
3. **Other pertinent data (e.g., size of English learner population, teacher credentialing, class size, programs for students)**
4. **Appropriateness of identified critical learner needs and their linkage to schoolwide learner outcomes**
   Note: Show data in chart format and comment. Include sections of the profile that show student achievement findings and interpretations.
5. **Comment on significant findings revealed by the profile and/or pertinent items that were not included in the profile.**

South Hills Academy (SHA) was established in 1957 as a private Christian K-8 school and since 2014 has functioned as a for-profit, proprietary K-12 school, governed and run by Fame Sky, with a primary emphasis on college preparation. The school population has varied over the years, but significant growth has occurred in the last seven years, primarily in the middle and high school levels. In the last year, the student population has increased by 130 students to 268. As with many schools over the last year coping with COVID lockdowns, the number of students has fluctuated but is trending positively. Overall, 150 students withdrew from the school due to the effects of the pandemic, but by gaining 130 the net loss of just 20 students is not as significant as many private schools. As reported by the school administration, several private schools in the area closed at the end of the 2019/20 school year and many of those students transferred to SHA for the 2020/21 school year.

The small size of the school contributes to an increased focus on efficiency and creative solutions, including rapid prototyping responses, development of new programs, and adaptations to support the fluctuating needs of students. Despite limited technological resources, the ability of the staff to transition in just two days to the unique demands of distance and hybrid learning speaks of the school's ability to adapt and respond to student needs.

The school has a low student-teacher ratio at all levels, averaging 16:1 at the elementary level and 8:1 at the high school level. As a result, the majority of instruction is handled in small group settings with a high degree of individualization, dialogue, close monitoring, and tutoring support. Students currently have the option of in-person or distance learning.

Enrollment

Grade Level	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
K	20	30	18	17	16	26
1	14	17	22	16	16	21
2	17	13	9	17	17	13

3	15	18	15	13	16	22
4	18	19	15	14	12	17
5	8	22	14	16	13	13
Total E	92	119	93	93	90	112
6	11	12	19	13	18	15
7	14	9	11	22	13	23
8	12	16	22	16	19	24
Total MS	37	37	52	51	50	62
9	5	8	3	11	16	11
10	0	6	15	11	12	19
11	0	1	9	25	17	15
12	0	0	4	10	24	20
Total HS	5	15	31	57	69	65
Total	134	171	176	201	209	239

The majority of elementary and middle school students are domestic and primarily live within the local community. The majority of the domestic students transfer to other local high schools, both public and private, following their eighth-grade year. Conversely, the majority of the high school is composed of international students made up of over 20 nationalities, with China representing the majority. International students are housed in a dormitory near the school, although with the challenge of the COVID lockdown, many remained in their respective countries and are being supported through distance learning. International students living in the dormitory are currently being supported as a learning pod, with subject-area teachers providing in-person instruction.

Domestic and International Enrollment

Level	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019		2019-2020	
	D	I	D	I	D	I	D	I	D	I
Elementary Total	112	7	93	3	90	3	90	0	103	1
MS Total	25	12	35	16	38	13	42	8	52	7
9	2	6	0	3	2	9	9	8	2	8
10	0	6	2	14	0	11	1	11	10	8
11	0	1	0	9	3	22	0	17	3	12
12	0	0	1	3	1	9	3	20	2	18
HS Total	2	13	3	29	6	51	13	56	17	46
Total	139	22	131	48	134	67	145	64	172	54

Due to the high number of international students as well as the broad variety of language groups in the community, the school serves a large number of English learners. English learners compose 12% of elementary, 21% of middle school, and 79% of high school students. The school has supported those students through a wide variety of specialized English support programs as well as embedded social opportunities, clubs, athletics, and activities in the school and community.

Primary Language

Language	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019		2019-2020	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
English	87	62	95	55	105	60	107	53	138	68	161	67
Cambodian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese	27	19	50	29	58	33	73	36	49	24	54	23
Hindi	6	4	4	2	2	1	4	2	1	0.5	0	0
Japanese	0	0	0	0	1	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Laos	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Spanish	14	10	18	10	7	4	12	6	12	6	17	7
Tagalog	7	5	5	3	3	2	1	1	1	0.5	1	0.4
Vietnamese	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	3	1	4	2
Non-English	54	38	77	45	71	40	94	47	66	32	78	33

The school makes use of a variety of student achievement data, including teacher-created, publisher-generated, and external assessment subscriptions and programs to inform the development of the school program. Staffing, facilities, curriculum, instructional, tutoring, counseling, and outreach programs have been connected to student data analysis, although the school is currently between external assessments and the impact of the COVID lockdowns have been significant in this area. Given the small size and limited resources, the school makes efficient use of student data to drive various programs and offerings.

The school has a strong academic program at all grade levels and evidenced in various testing platforms. The school utilized the TerraNova assessment system for grades K-8 until 2017 and results showed that students performed slightly better to significantly better at all grade levels than the national average. The school switched assessment platforms in 2017 to Illuminate, but after two years the lack of comparative national results and emphasis on teacher-created assessments prompted the school to pursue another platform in 2019/20. The school selected and had planned to administer the NWEA MAP test, but the COVID lockdowns delayed the initial assessments until Jan/Feb of 2021. Results of that assessment are not yet available.

The school markets its secondary school as a college-preparatory program and 100% of it's graduates have been admitted to and enrolled in primarily nationally-ranked, colleges and universities since 2017. Additionally, the school has expanded its AP offerings and participation, decreased its honors-labeled courses, and experienced a rapid increase in it's AP pass rate, approaching nearly 50% in just three years.

Honors, Advanced Placement (AP) Participation & Test Results

Grade Level		2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019		2019-2020	
		A	H	A	H	A	H	A	H
9	#				3	4	5	1	0
	%				27.3%	25%	31.2%	9.1%	0
10	#	1		2	5	3	4	7	0
	%	6.7%		18.2%	45.5%	25%	33.3%	36.8%	0
11	#	3	1	17	21	12	13	6	0
	%	33.3%	11.1%	68%	84%	70.6%	76.5%	40%	0
12	#			7	8	22	16	16	0
	%			70%	80%	91.7%	66.7%	80%	0
Total	#	4	1	26	37	41	38	30	0
	%	12.9%	3.2%	45.6%	65%	59.4%	55.1%	46.2%	0
AP Pass Rate	%			18%		38.5%		46%	

The SAT results for the school outpace the national average and are indicative of the success of the academic program. Students perform much higher in math than in English, especially international students learning English as another language. The school's continued focus and development of its English learner program is informed by this awareness.

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Results

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Total - Mean		1284	1121	1112
ERW - Mean		591	470	449
Math - Mean		693	651	663
Total - Median		1350	1120	1090
ERW - Median		610	475	430
Math - Median		700	665	680

Although teachers are required to hold a bachelor's degree, no other credential is required. Despite this provision, over half of the teachers at the school hold a current California teaching credential and the school supports teachers in pursuing a Clear California Credential by paying for half of the California Teacher Induction Program with an additional two-year contractual obligation.

As a private, proprietary Christian school, the schoolwide learner outcomes (SLOs) are consistent with the school's mission and vision statements, addressing personal character traits, student behavior and roles, academic expectations, and broader social/global impact. The religious aspects of the vision, mission, and SLOs serve to complement the function of the school in all areas and support students from differing religious backgrounds in their personal and academic development without the pressure or expectation of religious adherence or conversion.

Chapter II: Progress Report (2 pages)

Since the last self-study:
- **Comment on the school's major changes and follow-up process.**
- **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 school has experienced several significant changes following the 2016 WASC Mid-Cycle Visit including a new Head of Schools, increased recruitment and retention of international students, and increased high school enrollment. For the 2020/21 school year, 72% of the teaching staff is new to the school.

Instructionally, the school offered professional development in and implemented a standards-based grading system as well as expanded its use of project-based, cross-curricular learning. The school also implemented a subject-specific teaching schedule at the elementary level in 2020/21, where individual teachers are responsible for specific content areas and groups of students rotate between those teachers during the school day. Kindergarten remains a self-contained class with a single teacher.

Parental involvement had increased through the creation of a new parent-teacher committee, expanded communication, and a variety of meeting options. More recently, virtual meetings encourage the involvement of parents who would otherwise be unable to attend in-person meetings.

While the school continues to have significant teaching-staff turnover, physical, governing, and administrative components remain consistent and systems and policies remain in place. Between the 2019/20 and 2020/21 school year, 21 of 29 teachers either retired, left the school for personal reasons, or were hired at surrounding schools with greater resources or pay. Filling vacancies has always been complicated at the site, although a new 100% tuition waiver for teaching staff children replaced the prior 50% waiver in 2020/21, and the mitigation of future teacher loss is anticipated.

The school continues to see significant growth in international students at the high school level, with twice the number of students than at the mid-cycle visit in 2016. This has necessitated the expansion of staffing, academic programs, course offerings, and physical plant improvements and expansion.

2016 WASC Mid-Cycle Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up

#1: There is a need for a more formalized review and evaluation of the attainment of SLOs by all stakeholders.

The school developed a review process for SLOs that utilized input from students and stakeholders. The major categories were retained, although clarity was increased for all through redefinitions of key terms in 2016 and a shift from prescriptive performance expectations to conceptual understandings that provide for greater flexibility and creativity. The resulting clarity and flexibility has led to greater implementation in classrooms and instructional units, as well as facilitated creative extracurricular opportunities for students. The school has initiated efforts to assess SLO attainment, including work at creating SLO rubrics, although reporting of those results are not yet uniform or consistent. The school has established SLO awards to recognize student performance in the respective categories.

The action plan (Goal #3: Develop an effective system to monitor all students' progress toward meeting the academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes) couples this goal with academic standard progress, monitoring, and accountability. Additionally, the school governing board reviews the SLOs yearly and seeks input from site administration and staff. A strong awareness of the impact of SLOs on school culture and student learning is evident in classrooms, although assessment of their achievement varies. Student survey results and interviews indicate varying SLO recognition, integration, and accountability in classes, but a general awareness of the major concepts that are communicated throughout the campus via signage, SLO-based art installations, and displayed student work.

The SLOs orient, support, and complement school programs and student learning. While their holistic and conceptual nature makes it difficult to quantify attainment, teachers design units that include a SLO component. The school has not yet developed a system to communicate individual student SLO performance or student self-reflection.

#2: There is a need for a formal evaluation process for the administration and governing authority of the school.

SHA is a proprietary, for-profit school owned by the governing authority. The board, composed of five to seven members, evaluates itself.

This recommendation does not accommodate the unique nature of a for-profit school as the governing board is self-evaluatory. As the liaison between the governing board and the stakeholders, the Head of Schools communicates significant findings, offers consulting expertise, and provides feedback on board directives. Unlike most public and non-profit private schools, the Head of Schools has singular and broad discretionary authority for all aspects of the school including budgeting, facilities, personnel, curriculum, and daily operations.

The school administers surveys throughout the year to elicit feedback from students, teachers, and families about the academic programs as well as teacher and administrator effectiveness. Based on survey data and other measures, the school has made adjustments to its programs, roles of employees, and its mode of communication.

The Head of Schools is formally evaluated on an annual basis by the school board. The evaluation reviews a combination of both education and business practices. Principals are evaluated by the Head of Schools annually.

The action plan does not address this recommendation as the board has no plan be evaluated by any entity outside of itself. (Direct communication from the Head of Schools.)

#3 SHA needs to develop a process to develop, implement, assess, and revise curriculum.

Discussion is held about the school curriculum and driven by teacher observation of student need. The process is coordinated by the department principal, teachers, and administrators. The school does not have a set review cycle by subject or grade level, and the process is still in development. Formal evaluation of curricular effectiveness is also at the initial stages of development.

In 2019/20, SHA adopted new elementary reading materials and practices as well as expanded technology-based content and assessment subscriptions.

The recommendation is addressed in the action plan (Goal #6, Enhance and continuously develop approaches to learning and alternative instructional options that allow for a rigorous, standards-based curriculum) and the school's emphasis on expanded professional development (Goal #4) provides additional support for teachers and administrators in the process of curricular change. Again, the school has not yet developed a formalized process for curricular review.

Chapter III: Self-Study Process (suggested length: 1–2 pages)

Include a copy of the schoolwide learner outcomes.

Comment on the school's self-study process with respect to the outcomes of the self-study.

1. **The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement**
2. **The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards**
3. **The analysis of data about students and student achievement**
4. **The assessment of the entire school program and its impact on student learning in relation to the schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, and ACS WASC criteria**
5. **The alignment of a long-range action plan to the school's areas of need; the capacity to implement and monitor the accomplishment of the plan.**

The school's self-study process was conducted in the 2019/20 school year and involved then-current staff and stakeholders. Due to the postponement of the six-year WASC full visit, the visiting team observed that a significant portion of the 2020/21 teaching staff was not involved in the self-study process as nearly two-thirds are new to the school. The site WASC coordinator helped to familiarize the staff with the process and promote their inclusion in the visit through participation in focus-group meetings and virtual class observations.

The self-study process parallelled refinement of many aspects of the school's program, including a shift to proficiency/standards-based grading, new assessment tools, course curriculum modification, and subject-specific teaching schedules at the elementary level. Additionally, the process parallelled the continued expansion of informal stakeholder communication and feedback opportunities.

Standards have been in refinement during the self-study process. The school has shifted from CCSS to AERO standards to better align with international expectations of student learning. In the area of science, the school has adopted the NGSS at all grade levels. At the lower-elementary level, language-arts and K-8 math expectations are largely driven by the adopted curriculum (ABEKA). The school monitors and evaluates the vertical alignment of those expectations with the AERO standards at higher grade levels to ensure consistency and readiness for the next level of learning. A variety of teacher-created, curriculum publisher-generated, and external standards-aligned assessments are used to monitor student progress. The lockdown delayed the administration of some assessments, but students were completing those planned assessments during the WASC visit and scores are forthcoming.

The SLOs were reviewed by all stakeholders as part of the self-study process and modifications to the definitions of respective categories were made in 2019. These provide broader applicability to students of varying faith traditions and greater flexibility for teacher integration into personal and collaborative lesson design. The redefinitions were particularly important at the high school level, where the majority are international students, and strongly promote a Christian worldview without prescribing religious adherence or conversion. SLOs are posted on campus, with particular disciplines

emphasizing one over another as appropriate. The school has developed SLO awards and initiated work on a SLO rubric, but individual student feedback and student self-assessment of SLOs are not yet consistent.

Vision Statement:

> South Hill Academy provides quality education to prepare students to be well-rounded citizens with a Biblical worldview who will be successful leaders in their community.

Mission Statement:

> South Hill Academy seeks to develop a Christ-centered atmosphere that enables students to become socially engaged, effective communicators, and critical thinkers in a global setting.

Expected Schoolwide Learner Outcomes:
- **Christ-Centered**
  - SHA students will strive to exhibit character that is consistent with the teachings of Christ.
- **Effective Communicators**
  - SHA students will be able to read, write, listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.
- **Socially Engaged**
  - SHA students will learn to respect the rights and values of others, understand and appreciate diversity, build positive relationships, and assume responsibility for making beneficial contributions to their community.
- **Critical Thinkers**
  - SHA students will successfully navigate new information, make informed decisions, solve problems, resolve conflicts, and continue to discover the truth.
- **Global Citizens**
  - SHA students will help take care of our world, promote peace, mutual respect and understand that the world is made up of different cultures.

The school has the resources and the capacity for student data analysis and teachers utilize student data to individualize instruction and develop learning plans. Grade-level and schoolwide data were used as part of instructional and curriculum review as well as program and course development. The school is currently gathering student performance data with a new platform. Being a small school, systems and schedules for data collection and review are often initiated through personal interaction and formalized, consistent approaches were not observed. The school's capacity for rapid identification, modification, and implementation is strong.

The school's long-range action plan is organized by the WASC major criteria and addresses both site-identified and the 2016 WASC Mid-Cycle visit report recommendations. The action plan identifies various subtasks with responsible parties, resources, assessments/measures, communication. Many subtasks are identified as ongoing and do not have specific goals for specific dates, while others are framed within a school year. Specific individuals responsible for subtasks are limited to just

administration, counseling, or faculty, rather than specific individuals or committees. Decisions about the action plan design are largely left to administration, with teachers and stakeholders consulted or involved in communication, implementation, and assessment.

The identified areas of need in the action plan correlate to student data and stakeholder input and are organized in a manner that promotes a continuous cycle of improvement. Key outcomes are increased student performance, economic viability, and program expansion. The unique factor of a for-profit, proprietary school is the demand for a quality product—a product where success leads to additional students and resulting revenue.

Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program
CATEGORY A. ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING
A1. School Purpose Criterion

To what extent has the school established a clear vision and mission (purpose) that reflect the beliefs and philosophy of the institution?
To what extent is the purpose defined further by adopted schoolwide learner outcomes that form the basis of the educational program for every student?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.
Beliefs and Philosophy: The written mission and vision (purpose) reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the school and its constituency.

SHA has established a mission and vision statement that reflects the desire of the board and staff to educate and prepare students to be well-rounded citizens with a Biblical worldview who will be successful leaders in their communities. Their mission is to develop a Christ-centered atmosphere that enables students to become socially engaged and critical thinkers in a global setting.

Purpose, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, and Profile Data: The student/community profile data has impacted the development of the school's vision and mission and schoolwide learner outcomes.

The student profile and community data strongly impact the school's mission, vision, and SLOs.

School events take place to affirm the vision and mission of SHA. Students participated in such activities as Grandparents Day, Bring your Bible to School Day, SALT ministry, and the addition of prayer videos in response to COVID lockdowns.

SHA is continuing to develop and refine its SLOs. All stakeholders take part in surveys, discussions, and interviews to continue the conversation about the definition of their

SLOs. In order to promote and affirm their newly refined SLO's South Hills Academy has initiated the SLO award. Students and parents voiced strong support for Christ-Centered SLO and as a primary reason for enrollment at SHA.

Involvement of All: The school has a process for involving representatives of the entire school community in the development/refinement of the mission, vision, and schoolwide learner outcomes.

SHA conducts informal discussions among representatives of the entire school community in the development and refinement of the mission, vision, and schoolwide learner outcomes. There is evidence of student interviews and parent/teacher discussions that stakeholders find it important to maintain the Christian identity of the school and continue to aim toward being Christ-like.

Consistency of Purpose, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, and Program: There is a strong degree of consistency between the school purpose, the schoolwide learner outcomes, and the school program.

SHA has many programs in place to ensure there is a strong degree of consistency between the school purpose and the schoolwide learner outcomes. The mission and vision of the school is well aligned to the schoolwide learner outcomes. The school has developed unit plan templates to integrate the standards being taught to a schoolwide learner outcome. The administration supports teachers in integrating core subject matter content with schoolwide learner outcomes.

Communication about Vision, Mission, and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes: The school has means to publicize the vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes to the students, parents, and other members of the school community.

The school publicizes its vision, mission, and SLOs on the school website, student and faculty handbook, and marketing materials. It is evident that schoolwide learner outcomes are clearly posted on the pillars lining the school building and school murals.

The unit and lesson plan template created by SHA clearly identifies a connection between the standard being taught and a schoolwide learner outcome.

Regular Review/Revision: The school has a process for regular review/revision of the school purpose and the schoolwide learner outcomes based on current and future learner needs and other local/global/trends/conditions.

The process for regular review/revision of the school purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes is determined by the governing board as part of an annual board meeting. The governing board is solely responsible for determining the vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes. The school community is responsible for the implementation of the vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes.

Faculty meetings have been utilized for teachers to discuss current and future learner needs and other trends in order to give input on the school purpose and schoolwide learner outcomes.

A2.   Governance Criterion

To what extent does the governing authority adopt policies which are consistent with the school purpose and support the achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes?
To what extent does the governing authority delegate implementation of these policies to the professional staff?
To what extent does the governing authority monitor results?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.
Clear Policies and Procedures: There are clear policies and procedures with regard to the selection, composition and specific duties of the governing authority.

As a for-profit, proprietary school, SHA has a self-governing board that oversees the policies and procedures with regard to the composition and specific duties of the board.

Pretraining of Potential Board Members: Individuals who seek board membership or are being considered as appointees by the board will have some form of training in the principles and skills essential to the effectiveness of the school board.

As a for-profit, proprietary school, governing members are investors and are recruited and appointed based on their background, and training is provided as needed.

Relationship of Policies: The governing authority's policies are directly connected to the school's vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes.

The governing board has an Annual Work Plan that works to support the mission, vision, and SLOs.

Involvement of Governing Authority: The governing authority is involved in the regular review and refinement of the school's vision, mission and schoolwide learner outcomes. The governing authority uses a variety of strategies to remain current in research-based knowledge about effective schools.

The board reviews the vision, mission, and SLOs during the annual school board meeting. The board uses a combination of educational and business research to manage the school. Every July, the board and Head of Schools establish a work plan and budget for the school year. Once the work plan and budget are approved, the board leaves the day to day operation of the school to the Head of Schools.

School Community Understanding: The school community understands the governing authority's role.

SHA staff and faculty see the board as having three responsibilities: budget, setting annual goals, and supervising day-to-day operations. The executive director of the board visits every July and August. It was evident during focus group discussions that

the school community has a clear understanding of the governing authority's role.

Relationship to Professional Staff: There is clear understanding about the relationship between the governing authority and the responsibilities of the professional staff. The governing authority constrains its actions to policy making and strategic planning, while authorizing the administration to implement its decisions.

The governing body limits itself to policymaking and approval, strategic planning, and evaluating the actions and decisions of the Head of Schools with relationship toward the school mission and vision. The Head of Schools is authorized to initiate policy changes that must be approved by the board and has the authority to implement decisions in relation to the operation of the school.

Board's Evaluation/Monitoring Procedures: There is clarity of the evaluation and monitoring procedures carried out by the governing board, including the review of student performance, overall school programs and operations, and the fiscal health of the school.

The governing body approves the annual budget with a mid-year review based on school needs. The board pays close attention to student performance, AP test results, SAT scores, college acceptance rates, and the reputation of the colleges to which students are awarded admission.

Complaint and Conflict Resolution Procedures: The established governing board/school's complaint and conflict resolution procedures as they apply to the school's stakeholders are effective.

SHA has complaint and conflict resolution procedures that apply to all stakeholders. The procedures, included in the faculty handbook, follow a basic chain of command structure of teacher, Principal, Head of Schools, human resource officer, and direct contact with the governing board.

Evaluation Procedures: The governing authority carries out clearly defined evaluation procedures.

Probationary employee evaluations and annual performance reviews are conducted to determine new contract offers. Staff members are evaluated by the Head of Schools, Principal, or designated administrator, per governing board delegation, after the initial six-month probationary period of their employment to assess performance, attitude, skills and other employment-related attributes and characteristics of the employee. Formal and informal faculty evaluations throughout the school year and at least one staff member annual review are conducted to see if each employee has fulfilled their position requirements. Performance issues are addressed, and tools, resources, and guidance are given to all employees to be successful**.**

Evaluation of Governing Authority: There is a process for evaluating the governing authority.

As a for-profit, proprietary school, South Hills Academy has no process for evaluating its governing authority.

A3.   School Leadership Criterion

To what extent does the school leadership make decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the school on student achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes?
To what extent does the school leadership empower the staff?
To what extent does the school leadership encourage commitment, participation and shared accountability for student learning?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Defined Responsibilities, Practices, etc.: The school has administrator and faculty written policies, charts, and handbooks that define responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff.

SHA has a clear organizational chart that defines the structure of leadership. The faculty handbook clearly explains the responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff.

Existing Structures: The school has existing structures for internal communication, planning and resolving differences.

For internal communication, SHA uses weekly newsletters, staff meetings, email, and teacher in-service. Documents are shared internally using Google Drive.

The Head of Schools meets with other school leaders and interested stakeholders to create a school calendar. SHA utilizes faculty, administrative, and community meetings as formal structures for planning.

To resolve differences, a policy directs parents, students, and staff to first speak with the person with whom they have a conflict. If more resolution is needed, the person then speaks with the immediate supervisor, and then with the Head of Schools.

Involvement of Staff: The school leadership has processes and procedures for involving staff in shared responsibility, collaborative structures and actions, and accountability to focus ongoing improvement on teaching and learning that supports student learning.

The processes and procedures for involving staff in a shared responsibility, collaborative structures and actions, and accountability to focus ongoing improvement on teaching and learning that supports students learning at South Hills Academy are evident in weekly staff meetings, peer learning walks, SST meetings, and weekly

newsletters.

Evaluation of Existing Processes: The school leadership regularly reviews the existing processes to determine the degree to which actions of the leadership and staff focus on successful student learning.

School leadership meets during the summer to review the existing processes to determine the degree to which actions of the leadership and staff focus on successful student learning. They analyze grades, classroom assignments, assessment data, along with input from the school community.

A4.   Staff Criterion

To what extent are the school leadership and staff qualified for their assigned responsibilities?
To what extent are the school leadership and staff committed to the school's purpose?
To what extent do the school leadership and staff engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.
Employment Policies/Practices: The school has clear employment policies/practices related to qualification requirements of staff.

SHA's employment policies and practices related to qualification requirements of staff are clear and defined in their Human Resources documents for new staff members. The job posting has clearly defined requirements, the minimum qualification for teaching is a B.A. or B.S., school counselors must have a graduate degree in counseling, all personnel must sign a Statement of Faith, get a TB test, and submit a LiveScan. Employees are "At Will" with a 6-month probationary period. There is an established pay scale and formal evaluation cycle for all staff.

Qualifications of Staff: The school reviews all information regarding staff background, training, and preparation.

SHA has a process to review background, training, and preparation for qualifying staff. HR and department heads review resumes, certification and degrees are reviewed, first interviews are conducted by HR and department heads and make a recommendation to the Head of Schools to fill the vacancy.

Maximum Use of Staff Expertise: The school has a process to assign staff members and provide appropriate orientation for all assignments, including online instruction and specialized programs so that the expertise of the staff members is maximized in relation to impact on quality student learning.

School leaders hold an orientation week for new teachers prior to the start of the school year. It is evident from presentation slides and schedules that new staff receive training on policies, programs, and procedures. The school utilizes the expertise of teachers with prior experience to offer support and training to new teachers.

Defining and Understanding Practices/Relationships: The school has clear administrator and faculty

written policies, charts, and handbooks that define responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff.

It is evident that SHA has a Faculty Handbook that clearly defines responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff. SHA has a clear organizational chart that defines the leadership structure.

Staff Actions/Accountability to Support Learning: The school evaluates the effectiveness of the processes and procedures for involving staff in shared responsibility, actions, and accountability to support student learning throughout all programs. This includes an evaluation of the collegial strategies used to implement innovations and encourage improvement, such as shadowing, coaching, observation, mentoring, group presentations.

SHA uses administrative meetings to evaluate the effectiveness of the processes and procedures involving staff. Ongoing discussions are held among leadership to evaluate strategies used to implement innovations and encourage improvement.

Support of Professional Development: The school effectively supports professional development/learning with time, personnel, material, and fiscal resources to facilitate all students achieving the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

SHA uses a model of in-house professional development to effectively support learning and facilitate all students achieving the academic standards and the SLOs. If an SHA employee participates in off-site professional development, they are responsible for presenting the material during a schoolwide teacher meeting.

There is evidence of various professional development attended by employees that enhance the learning programs at South Hills Academy.

Through teacher interviews, SHA administration fully supports the financial requests of teachers to attend professional development.

Supervision and Evaluation: The school implements effective supervision and evaluation procedures in order to promote professional growth of staff.

SHA uses a combination of informal and formal observation to promote professional growth. Evaluation forms based on the Danielson Framework are used to help teachers improve the overall quality of teaching. SHA regularly reviews and revises its teacher expectations.

A teacher growth plan is shared between leadership and teachers to collectively set a professional goal for the school year. There are middle and end of year meetings to present evidence of growth toward that goal.

Measurable Effect of Professional Development: There are effective operating processes that determine the measurable effect of professional development, coaching, and mentoring on student

performance.

Due to high teacher and leadership turnover, SHA has not been able to evaluate the long term effects of its professional development program. SHA is working with its new staff on developing SMART Goals and Professional Learning Communities. It is evident that the school is developing effective operating processes that determine the measurable effect of professional development and student performance.

A5.   School Environment Criterion

To what extent does the school have a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that reflects the school's purpose?
To what extent is the school environment characterized by a respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support, and high expectations for each student?
INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.
Caring, Concern, High Expectations: The school demonstrates caring, concern, and high expectations for students in an environment that honors individual and cultural differences.

It is evident in focus group discussions that SHA demonstrates caring, concern, and high expectation for students in an environment that honors individual and cultural differences. One marker of this is their newly defined SLOs. Being a school with a developed international program, SHA honors individual and cultural differences. There are several cultural events and programs held throughout the year.

During the student focus group, the students stated how much the teachers care about the students as people and as learners.

Student Self-Esteem: The school fosters student self-esteem through high expectations for each student and recognition of successes.

SHA fosters student self-esteem through recognition of successes for each student as evidenced by student academic and SLO awards and display of student work outside of each classroom. SHA is developing their capacity for high expectations for each student by standardizing many academic processes.

Mutual Respect and Communication: Mutual respect and effective communication among and between staff, students, and parents is evident.

During classroom visits, it is evident that there is mutual respect and effective communication among and between teachers and students. Dialogue and discourse is professional yet warm and welcoming. Focus groups have also displayed mutual respect for staff, students, and parents in their desire to work together toward moving the school forward. Students cited respect as a key objective of SHA during the student focus group.

Teacher Support and Encouragement: There is a level of support and encouragement for teachers to use innovative approaches to enhance student learning.

South Hills Academy administration is open to varying approaches to enhance student learning. Administrators receive teacher input and are open to suggestions on how to enhance their current program. Teachers independently develop unit plans and determine the best method of delivery for instruction. Teachers are given the freedom to use alternative methods of assessment.

Safe, Clean, and Orderly Environment: The school has existing policies, regulations and uses its resources to ensure a safe, clean and orderly place that nurtures learning, including internet safety.

During the virtual visit, SHA leadership provided opportunities for the Visiting Committee to see evidence of their safe, clean, and orderly environment that nurtures learning. During virtual classroom visits, the school grounds were in good condition and the cleaning response of the COVID pandemic was in place.

SHA has internet filters that block inappropriate materials. Employees and students sign an internet compliance agreement and mobile phones are collected from the start of school and returned at the end of the school day.

SHA performs necessary safety drills including fire drills, earthquake drills, lock-down drills, active shooter training and workshops for all stakeholders, and staff CPR and First Aid certifications.

A6.   Reporting Student Progress Criterion

To what extent do the school leadership and staff regularly assess student progress toward accomplishing the schoolwide learner outcomes?
To what extent do the school leadership and staff report student progress to the rest of the school community?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Reporting Student Progress: There are effective processes to keep the board and parents informed about student progress toward achieving the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

SHA uses internal data to keep the board and parents informed about student progress toward achieving the academic standards and SLOs. SHA utilizes the Student Information System, ALMA, to provide students and parents 24 hour access to current grades. Parents and students have access to see which standards have been evaluated and student progress toward those standards.

Every semester high school students and parents meet with the school counselor to develop and maintain their high school pathway plan. There is evidenced

documentation of this plan.

SHA utilizes parent teacher conferences to further inform parents on their child's academic progress throughout the school year. The school has recently adopted NWEA's MAP test and will begin to use this information to further communicate student progress toward standards-based academic progress.

Monitoring of Student Growth: The school has an effective system to monitor all students' progress toward meeting the academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes.

The school has a system to monitor all students' progress toward meeting the academic standards and SLO monitoring is still in development. Currently, the school relies on formal and informal observations by the classroom teachers that are entered in the gradebook as grades or comments.

Data is analyzed throughout the year to see what adjustments need to be made to ensure student academic progress.

Modifications Based on Assessment Results: The school uses assessment results to make changes in the school program, professional development activities, and resource allocations demonstrating a results-driven continuous process.

SHA has made several accommodations to their school program based on assessment results. This is evident in the hiring of additional staff when assessment results showed the need for reading intervention. SHA provided intervention programs based on reading and math scores. These programs include MathsMate and Abeka.

A7.   School Improvement Process Criterion

To what extent does the school leadership facilitate school improvement which is driven by plans of action that will enhance quality learning for all students?

To what extent does the school leadership have school community support and involvement?

To what extent does the school leadership effectively guide the work of the school?

To what extent does the school leadership provide for accountability through monitoring of the schoolwide action plan?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Broad-Based and Collaborative: The school's planning process is broad-based, collaborative and has commitment of the stakeholders, including the staff, students, and parents.

The planning process at SHA strongly relies on the Head of Schools, the governing board, and department heads. The governing board with the Head of Schools outlines goals and objectives that are implemented for stakeholders to accomplish.

School Plan Correlated to Student Learning: The school's action plan is directly correlated to the analysis of student achievement data about the critical learner needs, schoolwide learner outcomes, and

academic standards.

SHA is currently transitioning to use NWEA MAP Assessments to gather data to analyze student achievement and correlate their findings to their action plan. Prior to implementation of NWEA MAP Assessment, SHA staff used a combination of formal and informal methods to evaluate student achievements.

SHA dedicates time during staff meetings to discuss student needs based on anecdotal classroom observation. These conversations are monitored by the principal or counselor.

Systems Alignment: Within the school there is evidence of systems alignment in areas such as professional goals, teacher evaluation, and strategic planning for the purpose of ongoing school improvement.

Teachers use the Danielson Framework for Teaching to set professional goals. There is an ongoing collection of evidence by the teacher to show progress toward their goal. SHA utlitzes a Professional Learning Goal document to monitor progress of their professional goal.

There is alignment in school leadership goals. The governing authority requires school leaders to set professional goals for themselves that align with strategic plans for the school. The strategic plan is created by examining data and analysis across all aspects of the school.

Correlation between All Resources, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, and Plan: There is correlation between allocation of time/fiscal/personnel/material resources and the implementation, monitoring, and accomplishing of the schoolwide action plan.

South Hills Academy is a for-profit proprietary school. It is clear that fiscal and material resources are managed by the governing authority. The Head of Schools' role is to monitor and implement accomplishing the schoolwide action plan based on governing authority decisions.

SHA develops an annual budget based on the needs of each department. The budget is divided by the department and based on the operating cost of the school with a relationship to the student population. These two factors determine the entire budget. The annual budget is closely monitored by the Finance Director and the Head of Schools. During the last week of each month, the budget is reviewed by the board of directors to ensure budget compliance.

While the budget is set annually and monitored monthly, there is the ability to cover unexpected costs using a formalized process. The Head of Schools can also request itemization to the annual budget when needs like human resource, consumable resources, or inflationary costs change.

Areas of Strength for Organization for Student Learning (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

1. The school purpose and schoolwide learning outcomes represent the beliefs and values of all stakeholders.
2. The planning, operations, and improvements of the school are focused on student learning.
3. Professional development is encouraged, and there are financial resources to attend workshops.
4. There is a high level of trust between the governing authority, Head of Schools, and teachers.

Key Issues for Organization for Student Learning (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

1. Develop and implement a long term professional development plan which includes schoolwide goals and program effectiveness evaluation system to support teacher self-efficacy and improve teacher retention.
2. Continue to promote collaborative meetings where data, student work samples, technology resources, and professional development information is shared to promote cross curricular alignment through the subject areas in all grade levels.

Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:
- Class Observations, including Virtual Visits and Recorded Lesson Repository
- Student Interviews
- Focus Group Discussions
- Committee Meeting Agendas and Minutes
- Faculty Handbook
- Professional Development Participation and Records
- Staff Meeting Agendas
- Governing Board Agendas
- Unit Plan Template
- Unit Plans

CATEGORY B. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

B1.   What Students Learn Criterion

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

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Current Educational Research and Thinking: The comprehensive and sequential documented curriculum is modified as needed to address current educational research and thinking, other relevant international/national/community issues and the needs of all students.

The Head of Schools and Principal are the primary researchers for new material and educational resources. Professional development articles are reviewed at staff meetings. Curriculum is updated and modified based on teacher input and student performance data, but a scheduled plan to review curriculum was not provided. Following discussion among teachers and observed student need, the school adopted new K-2 language arts and K-8 math curriculum in the past year and teacher fidelity appears consistent.

Academic Standards for Each Area: The school provides a comprehensive and sequential documented curriculum that is articulated within and across grade levels for the improvement of programs, learning, and teaching.

SHA does not currently have a documented curriculum outside of the pacing provided by the respective publishers.

SHA adopted American Education Reaches Out (AERO) standards for some grades in the 2019-2020 school year. These standards will support their international student requirements to attend universities in other countries. Other new prescriptive curriculums were adopted to support the AERO standards including APEX Learning, a digital program used in the High School.

Interviews with teachers revealed that they have the flexibility to adopt other standards. Middle school science uses the Next Generation Science Standards, and the elementary and middle school language arts team has established standards based on the 6 + 1 Writing Traits. The program uses common language across grade levels to teach Voice, Ideas, Presentation, Conventions, Organization, Word Choice, and Sentence Fluency.

Congruence: There is congruence between the actual concepts and skills taught, the academic standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

SHA bases lesson plans on the respective standards. Teacher-created unit plans link concepts and skills taught as well as the SLO that is appropriate. Not all plans linked to

this report show which SLO is being addressed in the plan.   Classroom observations demonstrate varying levels of congruence between the concepts and skills, and the academic standard and SLOs with some classes showing clear congruence and others only limited apparent congruence.

Student Work — Engagement in Learning: The school's examination of representative samples of student work and snapshots of student engagement in learning demonstrates the implementation of a standards-based curriculum and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

The standard-based curriculum can be seen in the lessons and samples of student work. SHA has planned to add more teacher staff development to understand the standards, and there is a need to create a formal policy and process to determine student understanding and attainment of the SLOs. The development of a SLO rubric has been initiated but not completed.

Accessibility of All Students to Curriculum: A rigorous, relevant, and coherent curriculum to all students is accessible to all students through all courses/programs offered. The school examines the demographics and situation of students throughout the class offerings. The school's instructional practices and other activities facilitate access and success for all students.

SHA identifies as a college preparatory school with a rigorous curriculum to support that outcome. Concerns about horizontal alignment within the grades is a topic SHA is looking to improve. For the 2021-2021 school year, the school has moved to a departmentalized structure where a teacher is assigned to a dedicated subject. This will require coordination to accomplish the horizontal alignment and a cross-curricular program.

As SHA enrolls more international students, the demographics of the school and each grade level are evaluated to ensure the rigor and standards are still being met. The High School has incorporated the APEX digital program to address the increase in international students.

Parent interviews revealed that after a family, Christian centered school, the high academics SHA provides is why they enroll their children at the school. The parents praise the SST (School Success Team) for addressing any challenges a student may face academically, and find a way to intervene and modify the curriculum for student success.

Acceptable Student Achievement: The school demonstrates acceptable student learning of the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes through defined performance indicators.

The school demonstrates acceptable student learning correlated to the adopted standards and the SLOs. Students who graduate or transfer to other schools have reported a high level of academic preparedness. SHA adopted standards-based grading

and has modified the report card to reflect this. SLOs are not included in the current report card and is an area SHA has identified to work on.

Integration Among Disciplines: There is integration among disciplines at the school and, if applicable, integration of outsourced curriculum into the program for which curricular integrity, reliability and security is maintained.

SHA reports that the elementary and middle school classes are more cross-curricularly aligned than the high school. Cross curricular projects are being included in the high school curriculum. Outsourced curriculum is evaluated for student learning needs, alignment with academic expectations, and correlation with the SLOs.

During classroom observations, integration between subject areas was not displayed. Subjects observed were taught in isolation and with a single focus of instruction. This is an area for growth to enhance the vision of the school.

Curricular Review, Revision, and Evaluation: The school assesses its curriculum review, evaluation, and review processes for each program area, including graduation requirements, credits, grading policies, and homework policy regarding the impact of these processes on providing a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum for all students.

Periodically, academic programs are evaluated by school leaders, teachers, and board members. SHA is looking to formalize a process for evaluating the programs and charting student progress. With the introduction of NWEA MAP testing, data will be collected to assess student performance.

When SHA made the shift to standards-based grading, the Head of Schools consulted with universities in the surrounding area for congruence with their programs and admittance procedures. This compatibility made the grading change easier for parents to accept and adapt to. During teacher interviews, the AERO standards also align with standards-based grading, and teachers feel the shift has enabled them to discern the students' understanding of the material and correspond the understanding with the standards-based grading system.

Interviews with parents revealed that high academics is a top reason they enroll their children at SHA. During the interviews, no mention was made of the new grading policy or any challenges with the homework policy. The school has done a good job of marketing the rationale for the grading change to its parents and schools in the surrounding area.

Collaborative Work: The administrators and teachers use various collaborative strategies to examine curriculum design and student work in order to refine lessons, units, and/or courses.

The small staff at SHA has enabled the teachers to interact easily with each other and

observe various classes through Learning Walks and Critical Friends. Teachers and administration report a high interest in expanding collaborative opportunities, although the current COVID restrictions have delayed that expansion. Student needs are discussed in both formal and informal settings and curricular modifications are made to accommodate changing student needs.

Policies — Rigorous, Relevant, Coherent Curriculum: The school assesses the curriculum and its rigor, relevancy, and coherency after examination of policies regarding course completion, credits, grading policies, homework, use of technology, etc.

School leaders are responsible for assessing the curriculum in relation to rigor, relevancy, and coherency. Yearly curricular reviews, as well as teacher-initiated concerns, inform the school's program and development. Students consistently complete courses with the required credits.

Articulation and Follow-up Studies: The school conducts student follow-up studies that provide insight to the effectiveness of the instruction to prepare students for pursuing further education, entering the work force, or meeting their personal goals.

Currently, SHA does not track students after they leave the school, although 100% of graduates are accepted and enrolled in a four-year college or university.

B2.   How Students Learn Criterion

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

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Research-based Knowledge: The administrators and teachers use a variety of approaches to remain current in research-based professional knowledge and apply the knowledge to improve teaching and learning. All students regardless of background and ability are actively involved in the learning that is based on the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards.

SHA utilizes a variety of resources to remain current in research-based professional knowledge. Local conferences and training are promoted and available to all teachers, although participation has varied and processes for evaluating the effectiveness of the training are not yet developed beyond the expectation that teachers report on the professional development at school meetings.

The administration provides the teaching staff with a variety of resources and articles each month focussed on improving student learning. The school also takes advantage of the broad and varied prior teaching experience that many teachers bring to the school site, including technological tools, classroom practices, and curricular options. A

detailed list of resources that have been reviewed by a teacher would be beneficial.

Planning Processes: The planning processes, including the use of formative assessment results, focus on the engagement of all student activity at a high level of learning consistent with the curricular standards and schoolwide learner outcomes.

A variety of tools are used by SHA teachers in the planning process. SHA administration shared a unit plan template that incorporates the guiding question, significant concepts included, SLOs, assessment, teaching strategies, available resources, and evaluation and reflection. Unit plans shared with the committee show alignment in structure of the plans although some plans did employ a different format.

Professional Collaboration: Administrators and teachers use various collaborative strategies to examine curricular design and student work to improve learning and teaching, including demonstrating critical thinking, problem solving, knowledge and application. This would include examples of the selection of the instructional approaches based on the learning purpose(s) desired.

Many in-house programs such as Learning Walks and Critical Friends have been in place for SHA teachers to observe other classrooms and discuss curricular design and student work, but are not currently in practice. With the introduction of specialized teachers in a subject area, the vertical planning between grades is a function of the single teacher. Discussion with the administration and teachers indicate an area to focus on is cross curricular planning for each grade to integrate the curriculum for students.

Professional Development: The school uses ongoing professional development to enhance the curriculum and improve learning and teaching.

Teachers are encouraged to attend outside professional development programs and then share the new material during faculty meetings. Emails are shared by the administration with training options that are being offered, and SHA pays for the registration. During this current year, teachers have stated that they have taken some training, but accessed it during their off time as the days are full and busy.

Teachers interviewed revealed that prior to school starting, professional development was provided. This included orientation for new employees. While the teachers felt that professional development was initially promoted by the administration, there has not been much training advertised since school began.

Challenging and Varied Instructional Strategies: The teachers strengthen student understanding and achievement of the learning outcomes through the use of a variety of instructional strategies that are selected on the basis of the learning purpose(s) and effectively engage students at a high level of learning.

Based on student work provided and interviews with teachers in the elementary, middle and high school sections, SHA teachers employ a varied range of instructional strategies to engage the students in a high level of learning. In the high school, topics are introduced with direct instruction and dialogue, then students are provided graphic organizers to record the information. PowerPoints are created by the students and then the students relate the topic to present day events. Rich discussions with the teacher help demonstrate the mastery of the information and the ability to apply it to real life.

In middle school, both direct instruction and hands-on activities are incorporated in the science instruction. Using the Next Generation Science Standards and the StemScopes program, students create physical models and simulations to demonstrate knowledge of the concept.

The elementary instruction includes both direct instruction and hands-on activities to engage the students. Art vocabulary was introduced during a direct instruction lesson, then the students had that chance to use this information in their own drawing. Reinforcement of the vocabulary continued as the students created their artwork.

Student-to-teacher interaction and check for understanding is widely practiced, but largely content-mastery-based and limited opportunities for student-to-teacher and student-to-student discussion and reflection were observed. Many observed instructional practices emphasized DOK 1 and 2 responses, and higher-level responses, where students defend an answer or argue for a position, were not observed.

Technological Integration: Teachers systematically integrate technology within the school so that all students develop a wide range of technological skills.

Google Suite products are used by the students and staff. Prior to the pandemic and online learning, SHA reported that students had basic computer skills. Digital photography, video production, and STEM classes are also provided to improve students' technology skills. Information on the degree of proficiency now that technology is being used every day with virtual learning would complete this study.

Some teachers are using Kahoot in their instruction as a review tool and an assessment. Flipgrid was also incorporated into lessons for recording student work.

The observed use of instructional technology emphasized automation and consumption over student production, contribution, inquiry, or entrepreneurship (T3 Instructional Technology Model). Leverage of creative and deliberate, pedagogically-aligned technology tools to accelerate student learning was limited.

Evidence of Results based upon Challenging Learning Experiences: Students working and their work demonstrate critical and creative thinking, problem solving, knowledge attainment, and application skills.

Creativity is developed in SHA students through music, dance, visual, performing and art classes. These classes held performances during the year in the Christmas Music Program, art exhibitions, dance performances, and the Visual and Performing Arts Festival. Student work demonstrates a level of critical thinking, but the teachers identified that improvement in taking knowledge and skills to higher level thinking is desired.

Student Understanding of Learner Expectations: The students know the standards/expected performance levels for each area of study.

Course syllabi and class rubrics were shared with the visiting committee. While there are clear expectations outlined in these documents, they are addressed more to the parents and not the students. During the virtual classroom walkthrough, there was little evidence of class objectives posted on boards around the classroom nor language posted about the standards-based grading.

During interviews with teachers, understanding of the SLOs was discussed. Most teachers felt that the students did not know these objectives and they were not emphasized in the class. This was an area that was also discussed with the administrators, and a clearer path moving forward with these objectives would benefit the entire school.

Student Perceptions: Interviews and dialogue with representative students inform the degree to which learning experiences are relevant in preparing students for college, career, and life.

It is not clear that SHA students in the elementary classes understand the expectations for each class and objectives were not consistently displayed in the classrooms that we visited. Incorporating the SLOs into the daily lesson is an area SHA wishes to improve. Discussion with the middle and high school student group indicated that they know what is expected of them in each class. Discussions about field trips SHA offers indicated that students feel that they are beneficial to the SLO of being a global citizen.

Student Needs: Teachers address student needs through the instructional approaches used.

Instruction is delivered in a variety of ways by the SHA teachers including direct instruction, project based learning, modeling, and feedback. During this trying time of in-person and virtual learning, the SHA staff has adapted lessons to best fit the needs of the students. While learning remotely, direct instruction has worked better for many teachers so the students are gaining the knowledge while away from the classroom environment. Models and simulations are being conducted, but group work is not easily transferred to this remote platform.

The inquiry-based, discovery learning model is encouraged by the administration to promote a student centered approach to learning. Staff development on the learning

model would benefit all staff.

Student Use of Resources: Students use resources for learning beyond the limits of the textbook such as effective use of collaborative activities, technology, library/media resources and community resources.

Field trips, community organizations, and the STEM and science lab supplement the textbooks and technology tools that are available to SHA students. A student group discussion highlighted many field trips that have impacted them like the Poverty Encounter in Los Angeles.

Technology was incorporated into the curriculum before the COVID shutdown which enabled the school to easily transition to virtual learning. Students report that they are quite comfortable with using Google suite products and can create many documents through this platform. The students also mentioned that they started using Quizlet to create review flashcards to help them study material.

B3.   How Assessment Is Used Criterion

To what extent is teacher and student use of assessment frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process?
To what extent are the assessment results the basis for measurement of each student's progress toward the schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards?
To what extent are the assessment results the basis for regular evaluation, modification, and improvement of curriculum and instructional approaches?
To what extent are the assessment results the basis for the allocation of resources?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.
Appropriate Assessment Strategies: The teachers regularly use appropriate assessment strategies to measure student progress toward acquiring understanding of a specific body of knowledge or skills, such as critical thinking and communication skills; examples of assessment strategies include essays, portfolios, individual or group projects, tests, etc.

SHA assessment strategies are adequate, and teachers use self-selected and self-created assessments in their classrooms. The SHA administration monitors the assessments through unit plans, and students are provided grading and feedback from the classroom teacher.

SHA is moving towards a progression of knowledge of what students know and understand. Standards-based grading will facilitate this transition. Teachers select, proctor, and evaluate the types of assessments that are used in their classroom. As SHA moves towards standards-based grading, the staff as a whole would benefit from collaboration on the types of assessments that are being selected.

Assessments during virtual learning have been difficult, and teachers reported and the VC observed that currently, discussion and informal assessments were most common. Another method of assessment during this virtual time has been with a Kahoot quiz which allows the teacher to see immediately if a concept has been understood. The

school has had a strong emphasis on formal, summative assessments and the use of both formal and informal formative assessments is limited.

Basis for Determination of Performance Levels: The school staff has determined the basis upon which students' grades and their growth and performance levels are determined and uses that information to strengthen high achievement of all students.

Shifting to standards-based grading starts in the 2020-2021 school year, and alignment of these standards, based upon student progression, will be reviewed by the SHA teachers. AERO standards have been selected as they align with the standards-based grading system. Students are marked either exceeding, proficient, satisfactory, emerging, or below standard rather than traditional grade or number. In conjunction with the new standards, SHA has modified their academic awards.

Demonstration of Student Achievement: A range of examples of student work and other assessments demonstrate student achievement of the academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes, including those with special needs.

Teachers collect a range of samples of student work when evaluating student achievement. After evaluating multiple standardized testing platforms, SHA will begin using NWEA MAP testing in January of 2021. The data collected from this assessment, which will be given 3 times a year, will drive instruction.

SHA does not separate the SLOs from the academic grades as they feel they are intertwined. The administration is looking at ways to evaluate and assess the SLOs. The school has not yet developed ways for student self-reflection on SLO progress.

Student Success Teams (SST) have been established to help struggling students, but SHA does not have a special education program. Parents interviewed speak highly of the SST program and are grateful for the inclusion of this service for the student and the family.

Correlation: The teachers correlate assessment to schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, course competencies and instructional approaches used.

During 2016-2019, benchmark assessments based on course expectations were created and administered by the teachers. This process was found to be time-consuming and did not provide conclusive data. SHA is moving to NWEA MAP testing in 2020-2021 to provide the school with more relevant data on student achievement.

Assessments surrounding the SLOs have not been incorporated into the assessment program at SHA. Ongoing dialogue with the administration and faculty has the issue at the forefront of considerations.

Modification/Decisions based on Assessment Data: Assessment data is collected and analyzed and used to make changes and decisions about curriculum, instruction, professional development activities, and resource allocation. Teachers modify and revise the curriculum and instruction as a result of student assessment, both collectively and individually.

SHA has transitioned to different testing platforms to generate assessment data. In 2015-2916, SHA used the TerraNova test to evaluate student learning. That following year through the beginning of 2018, Illuminate was used as an assessment tool. This tool was determined to lack quality data, and NWEA MAP testing will begin in the 2020-2021 school year. With all forms of data, staff meetings and subgroups examined the data and provided suggestions for new strategies to be used in targeted areas.

Student Feedback: Student feedback is an important part of monitoring student progress over time based on the schoolwide learner outcomes and the curricular objectives.

SHA has the ability to conference informally with its student body due to the small school population. Student feedback is provided in this manner as well as through surveys and small group meetings. The staff note that the small class sizes and family atmosphere at SHA, is a large draw to keeping them at the school as they can interact and support the students in a productive manner. As noted earlier, student feedback was primarily based on DOK 1 and 2 student responses with coaching toward the right answer rather than having students explain why they chose a particular answer.

Teacher Monitoring: Teachers monitor student progress over time and use student feedback as appropriate to determine whether course objectives and standards have been met.

Many strategies are employed by SHA staff to provide student feedback and assess how academic standards have been met. Student conferences, email, group chats with parents, and the SST process are used to monitor student progress, provide feedback, and develop individualized learning approaches to enhance student progress toward course objectives.

Areas of Strength for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

1. SHA has developed a strong Student Success Team system that is praised by the parents as a great intervention tool for their children.
2. Tools are in place to uniformly document unit plans, including instruction, assessment and SLO alignment for each grade and subject area.
3. Vertical alignment has been strengthened by the addition of a departmental approach to teaching in each subject area.
4. Once pandemic restrictions are lifted, students have access to many resources beyond the textbook to enhance their learning.
5. SHA quickly transitioned to virtual learning when necessary and currently continue with a hybrid model that is working for both the families and the staff. Instruction for parents helped this program start successfully.
6. The SLOs have been redefined to provide a better understanding for both the staff, students, and families.

Key Issues for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

1. Develop and implement a clear, coherent, and effective plan to evaluate the new NWEA MAP testing data as well as both formal and informal formative and summative assessment data within each classroom for congruence with standards-based grading.
2. Incorporate standards, learning objectives, and SLOs in classroom displays to strengthen the connection between classroom instruction and outcomes.
3. Develop and implement a clear, coherent, and effective staff development program that establishes short and long-term goals for student learning and addresses the change to standards-based grading to ensure alignment within the grades and subject areas.
4. Promote the self-efficacy and capacity of teachers through cross-curricular, collaborative, inquiry-based, instructional design and deliberate leverage of aligned pedagogical technology tools, and develop systems to monitor effectiveness and modify school programs to meet the changing needs of all students.
5. Focus on creative, varied, and deliberate instructional practices, utilizing Depth of Knowledge (DOK), that promote critical thinking, analysis, and elaborated response and defense to support student voice and concept mastery.

Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- Class Observations- both in-peson and virtual recordings
- Student Interviews
- Focus Group Discussions
- Committee Meeting Agendas and Minutes
- Professional Development Participation and Records
- Staff Meeting Agendas
- Governing Board Agendas
- Unit and Lesson Plan Samples
- Report Card Template

C. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

C1. Student Connectedness Criterion

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

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Adequate Personalized Support: The school has available adequate services, including referral services, to support all students in such areas as health, career and personal counseling, and academic assistance.

South Hills Academy has adequate services to support all students in such areas as health, career and personal counseling, and academic assistance. SHA has a healthcare room where office staff can provide first aid to students. All staff members are certified for First Aid and CPR. Teachers and support staff have updated lists of students with special health issues and needs.

Teachers and staff members work to develop connections with students that serve as a tier one intervention for personal counseling. The school recently hired a counselor that is utilized and delivers small group counseling if an issue is deemed serious or complex.

The counselor meets with students for college planning. The counselor helps choose classes and is open throughout the year to meet with students about to discuss academic credits and college admissions. Students participate in college campus field trips and college admissions application planning.

The counselor is an integral part of the Student Success Team meetings. The counselor arranges the meeting among all stakeholders. During the SST meeting, an action plan is developed and implemented. The results are shared with all people involved, and the teachers work with the student to carry out the process. Follow up meetings are also scheduled to monitor the progress of the plan.

Teachers at SHA offer academic assistance to individual students during breaks and after school. SHA provides free after-school homework and academic help for all grade-levels. Special needs students are referred to the local school district for securing an IEP and services from the district.

Conversations with parents were very complimentary about the support services available to their children. The SST is a program the parents find supportive and important at SHA.

School Support Systems: The school coordinates a system of support services that provides for maximum effectiveness, including the processes for intervention and referral.

SHA utilizes their counselor to coordinate and oversee SST meetings. Teachers

complete a Pre-SST document where they log the students area of strength, needs, and current accommodations. The contents of the SST meeting are summarized in a SST documentation form. All stakeholders in attendance to the meeting sign this document.

South Hills Academy has systems of school coordination of support in place. They are effective in utilizing the resources they have available.

Teacher observations are reported to the school counselor to determine what programs can be requested internally or externally. SHA relies on the local school district to provide specialized services.

The SST process is followed with a tracking sheet. Teachers are expected to follow SST procedures, and progress is monitored through anecdotal observations, student/parent interviews, and grade books.

Strategies Used for Student Growth/Development: Strategies are used by the school leadership and staff to develop personalized approaches to learning and alternative instructional options which allow access to and progress in the rigorous standards-based curriculum. Examples of strategies include: level of teacher involvement with all students, a curriculum that promotes inclusion, processes for regular review of student and schoolwide profiles, and processes and procedures for interventions that address retention and redirection.

The school leadership team and staff use several strategies to develop personalized approaches to learning. These include support staff for pull-out instruction, small group instruction, homework help, math and english placed by ability, A.P. classes, and A.P. Capstone Diploma.

School leadership has implemented a unit plan template that teachers complete and share via Google Drive. Leadership reviews the unit plan before implementation. The unit plan prompts teachers to identify methods of differentiation and the implementation of alternative instructional strategies.

Support Services and Learning: The school leadership and staff ensure that the support services and related activities have a direct relationship to student involvement in learning, e.g., within and outside the classroom, for all students.

Classroom teachers, parents, and school leadership use classroom observations, summative and formative assessments, and overall school performance as a means to identify underperforming or struggling students.

SHA school leadership and staff utilize the SST to ensure that support services and related activities have a direct relationship to student involvement in learning. This is a collaborative experience where all stakeholders are involved and take part in developing a plan for students success.

Co-Curricular Activities: School leadership and staff link curricular and co-curricular activities to the

academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes.

Before COVID lockdowns, SHA offered a variety of co-curricular activities. Examples of these activities included student leadership, Bible club, and field trips that supported both academic and SLO goals.

Student Involvement in Curricular/Co-Curricular Activities: The school has an effective process for regularly evaluating the level of student involvement in curricular/co-curricular activities and student use of support services.

The school, according to the self-study, has inconsistently utilized various strategies to evaluate effectiveness. Such strategies include individual program sign-up, request by parents for the program to repeat, After Action Review of the program, surveys, and daily attendance.

Student Perceptions: The school is aware of the student view of student support services through such approaches as interviewing and dialoguing with student representatives of the school population.

South Hills Academy utilizes student surveys and teacher/school leadership testimony to be aware of the student view of student support services. Teachers and school leadership participate in ongoing informal discussions with students on their perceptions of student support services. These topics of these conversations include teaching styles, assignments, and recommendations.

C2. Parent/Community Involvement Criterion

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

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Regular Parent Involvement: The school implements strategies and processes for the regular involvement of parents and the community, including being active partners in the learning/teaching process for all programs. The school involves non-English speaking parents and/or online parents.

SHA implements strategies and processes for the regular involvement of parents. The parent focus group indicated several ways in which they have been involved in school activities and feel that they can informally visit the Head of Schools at any time. Other regular involvement includes a room parent program, parent volunteer opportunities, parents as guest speakers, and after school program support led by parents.

There are many formal events where the Head of Schools and elementary principal are available for open discussion with parents. Twice a month there is a Principal's Coffee and Community Meeting. These meetings are designed to facilitate the sharing of information and create an open dialogue among stakeholders. The transition to virtual meetings, following the COVID lockdown, have enabled greater parent attendance.

There is a Parent-Teacher Committee that meets once a month to give input, bring up

concerns, and discuss upcoming events. The school relies on parent involvement to develop community activities and grow community satisfaction.

SHA involves all parents to be partners in the teaching and learning process by holding such events as parent teacher conferences, Open House, and Back to School Night. The school works to involve non-English speaking parents and online parents by providing translated video services for international parents and interpreters to local and international parents.

Use of Community Resources: The school uses community resources to support students such as professional services, business partnerships, speakers, etc.

The school has utilized community resources to support students. Examples of community involvement include partnerships with their local police and fire department, visits from the Mayor, and field trips to the local supermarket. Staff, including classified representatives, indicated that the school should continue to build community outreach programs and involvement to communicate and promote the vision of the school.

Parents/Community and Student Achievement: The school ensures that the parents and school community understand student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results (schoolwide learner outcomes) through the school's program.

Teachers use a schoolwide unit planner that is standards based and clearly identifies a schoolwide learner outcome.

The school has awards ceremonies tied to the schoolwide learning outcomes. Students who meet certain criteria receive an award specific to each schoolwide learner outcome. Students that meet the criteria to be nominated for all five SLO's are eligible for the Renaissance Award. The development of a SLO rubric was initiated, but not yet complete.

Areas of Strength for Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

1. SHA has adequate services that support the health, career, personal and academic counseling available to all students.
2. The school has a solid system of initial intervention and referral for academic and behavioral support in the SST process.
3. Parents are active participants in the learning and teaching of the students. Parents show strong support for all aspects of the school program.
4. Students feel strongly supported by administration, teachers, and staff to achieve personal and academic growth.

Key Issues for Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

1. Create an effective process for following up on SSTs with the student, parents, and teachers.

2. Enhance and continuously develop approaches to learning and alternative instructional options that allow for a rigorous standards-based curriculum.
3. Expand community outreach and local partnerships to build relationships and promote the school vision in the surrounding community.
4. Enhance teacher understanding of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies to assist in student support.

Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- Class Observations- both in-person and virtual recordings
- Student Interviews
- Focus Group Discussions
- Committee Meeting Agendas and Minutes
- Professional Development Participation and Records
- Staff Meeting Agendas
- Governing Board Agendas
- Unit Plan Template

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

D1. Resources Criterion

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

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Allocation Decisions: There is a relationship between the decisions about resource allocations, the school's vision, mission and student achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards. The school leadership and staff are involved in the resource allocation decisions.

A detailed activities budget supports students in all grades. Department Heads and the Head of Schools submit recommendations to the school board for allocation of funds. The Head of Schools has discretionary leeway to make the decisions without first consulting the board.

Teacher discussions revealed that teachers are given independence to choose programs to implement and standards to follow. The administration supports their choices and funding, though limited, is allocated quickly. A new elementary language arts and math curriculum, as well as a new science curriculum and program was instituted for the 2020/21 school year .

Practices: The school develops an annual budget, has an annual audit, and at all times conducts quality business and accounting practices, including protections against mishandling of institutional funds.

SHA's accounting of funds and budget are monitored by the board of directors. SHA conducts an outside audit of the finances as well as periodic budget meetings to review finances. Administrators and the Finance Director meet monthly to review the budget.

Facilities: The school's facilities are adequate, safe, functional, and well-maintained and support the school's mission, desired learning goals, and educational program.

SHA has improved areas of their campus over the past 6 years including safety features, playground updates, and improvements to a STEM lab, art classroom, library and computer lab to improve student use. Teachers and students surveyed agreed that the school grounds are safe and clean.

Sample agendas from the weekly administration meetings support that this committee looks at all areas as they update the facilities. Student Affairs, Technology, and Facilities are included in weekly meetings to support upgrades and improvements as needed.

The virtual walkabout of the campus showed a clean, kept facility. Murals graced many walls, and the SLOs were painted on pillars for all to see as they walked on the campus. Many classrooms, however, did not have bulletin boards or displays on the walls.

Parents commented that the campus is safe for their children but that updates to the facilities were being planned.

Instructional Materials and Equipment: The policies and procedures for acquiring and maintaining adequate instructional materials and equipment, such as textbooks, other printed materials, audio-visual, support technology, manipulatives, and laboratory materials are effective.

SHA has not established a formal process for acquiring and maintaining instructional material. The Work Plan created for 2019-2020 does not focus on implementing instructional material changes.

Teachers interviewed felt that the administration was responsive with providing the materials they needed for instruction. A new science program was purchased, StemScopes, and was implemented immediately upon the recommendation of the classroom teacher.

Well-Qualified Staff: Resources are available to enable the hiring, nurturing, and ongoing professional development of a well-qualified staff for all programs such as online instruction and college/career.

SHA has experienced high turnover this past year, but currently has sufficient certificated staff. The school has agreements to provide funding for teachers who need to complete their induction training if they will then stay an additional 2 years at SHA.

New teachers interviewed explained that professional development was held during the summer before school began, and opportunities for continued professional development have been offered with funding, but would occur during the staff members own time. The self-study reported limited participation in instructional PD offerings despite school encouragement for participation.

Professional development is primarily done in-house with peer to peer interactions and learning walks on campus. The survey of the staff suggests that the majority of the staff feel supported by the administration when pursuing professional development opportunities.

D2.   Resource Planning Criterion

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

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

Long-Range Resource Plan: The school has developed and implemented a long-range resource plan. The school has a process for regular examination of this plan to ensure the continual availability of appropriate resources that support the school's vision, mission and student learning of schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards.

SHA defines long-range planning with focusing on the needs of the school for that particular year. Priority in funding is to secure qualified faculty and staff, followed by educational resources and school facilities. Monthly budget meetings are held to update the yearly budget.

Through discussions with administration, a longer plan is discussed with the Head of Schools and the governing board, but this plan is not communicated to the school.

Use of Research and Information: The school uses research and information to form the master resource plan.

The administration, board, and staff members are responsible to research the needs of the school. New programs and materials are researched and presented by the staff member, and with agreement of the administrators, the program is implemented.

The Head of Schools has been spearheading the research on standards-based grading and has consulted with postsecondary institutions to ensure clear understanding and acceptable demonstration of student competency for entrance for graduating seniors.

Involvement of Stakeholders: Stakeholders are involved in the future planning.

When not in a pandemic environment, many informal meetings with the parents were held to gather information and opinions for future planning of the school. The small size of the school and the close bonds with the parents and students help facilitate these meetings.

On campus, informal pizza and leadership meetings occurred, and staff members participated in conversations, surveys, and e-mails to discuss the goals of SHA.

Informing: The governing authorities and school leaders are involved in informing the public and appropriate governmental authorities about the financial needs of the organization.

SHA is a for-profit, proprietary school with a governing board that is abroad. Finances are documented on an annual budget, but through enrollment and investors, the financial needs are met.

Marketing Strategies: The school has marketing strategies to support the implementation of the developmental program.

SHA engages with the public through many means including its website, social media, and international recruitment agencies. Discussions with staff members encourage SHA to reach out to the local neighborhood for increased enrollment and engagement. The school has a marketing committee and is exploring the possibility of hiring marketing personnel in the future.

***Areas of Strength for Resource Management and Development* (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:**

1. Qualified, creative, and adaptable staff.
2. Adequate facilities to support programs.
3. Implementation of new curriculum and instructional materials occurs in a timely manner.

***Key Issues for Resource Management and Development* (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:**

1. Create an effective process for following up on marketing and recruitment to grow the student population.
2. Develop and implement a plan to improve teacher recruitment, increase teacher retention, and support teacher growth through a variety of professional development opportunities.
3. Develop a long-range plan of 3-5 years, for financial security and planning.

Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:

- Class Observations
- Student Interviews
- Focus Group and Administration Discussions
- Committee Meeting Agendas and Minutes
- Professional Development Participation and Records
- Staff Meeting Agendas
- Governing Board Agendas

Part B: Schoolwide Strengths and Critical Areas for Follow-up (2 pages)

Briefly comment about the previously identified schoolwide strengths and critical areas for follow-up.

South Hills Academy provides its students with a strong academic program that fully prepares them for the next level of learning, wherever that may be. The school's mission, vision, and SLOs are representative of the stakeholders and serve to frame all programs. While the school does not have the fully-developed systems of larger schools, it takes advantage of its small size through informal, rapid-response, and prototyping capabilities, working to ensure that the needs of all students are addressed and acted upon. The school culture is positive and focussed on the full needs of its students.

In the interest of continued development of the program, the school should focus on developing distributed, collaborative opportunities for teachers that would result in increased teacher self-efficacy. Although instruction currently relies on high expectations, immediate feedback, and dialogue, the development of depth-of-knowledge practices would serve to leverage student voice, promote critical thinking and analysis, and deepen cognitive engagement. Additionally, a renewed focus on professional development for newly-hired teachers, fully supporting their varied needs, would serve to increase teacher retention and empower the staff to develop innovative strategies to meet the ever-changing needs of students.

Synthesize schoolwide areas of strength and list numerically. Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.

Schoolwide Areas of Strength

1. The school provides a strong academic program and supports for student success.
2. The school purpose and redefined schoolwide learning outcomes (ESLOs) represent the beliefs and values of all stakeholders.
3. There is a high level of trust between the governing authority, Head of Schools, and teachers.
4. SHA has developed a strong Student Success Team system that is praised by the parents as a great intervention tool for their children.
5. Parents are active participants in the learning and teaching of the students. Parents show strong support for all aspects of the school program. Students feel strongly supported by administration, teachers, and staff to achieve personal and academic growth.
6. SHA quickly transitioned to virtual learning when necessary and currently continues with a hybrid model that is working for both the families and the staff. Instruction for parents helped this program start successfully.

Synthesize schoolwide critical areas for follow-up and list numerically. Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.
- **Confirm areas already identified by the school in the action plan sections**
- **Confirm areas to be strengthened within the already identified areas**
- **Identify any additional areas to be added to the action plan that have been identified by the visiting committee. *This includes areas related to student achievement and other profile data, the school program and operation, and the action plan.***

Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up
(Include who, what, why, and the impact on student learning)

The Visiting Committee concurs with the school's identified areas that are outlined in the schoolwide action plan. These are summarized below:

1. Develop and implement a long term professional development plan which includes schoolwide goals and program effectiveness evaluation system
2. Develop an effective system to monitor all students' progress toward meeting the academic standards and schoolwide learning outcomes.
3. Enhance and continuously develop approaches to learning and alternative instructional options that allow for a rigorous standards-based curriculum.
4. Create an effective process for following up on marketing and recruitment to grow student population and develop better programs
5. Develop and implement a plan to increase teacher retention

In addition, the Visiting Committee has identified areas that need to be strengthened:
(Note: Show the relationship to what the school has already identified, if possible.)

1. Continue to promote collaborative meetings where data, student work samples, technology resources, and professional development information is shared to promote cross curricular alignment through the subject areas in all grade levels.

2. Promote teacher self-efficacy through collaborative, cross-curricular instructional design and deliberate leverage of aligned pedagogical technology tools and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies to meet the changing needs of all students.

3. Focus on creative, varied, and deliberate instructional practices, utilizing Depth of Knowledge (DOK), that promote critical thinking, analysis, and elaborated response and defense to support student voice and concept mastery.

4. Develop and implement a plan to improve teacher recruitment, increase teacher retention, and support teacher growth through a variety of professional development opportunities.

CHAPTER V: ONGOING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT (1–2 pages)

- **Include a brief summary of the schoolwide action plan.**
- **Comment on the following school improvement issues:**
    - **Adequacy of the schoolwide action plan in addressing the *critical areas for follow-up.* Consider these questions:**
        - **Do the action plan sections address the *critical areas for follow-up?***
        - **Will the action plan steps enhance student learning?**
        - **Is the action plan a "user-friendly" schoolwide action plan that has integrated all major school initiatives *(e.g., technology plan, staff development plan)*?**
        - **Is the action plan feasible within existing resources?**
        - **Is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?**
    - **Existing factors that support school improvement:**
    - **Impediments to school improvement that the school will need to overcome in order to accomplish any of the action plan sections:**
    - **Soundness of follow-up process to monitor accomplishment of schoolwide action plan.**

South Hills Academy's current action plan partially addresses both site-identified areas and the 2016 WASC Mid-Cycle visit report recommendations. The school's action plan is not currently tied to student achievement data about the critical learner needs, schoolwide learner outcomes, and academic standards, partially due to a change in assessment platforms and a delay due to the COVID lockdowns. However, the school communicated a clear desire to revise its action plan according to the observations of the visiting team and the review of recently assessed student data.

The school demonstrated a reasonable capacity and adequate resources needed to adjust the action plan following the WASC visit and review of the updated student data. The school also demonstrated a reasonable, if limited, record of monitoring and updating successive iterations of the action plan. The school has initiated their updated action plan and gathered action plan templates from the WASC website as well as representative action plans from similar schools to inform their revision.

The school's long-range action plan is organized by the WASC major criteria and addresses both site-identified areas and the 2016 WASC Mid-Cycle visit report recommendations. The action plan identifies various tasks and subtasks with responsible parties, resources, assessments/measures, communication. Many subtasks are identified as ongoing and do not have specific goals for specific dates, while others are broadly-framed within a school year. Specific individuals responsible for subtasks are limited to just administration, counseling, or faculty, rather than specific individuals or committees. Decisions about the action-plan design are largely left to administration, with teachers and stakeholders sometimes consulted or involved in communication, implementation, and assessment.

The current action plan is organized around the WASC categories as follows:

A: Organization for Student Learning

1. Develop and implement a clear, coherent and effective strategy to better educate all SHA community members the value of our mission and vision.
2. Develop and implement a long term professional development plan which includes schoolwide goals and program effectiveness evaluation system.

B: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

3. Develop an effective system to monitor all students' progress toward meeting the academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes.
4. Develop and implement a clear, coherent, and effective staff development program that addresses the needs of students, teachers, and the school.

C: Organization for Student Learning

5. Create an effective process for following up on SSTs with students, parents and teachers.
6. Enhance and continuously develop approaches to learning and alternative instructional options that allow for a rigorous standards based curriculum.

D: Resource Management and Development

7. Create an effective process for following up on marketing and recruitment to grow student population and develop better programs.
8. Develop and implement a plan to increase teacher retention.

The action plan's organization leads to reduplication of initiatives (2,4 & 3,6), compartmentalizing what should be complementary programs (the role of PD in goals 2 and 4 with increasing teacher recruitment and retention), and de-emphasizes the interdependence of the variety of school offices and roles toward focus on a common goal. The school has initiated an action plan revision following the WASC visit to address these concerns and streamline the document.

Analysis of limited data/information about the critical learner needs and student achievement, school operation and program does support the identified growth areas in the schoolwide action plan, but is complicated by the current lack of student assessment data. New testing was planned for the 2019/20 school year but delayed due to the COVID lockdowns and not resumed until the very week of the WASC visit. That assessment should provide the school with achievement data and correlations to academic standards, but no process is yet in place to assess SLOs or adjust the action plan in accordance with findings.

The current action plan lacks clarity in several sections and would benefit from clear and specific timelines with actual end dates, specific individual/committee responsibilities, objective measurement tools for each task and subtask, and uniform reporting processes. Many actions at the school take advantage of the small size through informal, personal communication concerning observed needs, rather than deliberate processes outlined in the action plan. Decisions about the action plan design have been largely left to administration, with teachers and stakeholders sometimes consulted or involved in its review. While currently effective for addressing specific concerns, the

growth trajectory of the school indicates the need to solidify and formalize the action plan's structure, revision, and communication processes. Additionally, adherence to the action-plan process would facilitate awareness and communication of schoolwide areas of focus, encourage accountability, and further improve stakeholder engagement in the process.

There is correlation between allocation of time/fiscal/personnel/material resources and the implementation, monitoring, and accomplishing of the schoolwide action plan. Again, clarity of responsible parties, specific timelines, incremental and objective measures of effectiveness, and specific mechanisms for reporting would guard against unnecessary expenditures or the waste of limited resources.