

**Mid Cycle Accreditation Report  
of the Visiting Committee**

**for**

**Waimea Middle  
Public Conversion Charter School**

**Western Association of School and Colleges  
Hawaii Association of Independent Schools**

***Visiting Committee:***

Steven M. Shiraki, Ph.D., Chair  
*Hawaii Department of Education  
Honolulu, Hawaii*

Susie Osborne  
*Kua O Ka Lā  
Pahoa, Hawaii*

**April 10-11, 2017**



## **I. Introduction and Basic Student/Community Profile Data**

### **A. The School Description**

Waimea Middle School Public Conversion Charter School (WMPCCS), located in Kamuela on Hawai'i Island, uses a middle school framework to empower all students with the skills, values, and cultural understanding to navigate high school and beyond.

WMPCCS serves a diverse population of approximately 250 students in grades 6-8 as the primary public middle school in the region. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Native Hawaiians make up the largest ethnic group attending WMPCCS (50%).

Occupations in the Waimea community are a diverse mix, including farming, ranching, professional, retail, service and tourism. There is a significant science research and health care presence.

The original Waimea School was a one-room schoolhouse founded in 1916. The school was separated into Waimea Elementary and Waimea Middle in 2000. In June 2003, the middle school converted to a public conversion charter school through a partnership with Ho'okako'o Corporation which serves as the governing board and non-profit partner.

In addition to core curriculum aligned to the Common Core State Standards, extended core classes in Technology and PE/Health are provided for all students. All students participate in leveled reading classes as determined by their STAR Reading scores and teacher recommendations. AVID is implemented schoolwide.

A Connecting for Success grant through the Hawai'i Community Foundation provides individual student learning plans, mentorship programs and counseling to targeted students. 'Ike Hawai'i initiatives and the Mala'ai School Garden provide hands-on experiences that are integrated with curriculum. An ongoing, free before-school tutoring program provides homework help to over 70 students.

The school also offers free after school athletics and K(Arts), which is funded through a partnership with Kahilu Theatre as well as a variety of after school classes provided through a Honoka'a Complex 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant.

With a schoolwide focus on educating the whole child, WMPCCS seeks to ensure that students become competent learners who embody the core values of 'Ike, Kaizen, Accountability, Integrity and Respect (I-KAIR).

**Vision:** Waimea Middle School – A Place of Infinite Possibilities

**Mission:** “Waimea Middle School empowers all students with the skills, values, and cultural understanding to successfully navigate high school and beyond.”

**Our beliefs about teaching and learning at WMPCCS:**

- Student success is a responsibility shared by all stakeholders: students, families, teachers and staff, administrators and the community.
- All students are unique and deserve a rigorous, creative and nurturing school environment that encourages them to realize their individual goals and aspirations as they move through the formative middle school years.
- Students benefit from learning opportunities that are culturally relevant and encourage appreciation and respect for diversity.
- It is the school’s shared responsibility to develop students’ critical thinking skills necessary for success in the 21st century.
- Quality curriculum and instruction, as well as ongoing assessment, are critical elements for student success.

**Schoolwide Learning Results: With our focus on educating the whole child, Waimea Middle School seeks to ensure that our students become competent learners who embody our core values of:**

**I ‘IKE**

- Recognize and produce quality work
- Demonstrate developmental competency in academics
- Communicate effectively
- Understand and appreciate culture

**K KAIZEN**

- Demonstrate continued academic growth
- Use complex thinking and problem-solving skills
- Develop personal strengths and interests

**A ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Set priorities and establish achievable goals for one’s own learning
- Plan and manage time and resources to achieve goals
- Monitor progress and evaluate learning experiences
- Utilize technology effectively and ethically

**I INTEGRITY**

- Understand and follow rules and codes of conduct
- Demonstrate responsible and ethical behavior
- Develop habits that are individually and environmentally responsible

## **R RESPECT**

- Respect similarities and differences in others
- Respond to cultural differences with understanding, knowledge and consideration
- Serve others and the community

*Ike – Knowledge: To see, feel, know, experience, understand*

*Kaizen – Trying every day to be better than the day before*

## **B. Significant School Changes and Developments**

**Change in Leadership:** Upon the unexpected departure of Principal Matt Horne in March 2015, Vice Principal, Amy Kendziorski, was named Interim Principal. The Instructional Coach, Janice Somerville, moved into the Vice Principal position. To adhere to the HGEA contract, our Local School Board, Ho‘okako‘o Corporation, conducted an in-state search for the Principal position during SY 2015-16. Amy was selected as Principal in May 2016, thereby ensuring continuity for students, staff, families and community partners. She is the current Principal. A new Vice Principal, Chris Barron, was hired at the beginning of the current school year.

**Facilities Funding:** Construction on the 9-classroom STEAM Building is on schedule. Expected completion is spring 2017. Instruction will begin in August 2017. The \$14.89M allocation by the State Legislature is the result of a 13+-year school/community effort in partnership with DOE facilities—to provide students with appropriate 21st century college and career readiness teaching and learning.

Initially referred to as the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Building, it is now referred to as the STEAM Building, adding the Arts and ‘Aina. The reference to ‘aina-based, hands-on teaching and learning will impact the curriculum, instruction and assessment. The school desires to utilize this new space for the students at Waimea Middle School as well as the larger community through partnerships and sponsorships with other agencies including Kamehameha Schools, Keck Observatory, Canada-France-Hawaii-Telescope Corporation, etc. These partnerships will bring external resources to students, as well as opportunities for professional development for staff.

**Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID):** After piloting AVID in sixth, seventh and eighth grade social studies in SY 2014-15, the school determined that the AVID program would be implemented in all sixth grade core classes beginning August 2015. This effort was the result of the accreditation recommendation that the school align its instructional practices. Sixth grade teachers attended the AVID Summer Institute in Honolulu and implemented the AVID Elementary Program

during SY 2015-16. AVID Elementary Essentials focus on the four necessary elements to ensure all students are poised for success: Instruction, Culture, Leadership and Systems. The program incorporates:

- Student Success Skills: encompassing communication skills (e.g. listening, speaking, writing), self-advocacy skills, note-taking strategies, critical thinking and study skills;
- Organizational Skills: both mental and physical; students learn to use organizational tools, as well as learn and practice skills around time management and goal-setting;
- WICOR Lessons: emphasize instruction on **Writing to learn, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading to learn** in all content areas;
- Partnerships: among students, classrooms, grade levels, schools, feeder patterns, families and communities

Based on the successful implementation in sixth grade, the school determined that AVID would be extended to seventh and eighth grade in school year 2016-17 SY. Funding was provided through a variety of grants to send seventh and eighth grade teachers to the 2016 AVID Summer Institute. Sixth grade teachers also attended and received advanced training.

**Reading Classes:** The master schedule was revised to include a reading class for every student. Based on STAR Reading scores, as well as teacher recommendations and SBAC English/Language Arts scores, all students were placed into a leveled reading class in addition to their regular English/Language Arts class. Students are assessed quarterly using STAR Reading and are able to move between sections as appropriate.

**The Neilan Foundation:** The Neilan Foundation (NF) is a non-profit community donor organization that has come forward to support the school. Since the 2013-14 school year, the NF has contributed a total of \$920,500. While their initial funding focused heavily on purchasing school buses and vans to enhance student learning opportunities and redirect limited resources into the classroom, they have come to understand the school's needs and have focused their funding on more direct supports for our mission-based teacher/staff LAP input, accreditation action plans, and data. Most recently, they have focused on schoolwide reading, student engagement via after-school programs such as athletics, K(Arts), robotics, etc., and family and community engagement.

**Connecting for Success:** Initially a three-year grant provided by the Hawaii Community Foundation to engage our most at-risk learners by connecting them to school, we are one of eight middle schools in the state to secure a 4th year extension due to successful outcomes. All students in the program are provided with individualized student learning plans, individual and small group counseling, family outreach, and mentoring opportunities. The mentoring program has become an exemplary program, and policies, procedures, training materials, etc., have been

shared with many schools. The Boys to Men group mentoring program began at Waimea Middle and has now expanded to Konawaena MS, Kohala MS and HS, Honoka'a HS, and Pahoa MS. At present, 91% of our 55 cohort students are partnered with a one-on-one community volunteer mentor or are receiving group mentoring. Mentors are provided with updates regarding student progress and celebrate with their mentees as appropriate. The grant has brought approximately \$600,000 to the school.

**Extended Learning Opportunities:** After-school programs have been expanded through a variety of grants and partnerships. A Kamehameha Schools STEM grant has provided after-school robotics and Mala'ai Garden classes. A 21st Century Community Learning Center grant which has contributed approximately \$47,000 in program supports has provided our students with a variety of STEAM focused after-school and summer programs.

**Collaboration with Other Area Schools:** Partnerships with the Hawaii Preparatory Academy and Parker School have afforded our students and staff with opportunities to enrich experiences for all students in the Waimea community. Staff members from the three schools collaborate in the Waimea Education Hui to bring culturally relevant opportunities to all students and staff. Students from the three schools have worked together on the Mele Mural project, the Plastic in our Oceans project, and two Myrlyn Hepworth Spoken Word Poetry programs.

**Kamehameha Schools Funding:** The school has worked extensively to restore funding from Kamehameha Schools. In the 14-15 school year, no funding was received. In 15-16, the funding totaled \$409,000, and in the current school year, the grant has totaled \$499,219. Additionally, the school was invited to apply for a KS STEAM Grant in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school year. We received \$99,300 for the current school year and have applied for \$500,000 for SY 2017-18. Some of the funding reduces the school's budget deficit; some provides additional student supports.

**Representation on the Ho'okako'o Board:** In an effort to improve communication between the school and our Local School Board (the Ho'okako'o Corporation) and as a result of the reorganization of the Board, the school and its Local Advisory Panel recommended two Waimea community representatives. Dr. Bob Masuda and Dr. Paul Nakayama, to sit on the HC Board. They have been instrumental in connecting the school to the community and to the Board. They are also involved in our STEAM Building fund raising efforts.

**Focus on College and Career Readiness:** Though the Connecting for Success grant, a schoolwide Career Exploration Day was initiated in SY 2015-16. Over forty guest speakers, many of them Waimea School alumni, presented their careers, including the educational requirements and necessary qualifications. This was continued in SY 2016-17.

To encourage students to complete high school and pursue further education, a community volunteer, Dr. Roger Gremminger, provided six exiting eighth graders with “College Pathways Scholarships” to attend Parker School or Hawaii Preparatory for ninth grade. Dr. Gremminger anticipates providing these new scholarships annually for Waimea Middle School exiting eighth graders. Additionally, Dr. Paul Nakayama, the Waimea community representative to the HC Board, and friends provided scholarships for four of our students to attend one summer school class at the Hawaii Preparatory Academy during summer 2016. Both Dr. Gremminger’s and Dr. Nakayama’s generosity have served to encourage WMS students to prepare for academic pursuits beyond their middle school years.

**Strategic Planning:** The school initiated a strategic planning process in November 2016. The goal is to develop a multi-year map to unify ongoing continuous school improvements and to begin to answer the following questions:

- What do we want our students to be able to do?
- How do we want our students to think and problem solve?
- What kind of instructional, cultural and technological resources do our students need to have access to?
- How best do we prepare students to meet the changing needs of the 21st century?
- How can we expand the traditional walls of the classroom to include the diverse ‘aina we have here in Hawaii?
- How can we sustain our native Hawaiian culture while fostering the language and culture of academia?
- How can we support our teachers with rich professional development to ensure a culture of continuous school improvement?
- How can we better engage our families and the wider community in the journey to 2017 and beyond?

### C. Follow-up and Progress Report Development Process

Waimea Middle School, particularly the instructional staff, invests significant time and resources to analyze student achievement data to guide decision making towards school improvement. The following procedures are in place:

- Standardized progress monitoring with STAR 360 learning assessments
- Longitudinal Data System, West Hawaii Complex Tracker, eCSSS, the Early Warning System, and Infinite Campus. The Connecting for Success team utilizes iResult, a new data system.
- Common Team Planning: Grade level teacher teams, along with administration and support staff, meet two times each week to use the Bernhardt model of Continuous School Improvement to modify curriculum, instruction, and assessment based on collected data
- All instructional staff members serve on an Accreditation Implementation

Group.

- The school's Leadership Team meets every other week to assess the progress the school is making towards reaching its goals. Progress is also shared with the Local School Advisory Panel and at Ho'okako'o Board Meetings.

Although much time has been dedicated to the review of student achievement, focus group discussions have revealed that time may need to be dedicated to focused examinations of student work and assessments, and deeper dialogue among faculty to make appropriate adjustments to instruction with the goal of enhancing student learning outcomes over time. In essence, the routine examination of student learning data will serve to inform faculty regarding the collective and individual learning needs of students, as well as progress toward optimal levels of achievement.

With respect to implementation and monitoring of the schoolwide action plan, the accreditation focus (implementation) groups have served as the conduit for regular discussions and monitoring of progress. Throughout the year, focus group meetings are held at least monthly. Periodically, full faculty/staff meetings provide updates and gather input from the large group. In 2015-16, Title I funding enabled focus groups to work after hours to complete their respective sections of the action plan. The final Action Plan and school wide progress reports were compiled by the self-study coordinator and reviewed by the Principal, including information that reflects the work of the focus group.

In total, the administrative team, leadership team, and focus groups report a collaborative process in all areas related to accreditation over the past three years, particularly with respect to the work of the focus groups. As the majority of the recommendations focused on the areas of teaching and learning, teachers shared that formalizing group processes were challenging, but overall, they felt that the challenges were part of the process of learning and growing together along professional parameters.

## **II. Progress on the Critical Areas for Follow-Up within the Action Plan**

**Goal 1: The Administration, Board, and HC Staff work toward the preparation and administration of a sustainable budget.**

### **Summary of Progress Made**

For 2015-16 and 2016-17 (YTD), WMPCCS avoided deficit spending, which was made possible by both careful budget restraints and, more importantly, increased private funding income, most notably from Kamehameha Schools.

The school “Meets Standard” for 2015-16 SY for Financial Performance related to Charter Commission’s new charter renewal criteria, and this, coupled with high rating for Organizational Performance assisted in school receiving a 3-year Charter Contract renewal for July 1, 2017 thru June 30, 2020. (The Charter Commission’s new Financial Performance criteria imposes rigorous sustainability expectations for all public charter schools and is monitored and assessed annually.)

WMS administration, teachers and staff, with the support of Ho’okako’o Corporation (HC), significantly strengthened the school’s relationships with Kamehameha Schools’ (KS) leadership, and its alignment with the KS vision, mission and strategic plan. This has resulted in a steady increase in financial support to the benefit of all students:

The Ho’okako’o Board and Staff are significantly strengthened with an expanded board with diverse skills and community networks, along with a responding commitment to the June 2015 Islander Report assessment. HC Board and staff have committed to addressing resource development in partnership with its three schools to re-establish trust, in order to create and ensure stability.

WMPCCS secured \$15.89 million from the 2013 and 2014 Legislatures and construction of a new 9- classroom STEAM building will be complete by summer 2017, ready for occupancy in Fall 2017. The opportunities this new facility presents are helping to drive a school-community commitment to engage in a strategic planning process that will unify ongoing continuous school improvements such as Accreditation and the Charter School Renewal Process.

Partial funding secured from a private donor was utilized to dedicate staff time to (1) development, and (2) family outreach/communications to support ongoing fundraising and sustainability.

## **Visiting Committee's Findings**

The progress report, along with focus group meetings, have served to identify several positive indicators of progress.

It is notable that the school received a 3-year Charter renewal contract which was supported by meeting the accountability indicators of the Financial and Organizational Framework measures. The school managed to not have a deficit budget which was the result of careful spending and an increase in private donors. The school was able to eliminate deficit spending, even when introducing new and significant programs to the school, such as AVID and instituting a schoolwide reading class.

The renewed relationship with Kamehameha Schools as a funder has been crucial in supporting the school's financial health.

The Committee noted that there is concern about a shrinking student enrollment. Since the core financial budget is directly tied to student numbers, this may require attention. Numerous possible factors were presented as to why this is occurring, although it is known that families in the Waimea community have several choices for schools in the area. It would be important to assess the reason for exiting students. It may be important to revisit the school's identity and culture in order to understand and then be able to communicate clearly to all stakeholders "Who we are" and "What makes us unique." What is that niche market that WMS addresses and is able to market toward ensuring a stable student enrollment and securing future external funding.

It was noted that the Ho'okako'o Board and Staff have been strengthened with both an expanded board with diverse skills and community networks. The HC Board and staff have committed to addressing resource development in partnership with its three schools to re-establish trust and ensure stability."

A 9-classroom STEAM building will be completed by summer 2017. While the facility will be built, there are still financial needs to be met in order to address additional energy costs, internal retrofitting of the building, and technology needs, including security and phone systems.

At this time, the Committee's recommendations to revise the goal to expand field of responsibility to include the Local Advisory Panel is logical and recommended.

**Goal 2: The Administration, Board, and HC Staff work together to develop a fundraising plan with attention given to donor strategy, opportunities, management, and including the clarification of roles and responsibilities.**

## Summary of Progress Made

Hawai'i Community Foundation extended what was originally a 3-year grant for a 4th year to continue supporting the important mentoring and wrap-around services for about 50 students deemed at-risk for dropping out of high school. Fidelity of grant implementation by WMPCCS earned the extension. The grant also helped fund a two-year Spoken Word immersion program involving writing and presenting original poetry by all students, with a ho'ike for the entire school-community at Kahilu Theatre. It also has funded a Career Exploration Day for all students during the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years to support student engagement with an enhanced college-career focus.

Since the last accreditation visit in 2014, WMPCCS' new/expanded annual partnerships include the State Department of Health funding a full-time counselor, Hawai'i County Police funding a full-time School Resource Officer, a new USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable grant, and Isemoto Contracting Company building a long-jump and repairing the gravel entry drive.

The school also expanded its Kahilu Theatre Foundation-Neilan Foundation partnership and secured several meaningful new partners including: oTech Together/Ka Ulu Ana, Partners In Development Foundation, an \$85,000 in-kind partnership that brought an intensive 2-week, STEM-focused program with cultural integration for all 6th graders; included daily hands-on projects, guest-teachers, student incentives, and a concluding family ho'ike to share learning. Partners in Development brought in 7 guest presenters, housed them, and provided all materials. University of California-Santa Barbara-NOAA-UH Manoa Marine Research Department provided a \$5,000 in-kind partnership, that allowed five WMPCCS students the opportunity to engage in rigorous research about plastics and the ocean.

Three grants totaling \$10,200 from Dr. Roger Gremminger, Dr. Paul Nakayama and Ernie and Paulette Clayton, encouraged students and families to become more focused on college readiness. The Development Committee, which underwent several changes since Accreditation, and staff have determined 1) there is no need to form their own 501(c)3 non-profit; and, 2) that Ho'okako'o serves the school's needs effectively. This Action Item has been officially dropped from their Action Plan. Administration, teachers, staff and the LAP concurred that additional focus was needed on family engagement, so they reviewed all existing communications tools and strategies, and prioritized a full-time family engagement position. This has been funded in part initially by Kamehameha Schools, and now by the Neilan Foundation. A Parent Partner Positives program was created and recently, a Hui 'Ohana group is being formed to better engage parents in school events and student progress.

Community awareness to attract/retain partners and recruit students prompted

news coverage in print, broadcast, and social media to spotlight school, student, and teacher achievements. This included a comprehensive invitation mailing/emailing for the STEAM building groundbreaking to help attract new partners and recruit students. A partnership with local videographer to produce a series of mini-documentaries of school and student achievements will be shared on social media, the school website, and at school events.

HC Board members Paul Nakayama and Bob Masuda have begun reaching out to the science community for support and funding for STEAM teaching and learning. Using the STEAM building as a catalyst, strategic planning was initiated and input is being sought from faculty, staff, LAP, families, students and the wider community. The final plan will address sustainability and fundraising.

WMPPCS was one of a select number of Hawaiian-focused public charter schools in West Hawai'i invited to apply for a Kamehameha Schools' STEAM grant for 2017-18 SY; The school has requested \$500,000 to support an expanded STEAM building vision of becoming a "hub of STEAM teaching and learning" for the region. This request addressed both technology needs and staffing for professional development, technology support, and overall coordination.

WMPPCS is working closely with DOE Facilities staff and, as needed, reaching out to State legislators and the Governor for additional funding for technology, technology support, and coordination.

### **Visiting Committee's Findings**

Significant community partnerships have positively impacted the school's fundraising progress. The school was able to retain existing partnerships and also expand into new relationships and commitments. Time invested in restoring, aligning with, and growing the Kamehameha Schools partnership resulted in restored, significant funding for the school.

Several supporting community members have developed scholarship programs and initiatives that encourage students/families to become more focused on college readiness.

While the new STEAM building will a tremendous asset to the school and provide unlimited opportunities, STEAM teaching requires significant new technology, professional development, technology support, and coordination with an estimated 1.7 million over the next 4 years.

With the core budget stabilized at this time, it is recommended that the school consider collapsing the two recommendations around budget sustainability and fundraising. At this juncture, they are much more linked. The focus group/committee has completed the development of their fundraising plan and may

consider revising the goal to focus on implementation of the fundraising plan.

**Goal 3: The Administration, School Leadership Team and Faculty develop and implement a plan to provide differentiated instruction in all classes to meet the learning needs of all students, particularly English Language Learners (ELL), Special Education, Migrant Education, and Gifted and Talented students.**

### **Summary of Progress Made**

Since year 2014-2015, the school has made progress in addressing the implementation of a plan to address differentiation in all classes, including the following indicators of progress:

- Determined that staff will use differentiation models already present in their classroom and work on making these models more effective
- Revised the master schedule to include time for teachers to discuss and plan strategies for individual students
- Researched and considered Gifted/Talented (G/T) program options, along with the needs of what would constitute the G/T population of students
- Completed Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for all MEP and ELL students (only in SY 14-15 and 15-16)

During School Year 2016-17, it was acknowledged that while valuable, it was not realistic to develop and monitor ILPs for all students. So the future work of the group should focus on developing a systemic tool or process that serves to define student learning needs and providing access to student learning data that would allow all teachers be in touch with student learning needs.

The school team has identified the areas of concern for the current school year (2016-2017). As teachers have reported that have no access to resources and/or don't know where to access ELL support, a part-time position was created and staffed beginning in January 2017. Similarly, for the Migrant Education part time teacher some clarity is needed regarding the information the teacher manages and/or how he may provide resources to classroom teachers.

It has been difficult to determine the long-range impact on student achievement. As the ILPs were not continued in SY 2016-17, there is very little formative data on which to determine their impact. However, STAR 360, provides teachers with data to facilitate differentiation and offer students a reading program that addresses their individual needs The current STAR reports show overall student growth over the past 2½ years.

The existing curricula have embedded tools that support differentiating, including

interactive online features. With reliable computers available to all students, WMS has been able to more consistently offer these tools as a delivery model for the curriculum, which has improved student engagement and success. Additionally, leveled reading materials have allowed students to access curriculum in small groups or individually, supporting differentiated learning needs.

### **Visiting Committee's Findings**

The progress report, along with classroom observations and focus group meeting have served to identify indicators of progress developing a plan for differentiated instruction in areas of need.

The following areas of need have been identified and present as possible next steps for further reflection, action, and implementation

- If individual learning plans and access to data continue to be key issues, focus on gathering data from reliable sources, such as STAR 360, to quantify student learning needs.
- Take the time to develop structures that allow teachers to engage in meaning dialogue focused on meeting the learning needs of individual students and the collective of students that exists in any class or grade level. Acknowledge the fact that learning needs will continue to vary greatly and time must be devoted to meeting the needs of students who are not achieving as well as they should.
- Action plans and subsequent plans for implementation must reflect the collective understanding of student learning needs, based on available data
- Consider the value of utilizing STAR 360 data reports, though efforts must be made to provide teachers with training to access the data reports routinely

In the remaining term of accreditation, the committee urges the school to continue to explore best practices in differentiated instruction that will result in a model of schoolwide implementation that serves the diversity found within the current population of students. Additionally, consider how the success of their efforts to provide differentiated instructional strategies will be measured, particularly to determine the impact on the learning and achievement of students.

Finally, take the time to research what differentiation looks like in a classroom with diverse student learning styles and needs.

**Goal 4: Continue to develop and implement an RTI system, including the use of data, to implemented in a school-wide framework.**

## **Summary of Progress Made**

During the 2014-2015 school year, the RTI Committee spent the majority of their time understanding the current RTI framework so that they could make a formal presentation to the staff in November and discuss the framework in detail with grade level teams during common team planning. They also researched reading intervention curricula to that they could select one to implement in the fall.

During the 2015-2016 school year, the committee/school focused on the following three items:

1. Implementing and evaluating a school wide reading intervention program
2. Training all staff in the use of STAR data
3. Researching the RtI process in feeder schools and successful schools with similar demographics

During the first semester of the 2016-2017 school year, the committee/school focused on the following action items:

1. Continuing with reading interventions school wide
2. Implementing a replacement core ELA curriculum for our neediest.
3. Integrating new members
4. Consolidating, expanding, and revising the action plan
5. Researching and discussing data teams and piloting one team with the reading department
6. Selecting and purchasing a math intervention curriculum. The curriculum is being piloted during the second semester of the 2016-17 SY with a small group of students
7. Beginning discussion with the registrar and members of the math department to include math intervention in the schedule
8. Designing an attendance action policy to address students with chronic absences. This includes an Attendance Action Plan which involves commitments from the student, the parents, and the school

## **Visiting Committee's Findings**

It is noted that a reading block has been scheduled in the school day for all grade levels. Additionally, the need to develop a structured system to evaluate the effectiveness and organize the structure of supports is necessary to assist students who require additional supports.

The team has clearly identified and understood the need for math interventions while cognizant of the challenge of scheduling these interventions without compromising the current reading intervention program. All interventions need to be implemented with fidelity.

The committee urges the school to ensure that all instructional staff be trained on

Star 360 assessment and understand how to navigate the reports in order to ensure that they have access to the data they need in order to have conversations around student learning needs and address changes in instructional strategies that may be required for underachieving students. It will be important to ensure that meeting time occurs and the team may want to include a time for sharing their successful practices or concerns with their peers. A clear meeting structure/agenda might benefit the group in feeling more successful and moving the necessary initiatives forward to completion.

It is important to recognize and ensure that addressing a counseling and behavioral component within RTI is important and has started to be implemented through the student incentive program. Ensuring the incentive system is clear and consistently implemented will be important for student and program success. The attendance plan is in place and should be followed with fidelity and supported by incentives. Educating families on the importance of attendance and the link between attendance and the academic success of their children is a critical component of the implementation of the attendance plan.

**Goal 5: The Administration, Faculty, and Staff continue to explore effective teaching/instructional strategies, along with assessing the need for a common teaching methodology that will effectively engage and promote high quality learning and achievement for all students.**

### **Summary of Progress Made**

At the outset, the Effective Teaching/Instructional Strategies workgroup conducted an assessment of current instructional practices by surveying the faculty. This survey provided important data on current practices and identified the need for a common instructional framework. AVID (Advancement Through Individual Determination) was selected as a possible vehicle for establishing common instructional practices at Waimea Middle School.

After the successful implementation of AVID in Social Studies, the school as a whole decided to adopt AVID incrementally. Title I and Title IIA funds were utilized to provide training for teachers. Over the summers of 2015 and 2016, the faculty attended AVID training. Social studies teachers received additional training. As of School Year 16-17, AVID is being implemented in all grade levels. Although WICOR strategies are utilized throughout all content areas and grade levels, each grade level focuses on one or two WICOR skills—6th grade: Collaboration and Organization; 7th grade: Inquiry; 8th grade: Writing and Reading.

In addition to the WICOR Strategies, a number of AVID strategies have been identified as tools that may be effective to address two identified major literacy

deficits that exist across all grade levels at Waimea Middle School--1) reading short expository texts, and 2) writing short expository paragraphs and summaries. The strategies that have been selected by departments include "Using Graphic Organizers to Summarize Nonfiction," "Summary Nonfiction 1-2-3," and "Expository Paragraph Writing." These strategies will be shared with all teachers and will be modeled by members of the Effective Teaching/Instructional Strategies workgroup during the second half of the 2016-2017 school year.

The Leadership Team serves as the AVID Site team and shares the responsibilities of implementing AVID with the Effective Teaching/Instructional Strategies workgroup. The responsibilities of each group are as follows:

#### AVID Site Team

- Develops and implements the goals in the Site Team Plan and creates individual commitment statements aligned to the goals.
- Analyzes school and student data in order to provide relevant professional learning at the site.
- Sets high expectations for all students, faculty, and parents in regard to student achievement and college readiness.
- Addresses equity issues/barriers on campus.

#### Effective Teaching/Instructional Strategies Workgroup

- Collects evidence to illustrate support for student access to, and success in, rigorous curriculum
- Models and shares effective WICOR strategies and academic success skills across content areas.

One area of concern is that the leadership team only meets once every two weeks and has other responsibilities. Finding adequate time to devote to AVID planning has been a challenge. The Leadership team plans to work on completing the Site Plan shortly and subsequently, will determine the metrics that will be used to measure the effectiveness of AVID as a school wide strategy.

Also under discussion are how to put systems in place for AVID peer walk-throughs, as well as how to incorporate successful implementation of AVID strategies in the teacher evaluation system.

It is estimated that AVID strategies have had a positive effective on student success, particularly in the area of organization. Teachers report that the binders have helped students keep track of their homework and other commitments. The supply pouches have increased student preparedness, and parent communication has improved now that Wednesday envelopes are kept in the binders. These strategies are particularly important for middle school students as they develop habits that will serve them as they pursue higher education and other goals. Still ahead, the AVID Site Team will determine the metrics that will be used to measure the effectiveness of AVID along with the implementation of the evaluation system.

## **Visiting Committee's Findings**

During the last full accreditation visit, one of the key goals identified by the school was to identify and implement a schoolwide effective teaching/instructional strategy. The report of progress and workgroup meetings have served to indicate that progress has been realized.

In the implementation process the school has found that finding adequate time to devote to AVID planning has been a challenge. Additionally, the school has identified the need to be able to measure the effectiveness of AVID as a school wide strategy.

Also under discussion are how to schedule AVID peer walk-throughs, as well as how to incorporate successful implementation of AVID strategies in the teacher evaluation system.

Along with addressing these needs, the Visiting committee also recommends that the Leadership Team and workgroup consider how the school may realize optimal levels of implementation and ensure commitment to ensure that this effort is sustainable and meets the learning needs of all students.

**Goal 6: The Administration, Faculty, and Staff explore a range of formative, classroom-based assessments that will allow teachers to measure student learning and make adjustments to instruction.**

## **Summary of Progress Made**

WMS faculty were surveyed and teachers shared formative assessment tools used in their classrooms. A bank was generated and is featured on the formative assessment bulletin board in the common work area, L-Lounge. The formative assessment group attended the Hawaii Island Technology Conference in March 2016, and further collections of formative assessment tools were gathered and presented to faculty.

A system was created to share formative assessment tools and evaluate their effectiveness in fall 2016. The WMS Formative Assessment System begins with selecting a strategy and then sharing the strategy, as well as providing resources for the faculty. Next, teachers implement the strategy, use it to inform instruction and document its effectiveness. Teachers reflect on the results using the "Formative Assessment Strategy Evaluation." The Formative Assessment Group collects and analyzes the data and determines the strategy's effectiveness and impact school wide. In October 2016, the formative assessment group piloted and then demonstrated a formative assessment tool, M & M check, and distributed posters to the faculty to facilitate implementation.

The Formative Assessment Group collaborated with the SWLRS (School Wide Learning Results) and Portfolio Subcommittee to develop a rubric to measure the SWLRS. A document, Formative Assessments Aligned to SWLRS Matrix, was created and shared with faculty for revisions and input. The group decided to focus on the student portfolio to showcase student progress and mastery of the SWLRS. Electronic portfolio templates were created and shared with faculty for piloting in the 2016-2017 school year. All students shared their electronic portfolios during Student-Led Conferences in November 2016.

More data is needed through teacher responses to the Formative Assessment Strategy Evaluation to build on the bank of effective formative assessments. Additional professional development opportunities for all faculty should be available and encouraged. We need to create a formative assessment tool for those SWLRS that do not have an assessment in place. We will continue to revise the student portfolios to include formative assessments and to align with the SWLRS.

Additionally, teachers should be provided with designated time to complete the Formative Assessment Strategy Evaluation, along with time to evaluate the revise the student portfolio protocol and modify the protocol to meet the needs of special student populations.

Introducing new formative assessment tools to the faculty has encouraged and motivated them to join the conversation and evaluate their teaching practices. Some teachers have used the shared tools and expressed success with students. They have related how the results of the assessments have informed their instruction and have shared the ways in which they have modified the tools and how the assessments have influenced their practice.

All students utilize the electronic portfolio to demonstrate and document progress toward academic goals and SWLRS.

### **Visiting Committee Findings**

Over the past three years, the school has worked systematically to address this recommendation. There is evidence that teachers have been utilizing strategies in instruction.

As this effort moves forward, the Visiting Committee offers the following for consideration:

- Keep in mind that formative assessment is a way to assess learning during the process of instruction. Ideally, it allows teachers to make appropriate adjustments to instruction in order to help all students achieve learning goals. This effort should then help to improve learning outcomes for students over time.

- If improvements in student achievement and/or instructional delivery are not being realized, then the school must identify the reasons why the formative assessments are not having the anticipated or desired impact.
- Continue to explore the literature on formative assessments to identify key strategies that work
- Teachers may also take the time to identify specific strategies that serve to assess learning. The point here is that formative assessments must measure the learning target.
- Provide time for teachers to share a range of formative assessment strategies in small groups—grade-level or departmental—so that dialogue might help teachers determine which strategies might best meet the learning needs of their students.
- Take time to revisit the use of e-portfolios; consider the benefits to students and seek student feedback and input as the intent of the e-portfolios is enhanced.

**Goal 7: The school as a whole work to support its decision to become an inclusive learning environment for students with disabilities by incorporating best practices in inclusion, co-teaching, and instructional development.**

### **Summary of Progress Made**

Using professional development materials purchased through Title I and learning from the special education department who worked with two consultants on inclusion, the Inclusion Work Group created a screening document for all new special education students which included, 1) a pre-entry assessment; 2) appropriate placement options; 3) recommendations for placement; and 4) how information should be shared.

While some of the members of the group had a difficult time embracing inclusion, their philosophy shifted to understanding that the general education teacher is the first person responsible for the learning of any student. In addition to progress monitoring, they recognized and accepted that included students require and deserve additional support. The work group suggested that progress monitoring should include weekly grades, attendance and behavior checks, quarterly progress reports, and school-wide use of STAR data.

During the 2015-16 school year, the inclusion group continued to work on developing metrics that would be used to measure the effectiveness of the inclusion program. They decided to utilize the Individual Student Learning Plan to collect both objective data such as standardized test scores and grades as well as subjective data such as teacher observations. In order to look at the effectiveness of the Inclusion Program as a whole, the group began to utilize STAR test data to examine how

students with disabilities perform relative to other sub-groups within the school.

While the recommendation to “support its decision to become an inclusive learning environment for all students with disabilities by incorporating the best practices in inclusion, co-teaching, and instructional development” was sound at the time of the initial visit, the school feels that, after two-and-a-half years of addressing this goal, it should no longer be viewed as a separate initiative.

Clearly the needs of special education students must be addressed alongside the needs of all students. The staff who originally were assigned to the Inclusion Implementation Group were reassigned to other groups at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year and continue to provide valuable insight to their new groups.

In general, special education students continue to score well below their non-disabled peers. When analyzing growth, however, we do see cases where disabled students are making good progress. According to STAR test results, our special education students achieved an average scaled score increase of 90 in reading and 51 in math from the beginning to the end of the 2015-16 school year. Average growth (scaled score) for regular education students for the same period was 105 in reading and 49 in math.

The group concludes with the understanding that they must continue to monitor the progress of our students with disabilities to ensure that a broad range of learning are being met.

### **Visiting Committee’s Findings**

The Visiting Committee commends the school for coming to the realization that the general education teacher is the person responsible for the learning of all students. This is a positive step forward. Additionally, progress in addressing this recommendation has been realized. Evidence of the interface of different strategies that support learning—differentiated instruction, the Individual Learning Plan, tiered interventions, and schoolwide implementation of AVID—have led the school to understand that meeting the needs of all students, including students with disabilities, is a collective responsibility.

As such, the Visiting Committee continues to suggest that all instructional staff embrace an inclusion mindset. There is more to be gained by ensuring that every student is included in the general education setting, to the degree that is appropriate and promotes some dimension of learning that will serve them in the future.

Additionally, begin to consider inclusion in the broader context across the entire school, moving beyond inclusion for students with disabilities to include other minority populations whose educational needs are not always met in the general

education. Depending on the learning needs of students, there are educational objectives that are best addressed in the general education setting. This is true for all students.

**Goal 8: The school as a whole continue to take the time to study the professional development/learning needs of teachers, and develop a long-range professional development plan that will promote learning for all students.**

### **Summary of Progress Made**

Recognizing that the most powerful way to raise student achievement is through professional learning and that professional development serves three overlapping functions: 1) To improve school performance; 2) To improve the quality of classroom instruction; and, 3) To support the implementation of new initiatives, Waimea Middle School has been working on the development of a long-range professional development plan.

With this in mind, they intentionally placed a member of the school leadership team in each implementation/focus group, in order to systematically assess the professional development needs of each group. Thus, in the process of completing and revising Action Plans annually, professional development needs have identified for different role groups—grade levels, departments, or schoolwide.

*A Site-Based Agreement between the Teachers Association Members of Waimea Middle School and Waimea Middle Public Conversion Charter School (Evaluation & Professional Development)* was negotiated in 2014 and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on April 4, 2014. This agreement specifies criteria the Administrator must follow when scheduling professional development at the school. As the site-based agreement will expire in the spring of 2017, the school will need to revisit the role professional development will play in the teacher evaluation procedure.

Taken together, the professional development needs determined through the accreditation process includes the implementation/focus group's action and the individual professional development needs identified through the Individual Professional Growth Planning as part of the Site-Based Agreement have resulted in a comprehensive professional development plan which will help promote learning for all students.

## **Visiting Committee's Findings**

There is a systematic process of identifying professional development needs, particularly with respect to key accreditation-related areas of improvement. As such updating the action plan occurs annually and ensures that professional development occurs over time.

The Visiting Committee suggests that, in addition to having the Leadership Team assess professional development needs, teachers have input in identifying key professional needs. Then over time, consider ways that embedded professional learning may occur, such that teachers are prompted to regularly and routinely utilize learning gained from any professional development, and, when appropriate, receive feedback on their efforts to apply and/or implement what they have learned.

Finally, continue to reflect on the primary focus of this recommendation. Consider it a goal to continue to develop a long-term plan for professional development. In this manner, you are will proactively plan for professional development that teachers will need in the future. Such a plan may then be reviewed and revised at least annually.

Additionally, as professional development is delivered, take the time to ensure that teachers are beginning to apply what they have learned, have consistent opportunities to share it with their colleagues, and are assessing the impact of professional development on student learning and achievement. In this sense, you are extending the focus of professional development, to create a broader focus on enhancing professional learning for all instructional staff. In its primary form, this creates opportunities for faculty and staff to engage in meaningful dialogue centered on their learning. In the end, the goal of professional development and learning serves to build the capacity of the staff and ensure growth in skills and knowledge over time.

### III. Summary and Recommendations

In their follow-up on the key recommendations from the last self study, the school has discovered that many of the recommendations overlap or intersect. These include, but are not limited to, differentiated instruction, formative assessment, inclusion, a long-range professional development plan, effective teaching and instructional strategies.

As the school moves forward to continue to address these recommendations, the school should take the time to reflect upon and plan to address the following:

- moving from a developmental phase into implementation
- continuing to research best practices
- promoting professional learning for all teachers by creating opportunities for instructional staff to engage in dialogue about how they may improve learning for all students and ensure that they are addressing both the learning and behavioral needs of all students.
- beginning to assess and measure the success of implementation efforts
- working toward optimal levels of sustainability of practice in any of these areas

Above all, in continuing the work toward realization of continued progress, keep the individual and collective efforts focused on practices that will best serve all students.

The following are the amended revisions to the original recommendations. These revisions will continue to guide the school's work during the next phase of the cycle of accreditation.

1. The Administration, Board, HC Staff, and LAP work together toward the preparation, understanding and administration of a sustainable budget. The Administration, Board, HC Staff, and LAP work together to implement a fundraising plan with attention given to donor strategy, opportunities, management, including the clarification of roles and responsibilities. (*Goals 1 and 2*)
2. With respect to a long-range professional development plan, it is recommended that the school take the time to develop a proactive plan that is grounded in an understanding of the needs of teachers, taking the time to seek input from teachers in determining needs.

***Note: If any of the original recommendations are not addressed here, then those recommendations remain intact, as stated in Section II, for the school to continue to address during the remainder of the accreditation cycle.***