

REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

WAIMEA MIDDLE PUBLIC CONVERSION CHARTER SCHOOL
67-1229 Mamalahoa Highway
Kamuela, HI 96743

March 30 – April 2, 2014

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Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

Waimea Middle School (WMS), located in Kamuela in the Big Island of Hawaii, concentrates its energies and resources on successful student learning in a middle school framework. Place-based and project-based learning figure significantly into the learning approaches, supported by ongoing partnerships with the private non-profit Ho'okako'o Corporation and Kamehameha Schools.

WMS serves a diverse demographic of students in grades 6-8 and is the primary middle school in the South Kohala region. The average income in the area is about 4% higher than the state average, although family incomes at WMS lag significantly, with 68% of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Ethnically, Waimea/Kamuela is a diverse area of primarily Caucasians and Asians; however the population also includes significant numbers of Hispanic, Pacific Islanders and Native Hawaiians. Native Hawaiians comprise the largest group attending WMS--48%. There is also a growing Pacific Islander population.

The community also presents a diverse mix, including farming, ranching, professional, retail, service, and tourism. There is also a science research and health care presence in the community. Other educational options in the area include three independent schools, another public charter school and home schooling options.

The school provides a variety of student supports. The free tutoring program, before and after school, provides reading, math, and homework assistance to approximately 120 students, or 43% of the student body. Intervention classes provide targeted reading and/or math instruction. Enrichment classes have been reinstated so as to address the development of the whole child. A grant from the Honolulu Community Foundation is providing supports to a cohort of the most at-risk students. 'Ike Hawai'i initiatives and the Mala'ai School garden activities are integrated throughout the curriculum.

An updated three-year Strategic Implementation Plan was created in 2010 and is now being replaced with School Wide Action Plans, developed through the accreditation process. The plans address four areas--Student Supports, Curriculum Alignment, Educational Technology, and Development & Resource Management. The plans will guide the work of the school over the next 4-6 years, providing a framework for continuous improvement embraced by all stakeholders.

Chapter II: Progress Report

The Critical Areas of Follow-Up were made through the Initial Visit in 2012. Since that time, the school, its leadership, and the HC Board have devoted time to address each of the following recommendations.

1. In the spirit of openness and transparency, Ho'okako'o Corporation (HC) Board take a proactive position in reaching out to the WMS constituent groups to heal the perceived rift that exists and improve communication.

The key stakeholders—faculty, staff, leadership team, accreditation steering committee, Board, HC Executive Director, and Local Advisory Panel—have met in various venues to discuss and plan key action steps and strategies. The following actions have helped to promote increased collaboration and communication.

- The HC Board involved the members of the school community in the recruitment and selection of a vice principal;
- The attendance of the HC Executive Director and Board Chair at Local Advisory Panel (LAP) meetings and the Governance Focus Group meetings has been positive;
- The meetings between the LAP chair and HC Board has resulted in improved communication;
- The LAP has recommended a Waimea community representative be a member of the HC Board, and as of March 2014, that representative has become a member of the Board.

A goal for further progress would be to engage in the accreditation action planning process and utilize the Development and Resource Management Action Plan to address and outline the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders. Such action would serve to further clarify the relationship between and among stakeholders.

2. HC, school leadership, and staff establish a functional Local Advisory Panel to improve communication between the Board, school, and community.

The Local Advisory Panel (LAP) has been reconstituted and meets monthly. The LAP serves in an advisory capacity to the HC Board and principal, and further supports the school improvement goals. As a result of some reorganization of the panel and its members, there is a greater opportunity to ensure that the members of the panel represent the Waimea community.

As a whole, the reconstitution of the LAP has served to increase participation and

improve communication within the school and between the school and the HC Board. The panel includes representatives from the following stakeholders--families, students, community members, certificated staff, classified staff and administration--thus promoting active, broad-based participation. The panel still seeks two additional community members to complete the full complement.

3. HC Board review and update roles, responsibilities, plans, strategies, and community outreach efforts.

The new HC Strategic Plan (2012-2015) prompted a restructuring of a new Board Chair and Vice-Chair, as well as a new committee structure. In the process, the Board's responsibility has been clarified and communicated. The restructuring of the Board under the new strategic plan has begun to have a positive impact on the relationship between the Board and the school.

There is a general understanding that communication structures may continue to be enhanced. As such, the self-study recommends that a communication plan, with specific tasks and targets, would be beneficial.

4. The HC Board, in collaboration with school leadership and staff, ensure a smooth transition of the new Principal/CEEO.

A transition plan for the new principal/CEEO was developed and implemented. The plan was initiated in June 2012 and concluded in September 2013, included the following components: 1) Learning the community; 2) Learning the school; 3) Learning Ho'okako'o; 4) Addressing the future; 5) Professional development; and 6) Personal and Family.

The transition plan was successful and the new principal developed a deeper and broader understanding of the school and its strengths and needs, along with those of the wider community. At the point of the accreditation visit in March 2014, there was sufficient evidence that the principal had made a nice transition, and was positively embraced by both the school and community.

5. School leadership and HC review resource allocations and explore sources of supplemental supports beyond current levels.

Although the school applies for grants and conducts fundraisers and community activities to generate local school funds, this indicator continues to be a struggle. There is currently a reserve of 2.4 million. WMS has been operating at a deficit that averages \$300,000-\$400,000 a year, which has been coming out of the reserve.

WMS is currently developing a strategic plan that will utilize approximately 2 million of the reserve to invest in student achievement. It is hoped that the investment will address the ongoing deficit issue and serve to promote the long-term financial sustainability of the school.

Collectively, HC and WMS will need to develop a strategy to increase income and/or decrease operational expenses before June 2015, in order to sustain the WMS program. As a result of the accreditation process, a Development and Resource Management Action Plan has been created. Additionally, the HC Board has established a "Development Committee" whose primary purpose will be to diversify and increase revenue shares. HC has also hired a Resource Manager/Grant Writer who will work with the Principal and Leadership Team to establish fundraising priorities that are aligned with school wide goals and learning expectations. As a result, HC has launched a three-year development and fundraising campaign designed to maximize public and private support for its unfunded innovations, and to build long-term community support. For Waimea Middle, a key area of focus will continue to be curriculum, assessment and instruction.

Early in the spring of the 2014, the school has shared that a number of individuals have reached out to the school with donations that will serve to fund supplementary needs. The donations, as a whole, have helped the school and the board realize the great potential that exists in the community.

6. School leadership and the board use a data dashboard to support communication and collaboration.

Thus far, the HC Board has completed a "Priority Functions and Indicators of Success" matrix, which outlines the board functions, corporate functions, school functions, and evaluates each. Beginning in Fall 2013, the principal has submitted a quarterly report to the board using a common template, highlighting test results, attendance, and progress on current initiatives. This serves to provide a periodic update of the key functions of the school during the reporting period.

Both components, the matrix and the dashboard, are the first steps in an effort to communicate the effectiveness of the school and the Board. This information also needs to be shared with the school community annually. Additionally, a communication plan/protocol, developed jointly by the Board and the school, will continue to facilitate active communication.

7. Greater HC Board increase its participation in all accreditation processes.

There was adequate participation in various accreditation processes and related

meetings, such as faculty/staff meetings, Governance focus group, and Local Advisory Panel meetings. The board, particularly the Executive Director and the President, provided input into the accreditation process. Additionally, the HC staff responded to the accreditation focus groups' request for information and HC reviewed and provided feedback on the Self-Study and Action Plans.

Although the school had hoped to include more HC board members in the accreditation process, it was acknowledged that board members reside on other islands and hold full time jobs, thus making regular travel to school meetings challenging. Given the challenges presented by distance and travel, during the accreditation visit, Board members and the Executive Director were present for key meetings and discussions.

8. School leadership reintroduce popular electives in balance with efforts to navigate restructuring.

For School Year 2013-14, the master schedule was revised to incorporate a quarterly exploratory wheel in all grade levels. Additionally, an "X" period allows student to select from a broad variety of enrichment activities. Beyond co-curricular courses, notable courses include Leadership Skills, Middle Skills, and College and Career readiness.

It is felt that the reintroduction of the exploratory wheel and the introduction of an "X" Period has helped to engage student in their own learning and appeals to diverse learning style. All course offerings will be evaluated at the end of the first semester, which will prompt recommendations for the following year. Feedback from students, families, teachers, staff and administration will be incorporated as part of the evaluation.

Next year, with the planned increase in instructional minutes that will lengthen the school day, there are plans in place to add an "X" period to allow for more and better access to elective courses for all students.

9. HC, new Principal/CEEO, and WMS address long range planning for Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) and Repair and Maintenance (R & M).

As a conversion charter school, WMS is a Department of Education campus. As such annual meetings with the Complex Area Administrative Services Assistant and the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) result in ongoing prioritization of repair and maintenance needs. In SY 2012-13, prioritized projects included updating of the electrical system to support technology, resurfacing of the outdoor basketball court, and rewiring of the night lights.

Current funding for prioritized capital improvement projects is embedded in the

Department of Education budget for SY 2013-14. The school was allocated funds by the 2013 Legislature to begin construction of the 9-classroom science-technology building.

Overall, WMS has received a significant level of funding for facilities maintenance and development, an indication of community leadership to support the school and grassroots community support. Future plans include evolution of the HC Finance Committee into the Development Committee, which will assist with financial policy as well as facilities/operations planning. In addition, the Development and Resource Management Plan will focus on long-range planning to meet the school's defined and ongoing needs.

Chapter III: Self-Study Process

Throughout the self-study, there is strong evidence that from the outset, the commitment to the accreditation process and the self-study has been inclusive. All members of the faculty and staff have maintained and sustained direct and consistent involvement in all aspects of the accreditation process, including focus groups and action planning groups. To deepen the self-study process, the school and its focus groups solicited family and community input and attempted to recruit family and community members to join the focus groups. As appropriate and possible, input was sought from the Local Advisory Panel (LAP) and the Ho'okako'o (HC) Board.

The accreditation team visit in March also provided additional evidence of an inclusive process from inception to present. As such, there is significant evidence that the school will maintain its commitment to accreditation as a vehicle to promote continuous school improvement.

The clarification of the school's purpose and the expected school-wide learning results.

During the period of August - October 2012, revised vision and belief statements were created and approved by all members of the school. In December 2012, the School Wide Learning Results (SWLRs) were drafted, revised, and approved.

The accreditation processes continued, with regular meetings of the focus groups, drafts of specific chapters, and review by faculty and staff. From August - October 2013, revised vision, mission, and belief statements were reviewed and approved by all constituent groups. Accordingly, grade levels met to determine how to measure student mastery of the School Wide Learning Results.

The assessment of the actual program and the impact in student learning with respect to the criteria and the ESLRs.

In general, the sections of the self-study indicate that the school as a whole has dedicated much time and energy to moving ahead with alignment of the curriculum to the Common Core State Standards and the School Wide Learning Results (SWLRs). As work has proceeded and initial action plans have developed, various sectors of the school, particularly with respect to the SWLRs and portions of the curriculum, have made progress in integrating SWLRs with curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

It is recognized that there is still much work to be done in this area, particularly in ensuring that the integration and alignment has a positive impact on student learning in all areas of growth and development. The school, with this recognition, should make the continuous assessment of the program a priority, simply to insure that there is a positive impact of the quality of learning

for every child on campus.

The development of a school-wide action plan that integrates subject area, program, and support plans to address identified growth needs.

From the initial drafts of chapters in the self-study, focus groups identified areas of strength and improvement in their respective chapters in March 2013. Shortly thereafter, all faculty and staff met to identify common areas of need. The commonalities fell into four areas--student supports, curriculum alignment, educational technology, and development and resource management. These areas subsequently served to create a framework for the school wide action plan.

In April of 2013, focus groups were combined into action plan groups and the first drafts of action plans were created. Several months later, groups completed revised drafts that were presented to the faculty and staff for input and feedback. Feedback on the action plan was solicited from the LAP during regular meetings. Families were provided summaries in the weekly 'Ohana News, with opportunities to provide input. Students met in roundtable discussions to share their suggestions.

The development and implementation of an accountability system for the accomplishment of the school-wide action plan.

Given the inclusive practices that prompted the development of the action plans, along with the commitment of the school as a whole to accreditation as a continuous improvement process, the entire school community, guided by the Leadership Team, will develop and maintain an accountability system to monitor the ongoing progress toward the goals addressed in the school-wide action plan. Currently, there are plans to conduct quarterly reviews, utilize staff meetings for feedback, and create a structure for a broader, more inclusive system to quantify progress toward the benchmarks and goals in the school wide action plan.

Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

Chapter 1: School Philosophy and Purpose

Criterion: *The school has established a clear statement of philosophy. In the following standards, the term "philosophy" refers to the school's statement of philosophy, purpose or mission.*

The school's statement of philosophy and purpose are clearly communicated in its vision, mission, and beliefs about teaching and learning. In concert, there is a strong student focus, as well as a commitment by all stakeholders to support the goals of learning, achievement and student success.

Waimea Middle School adopted philosophy and purpose statements that had been collaboratively agreed upon by all stakeholders. In the summer of 2012, the accreditation steering committee reviewed the vision, mission, core values, principles of Pa'ahana, and beliefs. Over the course of five months, from July - November 2012, the statements were revised, based on feedback from all stakeholder groups.

Based on the mission that student success depends upon skills, values, and cultural understanding, School Wide Learning Results (SWLRs) describe what a student should know, understand, and be able to do. Students are expected to attain mastery of the SWLRs by the time they complete the 8th grade. Assessment of achievement of the SWLRs is embedded in the curriculum and is responsibility of each grade level, working in collaboration. Plans to enhance this effort are currently being discussed.

The final documentation of the school's vision, mission, beliefs, and School Wide Learning Results has been approved by all constituent groups, including the Local Advisory Panel, the chairperson and executive director of the Ho'okako'o Corporation, on behalf of the Corporation, along with the reaffirmation of the faculty and staff. The documents have been shared and published in the faculty 'Ohana Handbook, the student planner, the school's website and the 'Ohana newsletter.

Commendations for School Philosophy and Purpose

The Visiting Committee commends:

1. Waimea Middle School and its stakeholders, for their comprehensive and collaborative efforts in creating a vision, mission, beliefs, and School Wide Learning Results that reflect learning goals for all students. (self study, p. 13-14; School Philosophy and Purpose evidence binder; observations; focus group meetings)

Recommendations for *School Philosophy and Purpose*

The Visiting Committee recommends:

1. The administration and faculty continue their efforts to define how the curriculum will serve to ensure that all students meet the School Wide Learning Results, and that student achievement of the SWLRs are measured appropriately across all grade levels. (self study, p. 15; focus group meetings)
2. The administration and faculty develop a measurement and accountability framework that will measure student outcomes toward the achievement of the SWLRs. (focus group meetings; meeting with administration; self study progress report.)

Evidence about student learning for the self-study and visit that support these commendations and recommendations include:

- self study report
- classroom observations
- focus group meetings
- meeting with administration

Chapter 2: The Governing Body

Criterion: *The governing body (1) sets policy consistent with the school's purpose; (2) delegates implementation to the head of school; (3) ensures the fiscal stability of the school through financial oversight and fundraising; and (4) monitors results.*

A major outcome of the Ho'okako'o's new strategic plan (2012-2015) was a re-envisioning of the management framework, adjustments to the Board structure and term limits, and an emphasis on the Board's role to seek funding to align with school priorities. A restructuring of the Board prompted the election of a new chair and vice chair, as well as a new committee structure. The committees now include: Executive, Nominating and Governance, Budget and Finance, Education, Development, External Relations, and Local School Advisory Panel.

Ho'okako'o Corporation transitioned to a new Executive Director in 2009. The Local Advisory Panel (LAP) was reconstituted in June 2012. The panel serves in an advisory capacity to the Ho'okako'o Board and principal to support the school's improvement goals. In total, these organizational changes and the current stability of the school administration, should help the school, corporation, and Board work together to support a common set of goals.

Directors and trustees are individuals with experience at the policy making level. They possess a belief and passion for quality education, knowledge of local and national educational trends, maintain an awareness of charter laws and legislation, and are financially knowledgeable and accountable. There is a diversity of expertise on the Board from the education and business community. Their connections within the state offer opportunities to share learning with the DOE and private school sectors and generate the funding and resources necessary to sustain educational innovation and reform strategies at the school.

There has been an effort to recruit board members from the local community who demonstrate expertise in one or more of these areas. It was felt that a local community member on the Board would help to ensure increased involvement, visibility, and communication with the Waimea Middle School community. This addition to the Board may serve to promote increased involvement and attendance at school activities, and would serve to improve two-way communication between the Board and the school stakeholders. As of March 2014, a member of the Waimea community was selected to serve as a member of the Ho'okako'o Board.

Currently, in keeping the Board abreast of the educational programs of the school, the principal reports on the progress at quarterly board meetings, utilizing a consistent template that reflects areas of academic achievement and assessments, attendance, enrollment, and retention, staff development, feedback and evaluation, finances, family and community engagement and accreditation. As regularly as possible, Board members attend the monthly Local Advisory Panel (LAP) meeting, where school programs are regularly reviewed and discussed. The Board also receives the weekly community newsletter, 'Ohana News, to keep abreast of programs and activities at the school.

The current structure of planning between the governing body, corporate structure, and the schools are focused on improving achievement for students. The Board, corporate, and school plans do not always use consistent language, a common structure, or clear implementation timelines, which has at times led to confusion, hindered communication, and affected implementation of reform strategies. The school and corporation will benefit from consistency in each of these areas.

The Executive Director, as chief administrative officer of the Corporation, is responsible for the supervision and evaluation of the principal. Proficiency and professional growth is evaluated based on outcomes relative to the Ho'okako'o Corporation and the school's vision, mission, and goals.

Annually, a self-assessment of each administrator is conducted and reviewed with the supervisor. The supervisor and individual administrator share responsibility for identifying and pursuing professional development and growth opportunities. Goals are set through collaborative discussion. Performance and professional growth reviews are conducted a minimum of three times a year.

With respect to an internal evaluation of the Board's performance, the Executive Committee of the Board, in collaboration with the Executive Director, updates a Progress Matrix on a quarterly basis. In 2011-2012 the Board completed a Priority Functions and Indicators of Success, which evaluated the progress of the Board, the Corporation, and the school in the following areas: Operations, Educational Quality, and Legislative/Communications.

With respect to fundraising activities, the Board directs the Executive Director to negotiate renewable Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) with Kamehameha Schools, who has been the primary funder in addition to state per-pupil funds. The restructuring of the Board included the formation of a Development Committee whose primary purpose is to diversify and increase additional funding streams for Ho'okako'o schools. Thus, the Board approved the hiring of a full-time Development Director who began on October 2013. As new members are recruited for the Board, the ability to assist with increasing fundraising capacity will be a primary qualification. Both the Board and the school sees these developments, along with the reorganization of the Board and the strategic plan, as positive steps forward in addressing the comprehensive, defined needs of the school.

Commendations for *The Governing Body*

The Visiting Committee commends:

1. The current Board and its Executive Director, for their expertise and commitment to improving educational processes at Waimea Middle School. (self study, pp. 17-22; focus group meeting; meetings with administration and other stakeholders)

2. The Board and the Executive Director for developing and implementing a strategic plan and revised organizational structure to guide the future work of the school. (self study, p. 18; focus group meeting; Governance evidence binder)
3. The Local Advisory Panel, for their commitment and willingness to support the school and its journey toward continuous improvement. (self study, p. 18-19; LAP meeting; community and family meeting; focus group meeting)
4. The Board for creating the opportunity for a representative from the Waimea community to serve on the Board. (self study update; focus group meetings; meeting with administration)

Recommendations for *The Governing Body*

The Visiting Committee recommends:

1. The Board, the Executive Director, the LAP, and school leadership continue to clarify specific roles and responsibilities. (self-study, p. 19-20; focus group meeting; meeting with Board)
2. The Board, Executive Director, and school leadership seek opportunities to improve participation by board members and two-way communication, in a broad effort to build stronger relationships and trust with the entire school community. (self-study, pp. 19, 20, 22; focus group meeting; other stakeholder meetings)
3. The Board, Executive Director, and school strive to formulate plans with consistent language, a common structure, and clear implementation procedures. (self-study, pp. 19; focus group meeting; Governance evidence binder)

Evidence about student learning for the self-study and visit that support these commendations and recommendations include:

- self study report
- focus group meetings
- meetings with stakeholder groups
- interviews
- evidence binders

Chapter 3: Finances

Criterion: *The financial resources available to the school are sufficient to sustain the school's programs and are effectively used to carry out the school's purpose. The governing body executes responsible planning for the future.*

Waimea Middle School (WMS) currently serves 280 students, which represents a dramatic reduction from five years ago. A major source of the decreased enrollment is the opening of another local public school. Because a reduction in students means less state per-pupil allocation for the school, which is the WMS' largest revenue source, this loss of students has created significant financial challenges. As a public charter school, WMS does not charge tuition.

WMS begins their annual budget process in February by receiving input from various stakeholders, including the school leadership, the Local Advisory Panel (LAP), and Ho'okako'o Corporation (HC). In April, the school submits a budget to HC staff who offers recommendations. The full HC board approves the budget in May after its Budget Committee has reviewed it, discussed any changes, and recommended its approval. The budget is adjusted in October to reflect the school's official enrollment count.

The school's budget format is clear and explains how expenses were calculated, which revenue will pay for the expense, as well as how the expense is connected to the school's implementation plan and goals. WMS recently adopted a new digital account management system that is used by both the school and HC to track income and expenses in real-time. The budget-to-actuals report is reviewed weekly by the Principal and is used to inform decision-making and progress monitoring. WMS has appropriate internal controls and has an independent accountant review its financial statements quarterly. An audit is completed annually, and the school has received an "unqualified," or clean opinion, from the auditor each of the past five years.

WMS employee compensation is based on labor contracts with three different bargaining units and is determined by the employee's placement on the salary scale associated with their respective bargaining agreement. The exceptions are administrator salaries, which are based on HGEA salary schedules but placement on the schedule is determined by individual contracts. Benefits packages are also based on the negotiated agreement with the bargaining units. Although the cost of living in Waimea is relatively high, the salary and benefit packages are adequate for most employees.

WMS has no endowment but has built a reserve of \$2.5 million. The reserve funds have been held in HC accounts but are being released this year to the school's local accounts. For the past 5 years, WMS has been operating at an average budget deficit of \$300,000-\$400,000 per year. As revenue declined, some services were cut but many practices stayed the same, thus resulting in an operating deficit. The school's food service and transportation programs are

both costing the school \$150,000 per year above and beyond any fees collected. The school has used its reserve funds to cover the annual deficits.

The school administration and HC board have decided that approximately \$2 million of the reserve funds be used to over the next 2-3 years to build capacity and sustainability and dramatically improve student achievement. The remaining \$500,000 of the reserve will be kept as a "rainy-day fund." The rationale for using such a large amount of the reserve is that funders will be unlikely to continue supporting the school if it has a large reserve and student achievement is not increasing.

In 2005-2006, WMS submitted a Capital Improvement Project request to the State Legislature for the construction of a new, 9-classroom building focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The school was awarded \$1 million from the legislature for planning and design in 2007, and another \$5 million in 2013. The school is optimistic the remaining \$5 million needed to complete the project will be awarded soon.

Commendations for *Finances*

The Visiting Committee commends:

1. The administration, Board, and HC Staff for a clearly articulated budget and budgeting process. (self study, pp 26-29; Finance evidence binder; focus group meeting)
2. The administration and Board for supporting the financial strength of the school through the development of a healthy operating reserve fund. (self study, pp. 27-28; Finance Evidence Binder; focus group meeting)
3. The administration, account clerks, and HC Staff for implementing a new online account management system that provides real-time data, which helps financial progress monitoring and supports more informed decision-making. (self study, p. 26; focus group meeting)
4. The administration, account clerks, HC Staff, and Board for receiving an "unqualified," or clean opinion the past five years from the auditors. (self study, p. 29; focus group meeting)
5. The administration, account clerks, and HC Staff for establishing and performing strong internal controls. (self study, pp. 29-30; focus group meeting)
6. The principal and School Leadership Team for assuming responsibility for the school's long-term financial health by developing a 5-year projected budget. (Finance evidence binder; focus group meeting)

Recommendations for *Finances*

The Visiting Committee recommends:

1. The administration and Board examine the school's needs in both fundraising and reserve fund management to ensure school programs receive sufficient funding, particularly in light of the decision to draw down such a significant percentage of the current operating reserve fund. (self study, p. 1, 27; Finance evidence binder; focus group meeting)
2. The administration, Board, and HC Staff work toward the preparation and administration of a sustainable budget. (self study, p. 27; Finance evidence binder; focus group meeting)
3. The administration, Board, and HC Staff investigate, and if appropriate administer, a plan to manage the high costs associated with auxiliary fee-based services, such as transportation, energy consumption, and food service. (self study, p. 29; Finance evidence binder; focus group meeting)
4. The administration, Board, and HC Staff monitor and administer a plan to secure the funding needed to sufficiently complete a classroom building project that satisfies the school's programmatic and space needs. (School Progress Report, pp. 7-8; self study, p. 38; focus group meeting)

Evidence about student learning for the self-study and visit that support these commendations and recommendations include:

- self study
- School Progress Report
- focus group meeting
- Finance evidence binder

Chapter 4: Development/Fundraising

Criterion: *The governing body and administration create and implement development/fundraising program consonant with the philosophy of the school and sufficient to meet the present and future needs of the school.*

Extra funds for the Waimea Middle School, beyond the per pupil allotment from the Department of Education, come from a variety of sources: Ho'olako Like, federal grants, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, other grants and donations and in-kind contributions. This year's total as of October was \$652,000, with no funds coming from Ho'olako Like, which contributed \$420,000 in 2011-2012. The school initiated a Capital Improvement request with the legislature in 2005-6 for a 9-Classroom Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Building for their children and have received 6.5 million of an initial allocation. WMS is hopeful that the legislature will fund the remaining needed 7 - 9 million this year.

Primary fundraising expenses are contracted services and salaries. The school contracts with an experienced administrator for federal and private grant assistance. Through these contracted services, the school has successfully received a number of private grants. In addition, the school employs a Community Liaison who spends a portion of her time (approximately 25-33%) working on fundraising and legislative advocacy for capital projects. Ho'okako'o has recently hired a Resource Development Manager at the corporate level and maintains a Board Development Committee; both resources are designed to assist the school in advocacy, research, and active application for development opportunities. The development resources are currently adequate for the school's needs; however, significant development work is necessary in the next year and a half to prepare for a future in which the reserve funds do not exist. All parties are working hard to increase income and decrease expenses in preparation for the exhaustion of the school's reserve funds. The principal recently developed a relationship with a donor family committed to supporting the school needs in sustainability improvements and to honoring teacher efforts towards a culture of excellence. That family donated \$266,000 in December to fund supplementary needs and more this Spring to recognize teachers.

To date, the HC Board and the Ho'okako'o corporate staff have worked largely independently from the school on their fundraising and sustainability efforts – a major focus has been maintaining the relationship with Ho'olako Like as a primary funder. The principal works with the Community Liaison, the contracted federal programs and grant writer, and other school staff to pursue more localized, targeted grants & contributions. Moving forward, greater emphasis and cooperation will be necessary between the school and the HC corporate office around large-scale fundraising. As the school works to build sustainability, control costs, and dramatically increase student achievement, the board and the corporate staff must support the school by securing significant funding to make up for a continued annual spending deficit. Operating and capital fundraising priorities are guided by the mission and vision of the school and determined by the administration, in collaboration with the Board, School Leadership Team, Local Advisory Panel, and Ho'okako'o staff. At the school level, recent fundraising efforts

have been focused on the new 9-Classroom STEM Building as well as targeted grant to support achievement of struggling learners and enrichment opportunities for all students. Most of the supplemental (non-federal) funds raised go toward initiatives that support whole-child learning related to the school-wide learning results that are extra-curricular and related to core values.

At the school level, the Local Advisory Panel has been a valuable source of information and constituent support for fundraising. In addition to the Local Advisory Panel, the school has reached out to community groups through community meetings, club visits, and advertising to support legislative initiatives for capital projects (such as the 9-Classroom Building). The Community Liaison devotes a majority of her time to partnerships, publications, and constituent relationship development for the school and provided a strong foundation for fundraising. As constituents, teachers involved in special programs such as Robotics, the East Coast Trip and Student Leadership regularly fundraise in order to support their programs.

WMS is a public conversion charter school which occupies State land and Department of Education facilities. The school funds custodial and minor maintenance services while the State Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) and the Department of Education at no cost to the school complete major maintenance. Each year in October, the school administration works with the Department of Education and DAGS to prioritize capital needs for the school and get those needs on the matrix for completion.

The following figures show that 22.7% of the schools operating revenue for the last school year was contributed income. School Year 2012-13 Revenue: State Per Pupil-77.3%, Federal Grants-14.4%, Student Fundraising-4.1%, Other Grants & Contributions-1.6%, Student Fees-1.4%, Office of Hawaiian Affairs Grant-1.2% and Ho'olako Like Grant-0.0%. As a result of ongoing negotiations, in large part surrounding the school's large reserve, Ho'olako Like did not grant any funding to WMS in either 2012-13 or 2013-14. It is anticipated that Ho'olako Like will resume funding at some future point on a needs based and performance based model.

The primary sources of contributed income come from federal Title I, Title II, Migrant, DOD, Child Nutrition, and Impact Aid. Small-scale student fundraising for sports and clubs contribute to income targeted at those particular programs. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs gives an annual grant to the school based on enrollment, although the 2012-13 grant was substantially less than in previous years. Other grants and contributions include small grants and donations from businesses and individuals.

Commendations for Development/Fundraising

The Visiting Committee commends:

1. The administration, Board, HC Staff, Community Liaison, and school community for providing leadership and demonstrating perseverance in the school's capital needs initiative, resulting in the school receiving a \$6.5 million allocation and continuing

efforts to secure another 7-9 million for a new 9-classroom Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics building. (self study, pp. 8, 36-38; focus group meeting; conversations with school leadership and Board; Finances, Development and Fundraising evidence binder)

2. The Board and administration for setting up a successful development team consisting of an experienced administrator who assists with grant writing and a Community Liaison who spends time working on fundraising and legislative advocacy for capital projects. (self study , pp. 36-38, group meeting, conversations with school leadership and Board; Finances, Development and Fundraising Evidence Binder)
3. The Board for hiring a Resource Development Manager at the corporate level who will assist with grant writing and resource development for WMS and maintains a Board Development Committee. (self study, pp. 36-38; focus group meetings; conversations with school leadership and Board; Finances, Development and Fundraising and Ho'okako'o Evidence Binders)
4. The faculty and staff involved in special programs such as Robotics, the East Coast Trip and Student Leadership who regularly fundraise to support those critical enrichment activities. (self study, pp. 36-38, 57-58; focus group meetings; conversations with school leadership and students; Finances, Development and Fundraising evidence binders; classroom observation)
5. The school, community, and Mala'ai Garden staff for providing financial as well as curricular benefit through the establishment and maintenance of the Mala'ai Garden. (focus group meetings; conversations with administration, Board, and students; Finances, Development and Fundraising evidence binders; observation)

Recommendations for *Development/Fundraising*

The Visiting Committee recommends:

1. The Board, HC Staff, and school leadership collaboratively develop more and diverse funding sources in order to sustain the school program and effectively carry out the school's purpose and student achievement of the expected school wide learning results (self study , pp. 36 -40; focus group meetings; conversations with administration, Board; Finances, Development and Fundraising evidence binder; classroom observations)
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. (self study Ch. 4; focus group meeting)

Evidence about student learning for the self-study and visit that support these commendations and recommendations include:

- self study Report
- focus group meetings
- evidence binders
- conversations with administration, Board, and students

Chapter 5: Administration, Faculty and Staff

Criterion: *The school employs qualified personnel who understand and support the school's philosophy and work cooperatively to create an environment in which effective learning takes place.*

Administration

The school has a defined administrative structure with responsibilities outlined. In recent years, the school has undergone changes at the administrative level, including four principal transitions since 2006, the last occurring abruptly in the middle of 2011-2012. Currently, the school has a principal and vice principal who serve as the primary educational leaders responsible for development, implementation, supervision, and evaluation of a comprehensive program of educational and student services. They administer the program in accordance with federal and state statutory requirements, board policies, administrative rules and regulations, and consistent with collective bargaining agreements. The principal reports directly to the Ho'okako'o Executive Director who works under the supervision of the Ho'okako'o Board. The vice principal reports directly to the principal. Two administrators, working together, are sufficient for leadership and organizational management for Waimea Middle School.

Administration is advised and supported by a large school leadership team consisting of six department chairs, three grade level chairs, the counselor, student services coordinator, the community liaison, coaches, and a classified staff member. Decisions are made at multiple levels within the school that are based on the school's learning expectations. Discussions and decisions at the leadership team reflect the individual and small group decisions in relation to planning and implementation of programs that support student learning, as well as necessary operational requirements. Efforts were made this year to improve effectiveness of the leadership team by restructuring the meetings to have only small focused groups attend each meeting. When issues pertaining to the whole school arise, the full team meets, a recent example being the schedule for next year, including the extended learning time. Administration plans to improve clear communication of final decisions and the overall rationale behind them.

Additionally, administration is supported and advised by a Local Advisory Panel (LAP) comprised of community, family, staff, faculty, students and board representation. The LAP has been involved in providing input into the school-wide action plans which are based on the learning expectations and overall needs for additional success of the school.

The process for decisions being communicated to all members of administration, faculty and staff relies on the individual and collective responsibility of all staff, including members of the School Leadership Team, to communicate through meetings and written communication. Written communications which go out through staff email, the staff portal on the school website, and a weekly staff bulletin assist in supporting communication efforts of school-based decisions. Meetings are used to communicate information, and staff is able to access the

minutes to all leadership team, department, and grade level meetings on the S drive available on staff member computers.

Personnel policies are part of union negotiated contracts and are adhered to by administration. Human Resources within Ho'okako'o Corporation provides additional guidance. The Waimea Middle School 'Ohana Handbook provides an extensive overview of school-based personnel policies.

Faculty

As members of the Hawaii State Teachers Association, the faculty receives the salary and benefits packages within the contract provided by the state. Feedback from faculty reflects appreciation of the recent increase in pay, as well as the choice in benefit plans available. Faculty may work towards moving up in class within the salary schedule. However the cost of living in Waimea creates potential difficulty for faculty members.

New positions within the school are posted, interview committees are formed at the school level to review credentials and educational background followed by an interview of candidates, final review of credentials and educational background is with the Ho'okako'o Corporation. Having the flexibility to recruit outside the DOE hiring system provides WMS the opportunity to identify and acquire talent, both for administration and faculty, from outside the State or DOE pool. This flexibility in recruiting and hiring has allowed WMS to bring on individuals with very specific skills to support their program. Guidelines are provided to faculty members within the HSTA contract and 'Ohana Handbook detailing duties outside of the classroom, and teachers traditionally go beyond the expectations in support of their students' learning and the school.

At the start of the 2012-2013 school year, the Classroom Teacher Competency Model Criteria and Competency Summary was distributed to faculty and reviewed by the principal to be used in providing an annual evaluation of faculty for the first time. Faculty report that the hiring of a Vice Principal is valued, as it allows for a more timely process in meeting with administration as well as potential for a different evaluator annually. The faculty would like more clarity surrounding the evaluation and consistency in its implementation. The administration intends to continue to provide training and professional development regarding the faculty evaluation procedures, as well as to review the process with the faculty annually in the opening days of school to be clarity.

There are twenty-eight faculty members at Waimea Middle PCCS. Of these, all hold college degrees. This school year, there are three faculty members who began teaching subjects outside of their licensure and training, but all have experience and reason for their placement.

There is not a formal program presently designed or in place that is used to orient new faculty members to the school. However, as described in the Faculty 'Ohana Handbook, Department Heads and Grade Level Chairs are expected to assist in orienting new faculty members to the

school by going over forms and procedures, assisting with questions when needed and serving as a person to ask for help. Beginning with the 2008 school year, the formal process in place was discontinued due to no new hires and since then there have been only a few hires and a couple of newly developed positions. The school would benefit by reinstating a more organized means of orienting new faculty and staff.

All professional development is approved and funded by Waimea Middle School provided they support the school vision and mission. In-service training must also directly align with the Classroom Teacher Competency Model for quality instruction. WMS provides budgeted time and money for continued training and professional development of its faculty in order to develop an environment where teachers collaborate to improve instruction in order to positively impact student learning and achievement. Training workshops are incorporated into the Common Team Planning times, or through Full Faculty meetings and Professional Collaboration Days. Faculty may also attend conferences, workshops and seminars outside the school to keep them abreast of current educational research, best practices, programs and curriculum. Faculty who attend any training and/or professional development are allotted time to share their new knowledge with the rest of the staff during CTP, grade level, or full faculty meetings. Supported by the school, many teachers subscribe to literature and publications that keep them up to date with current research and upcoming conferences.

Faculty and staff at Waimea Middle School meet both formally and informally throughout the year in various venues and with various schedules: School Leadership Team, Grade Level Team, and Department Meetings and Professional Collaboration Days. Full Faculty Meetings this year have been reserved for professional development in the Teacher Evaluation and Competency model framework as the focus. Beyond the agenda focus in all meetings, time is used to share and discuss ideas, concerns/problems or issues, and receive or disseminate information. The School Leadership Team meetings have proven a useful venue in which faculty and staff can be active participants in decisions made in regards to operational issues, implementation of programs and curriculum, student achievement, faculty and staff issues, and community relations. The S drive serves as a valuable tool for communication.

Teachers take part in the evaluation, design and development of curriculum through department CTP times, full faculty meetings, PC days, and grade level meeting times. Faculty has the opportunity to provide input on curricular decisions through department meetings and leadership team meetings; final decisions rest with the principal. Some faculty members report confusion regarding curricular decisions and evaluation.

A Leadership Team comprised of representatives from each department and grade level, as well as support staff, meets twice monthly to discuss school issues and assist in decisions made within the school. Faculty can share concerns with members sitting on the Leadership Team for discussion, inform the administration of concern, or if union related, address the Hawaii State Teachers Association. Annual surveys provide insight and data as well.

No formal program is in place to assist teachers in identifying and responding to ethnic,

cultural, and gender biases in themselves, but they are encouraged to participate in related professional development and incorporate multiple perspectives in their lesson planning to balance curriculum bias.

Support Staff

The support staff members have detailed job descriptions and complete an annual State of Hawaii Performance Appraisal System (PAS). In-service training is provided, depending on the support staff position, as needed through full faculty and professional collaboration days. Additionally, professional development opportunities for specific support staff positions are offered outside the school setting. Support staff members have multiple avenues to share ideas as well as provide input into discussions and decisions. They report feeling that they have input into school-wide decisions.

Qualified educational assistants are hired based on allotments through the special education program. While there is support staff in place for specialized programs, such as educational assistants for Special Education students and paraprofessional tutors for the Migrant Education students, it is believed that further assistance to teachers and students within regular education classes would be beneficial.

Unique to this school, the Head Custodian serves as the Athletic Director and has dramatically increased sports participation at this level, noted as 80% participating in some way. This structure enhances the feeling that every adult on campus cares about the well-being of the students.

* * *

Overall, Waimea Middle School has a capable, highly educated and diverse administration, faculty and staff. A high percentage are veteran faculty and staff with many years of experience who are long-standing residents of Waimea, and dedicated to the children, families, and community. They are providing a safe and nurturing environment for student learning. A majority of faculty and staff are involved with co-curricular and special programs offered before and after school as well as during recess and lunchtime. Dedicated faculty and staff frequently work past required hours to ensure the job is done. Further, supportive relationships exist among the faculty and staff and are evidenced by a willingness to assist one another. To scaffold the administrative team, the school filled the vice principal position this year.

Waimea Middle School has identified a few challenges. Opportunities are needed to further clarify the faculty evaluation system and to refine procedures of explanation and consistency of implementation. While the school augmented its educational team with multiple new positions, the understanding of roles and responsibilities are still being refined and defined as the structure of the school adjusts. There is a call for a persistent dedication from administration, school leadership, and advisory stakeholder groups to ensure decisions are effectively

communicated. Using their words, there is a high level of commitment to the school among Administration, faculty and staff, but there is a low level of time to ensure the job is completed within the work-day.

Commendations for *Administration, Faculty and Staff*

The Visiting Committee commends:

1. The faculty and staff for their dedication to student learning as evidenced by their involvement in co-curricular and special programs, their participation in important school decisions, and their willingness to overlap roles and work beyond the required hours to ensure the job is done. (self study, pp. 49-55; focus group meetings; conversations with students, parents, teachers and support staff; observation)
2. The Board, Executive Director and principal for augmenting administration with a vice principal to support the facilitation of administrative actions that focus on student achievement and SWLRs. (self study, pp. 41-45, 59-60, 65-68; focus groups meetings; conversations with administration, teachers and support staff; Administration, Faculty and Staff evidence binder)
3. The administration, faculty and staff who facilitate and participate in School Leadership Team meetings, which have proven useful means for faculty and staff to be active participants in decisions made in regards to the school's operational issues, implementation of school programs and curriculum, student achievement, faculty and staff issues and community relations (self study, pp. 41-55; focus group meeting; conversations with administration, teachers and support staff; Administration, Faculty and Staff evidence binder)
4. The administration, faculty, and staff for providing a safe, nurturing environment where students can focus on their learning. (focus group meetings; LAP meeting; conversations with administration, teachers, parents, students and support staff; observation)
5. The support staff for their dedication to the school and its students as evidenced by their participation in the accreditation process, willingness to take on additional roles in support of students, and for appreciably helping to create that safe nurturing environment that characterizes WMS. (self study; focus group meetings; LAP meeting; conversations with administration, teachers, parents, students and support staff)

Recommendations for *Administration, Faculty, and Staff*

The Visiting Committee recommends:

1. The administration in collaboration with the School Leadership Team find means to clarify, reinforce and refine the faculty evaluation system to provide consistent, effective evaluation of faculty. (self study, pp. 41-45, 58; focus group meeting; Administration, Faculty and Staff evidence binder)
2. The administration clearly communicate the roles and responsibilities of the new positions in the school so that they are defined and understood. (self study, pp. 50-51, 59-58; focus group meetings; Administration, Faculty and Staff evidence binder)
3. The administration, School Leadership Team, and advisory stakeholder groups devise procedures to ensure decisions and information are effectively, clearly, and consistently communicated. (self study, pp. 36-39, 41-68; focus group meetings; Administration, Faculty and Staff and evidence binder)

Evidence about student learning for the self-study and visit that support these commendations and recommendations include:

- self study
- focus group meetings
- evidence binder
- conversations with school leadership, students, parents, faculty and staff
- observations

Chapter 6: Students

Criteria: *The school has admissions policies and procedures which are consistent with its philosophy.*

The school provides a nurturing environment that reflects the school's purpose and is characterized by trust, caring, and support, a respect for differences, and high expectations for each student.

The school provides activities, opportunities, and support services which reflect the philosophy and learning expectations which meet the academic and personal needs of the students.

WMS has a clear application process that includes orientation to the school, communication of school rules, bell schedule, and explanation of the student handbook and planner. The school also provides uniforms and supplies which puts all students on an “equal playing field” to begin school. A math placement test and a review of student records helps identify student needs early in the enrollment process. Parents also are given access to the online grade book program and are encouraged to sign their children up for a before or after school program. Enrollment must be streamlined since the registrar must enter student information in two different online systems. Records are secure and complete.

The student body consists of small sub-groups that are challenged by the academic program which meets the needs of the larger population that is relatively high performing. Several programs are in place to support these sub-groups such as before and after school tutoring. Support personnel includes a school counselor, SBBH counselor, BISAC counselor, and an At-Risk Counselor. Individual Student Learning Plans, now being implemented for students identified as being high risk, will provide a way to track progress and assure that the counseling services provided are effective.

While the self-study did not identify behavior and student discipline as an area of concern, examination of the school behavioral data, along with focus group discussions, provided evidence of an increase in documented student behavioral referrals. This is emerging as an area warranting further monitoring and investigation over time.

One of these sub groups is a relatively large ELL and Migrant population. The recent resignation of a full-time ELL teacher has impacted the level of support that is available to these students. Also a move to an inclusion model of SPED has caused anxiety among teachers and there is concern, as expressed at the program focus group meeting, that the differentiation that is necessary to meet the needs of all the students in a highly diverse group, will be daunting. Students also expressed that, while there is an honors section of ELA and Math, students in the class were not satisfied with what was being taught and how it moved too quickly for some students. They wanted challenging course work that perhaps went deeper, not just faster.

Clearly, one of the areas needing improvement is the instructional design of coursework that will meet the needs of its diverse populations and particularly the learning needs of the various sub-groups that exist among students, particularly ELL, SPED and Gifted and Talented.

When asked what was the best thing about WMS, a representative group of students had many answers. One said it was the school values that were used in many aspects of the school and are foundational in all school relationships. All agreed that there was little or no bullying and “very few fights.” Some said it was the teachers and staff, who were always willing to help students. They all agreed that they felt safe, despite hearing in the larger community that WMS was a “rough” place. Students wanted to stay at WMS and wanted them to add a high school so they wouldn’t have to leave. One student said that his relationship with an adult staff member “changed his life” and that he was changed for the better due to this relationship. Students and families feel that WMS is a safe and friendly place for learning and creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, support and trust is a goal for the school.

Besides the support staff who are available to students, there are a variety of co- and extra-curricular programs available. These include support for academic learning, such as the before and after school Homework Help and enrichment programs such as the K(Arts) program and robotics. Students may also participate in middle-school athletics and a Yearbook Club. These opportunities are communicated to students and their families in a variety of ways and at various times during the school year. Student leadership is developed through the Student Leadership program and over time, students will be given opportunities to plan and develop more activities for students to participate in.

When asked, students felt that there were a lot of activities to choose from and that they especially enjoyed the “X” periods and wanted to have more time in them. Many took advantage of the before or after school Homework Help and also stayed at school to use computers if they needed them. They also expressed a need to have better science labs to work in and to have more access to sports. They mentioned that many times they didn’t understand why they were learning something and that sometimes they seemed to be learning some of the same things over and over again.

Commendations for *Students*

The Visiting Committee commends:

1. The administration, faculty, and staff for providing access to a variety of co- and extra-curricular opportunities that are offered at no charge for students. These activities may include snacks and are well-staffed to provide student support. (self study, pp. 85-86; focus groups; conversations with staff and students)
2. The administration, community liaison, and LAP for securing the financial assistance to provide a range of student support services, including a BISAC and SBBH counselor. (self

study, pp. 85-86; focus group meetings)

3. The administration and staff for providing improved and expanded support services for students identified as “at-risk” through staffing positions, community partnerships, and grant programs. (self study, pp. 79-81; LAP Meeting; focus group meeting; Connecting for Success Evidence Binder).
4. The students for embracing school wide core values and demonstrating them in their relationships with staff, other students, and community. (self study, pp. 76-78; focus group meetings; observation)
5. The administration and staff for assuring that school wide core values are made an integral part of student orientation, staff/student relationship building and student/family support. (self study, pp. 76-78; focus group meetings; observations; conversations with staff and students)
6. The administration, faculty and staff for providing a strong ‘Ike Hawai‘i program using community resources which supports the school’s place-based focus and Native Hawaiian students. (self study, p. 78; focus group meetings; classroom observation; conversations with staff)
7. The administration, faculty and staff for developing Individual Student Learning Plans when additional support is needed for addressing academic and behavioral concerns. (self study, p. 81; focus group meetings; The Secondary Program evidence binder)

Recommendations for *Students*

The Visiting Committee recommends:

1. 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. (self study, pp. 81-84; focus group meeting; classroom observations)
2. The administration and faculty develop a process to document and analyze the effectiveness of school counseling services relative to student behaviors and academic needs. (self study, p. 84; focus group meeting)
3. The administration, faculty, and LAP should broaden the scope of its cultural education component to address other ethnicities given the multicultural nature of the student population (self study, p. 84; focus group meeting).

Evidence about student learning for the self-study and visit that support these commendations and recommendations include:

- self study
- focus group meetings
- evidence binders
- meeting with students
- classroom observations

Chapter 7: Community of the School:

Criteria: *The school leadership employs strategies to inform parents, other school constituencies and the wider school community about, and to involve them in, the life of the school.*

Waimea Middle School has several avenues for stakeholder groups to become involved in the school. The reconstituted Local Advisory Panel provides an opportunity for educators, parents, community and HC board members to collaborate on school issues, concerns or initiatives. Parents are encouraged to attend an annual 6th Grade family orientation for incoming students and new students and their families are provided an individualized introduction to the school community including a tour, selection of coursework, and required forms. Parents are provided volunteer opportunities through working in the Mala'ai School Garden, providing their expertise as special classroom presenters, assisting the office in large mail outs and being one-to-one mentors as part of the Connecting for Success Grant programming.

Communication and collaboration with parents is provided through multiple delivery formats including a student planner, weekly 'Ohana News, the Tuesday envelope, the newly introduced Jupiter online interactive grading system, open house events, the school website and Facebook, the online Google master calendar of events, student-led teacher-family conferences, and the principal's open door policy.

Waimea Middle School administration associates regularly with the community and fellow educators through the Waimea Education Hui and the Waimea Education Roundtable discussions. Partnerships also exist for community building, fundraising and school improvement purposes such as the Domino Pizza Fundraiser, creation of the gravel entry driveway, and the Kahilu Theatre foundation. Several school facilities, such as the gym and cafeteria, are also shared with Waimea Elementary School and are made available to the community for athletics, after school programming and other events.

Commendations for *Community of the School*

The Visiting Committee commends:

1. The administration, faculty and staff for providing many volunteer opportunities for parents and community members to offer their talents and skills to support the school and become involved. (self study, pp. 92-92, 97-98; focus group meeting)
2. The administration, faculty and staff for utilizing a variety of communication formats for parents in order to foster more engagement in school activities and student learning including a computer in the office for families without internet access at home. (self study, pp. 95-98; focus groups; Community of the School evidence binder)

3. The administration, faculty, and staff for maintaining a community liaison position that supports the school in fostering supportive community partnerships that provide funding, supplies and in-kind contributions to increase student learning opportunities (self study, p. 97; focus groups; Community of the School evidence binder).

Recommendations for *Community of the School*

The Visiting Committee recommends:

1. The LAP seek additional community representatives from groups that make up the largest demographics of the school, such as those families who qualify for free and reduced lunch and Native Hawaiians. (self study, pp. 74-75; focus group meeting)
2. The administration take steps to improve the relationship with WES for better shared use of facilities and with State agencies to better provide services to maintain facilities and grounds (self-study, pp. 103-104; focus group meeting).

Evidence about student learning for the self-study and visit that support these commendations and recommendations include:

- self-study report
- classroom observations
- focus group meetings

Chapter 8(a): The Secondary Program

Criteria:

What Students Learn:

The school will have a challenging, coherent, relevant curriculum that provides all students with suitable courses of instruction, consistent with the school's philosophy, goals, and learning expectations, as well as student needs, abilities and interests.

How Students Learn:

Faculty and administration design and implement a variety of teaching strategies that actively engage students, address a variety of learning styles and are consistent with the school's philosophy, purpose and learning expectations.

How Assessment Is Used:

Teacher and student use of assessment is frequent and integrated into the teaching and learning process. The assessment results are the basis for a) measurement of each student's progress relative to the school's learning expectations; b) regular curriculum review and instructional improvement; and c) allocation of resources.

Reporting School Performance:

Based on a variety of data, the school will regularly examine how well students perform in relation to school learning expectation and communicate the findings to appropriate constituencies.

Co-Curricular Programs:

The school will have co-curricular offerings that complement the formal instruction of the school, are responsive to student needs and engage special interests among students, faculty and community resources.

Language Arts

The Language Arts program at WMS consists of a core method for instruction that utilizes a balanced literacy approach. Two online programs are used to support the reading of non-fiction material called Teenbiz3000 and Flocabulary. While STAR reading assessment can be used to inform instruction because it provides proximal skills for each student, it is not yet being used for this purpose. A literature program previously used serves as resource material for the literacy program. A priority has been placed on the selection of a new reading program to meet student learning needs. Honors English is scheduled to differentiate educational offerings.

While a formal writing program is not evident, writing is being addressed across curriculum with writing process evidenced in language arts and other classrooms. The Waimea Middle

School Writing Assessment is used to assess 3 traits of writing. Exemplary student work is collected in a Student Portfolio that is used to document and share student progress.

Grade level teams meet and discuss results of the various assessments that are used at WMS. The various forms of data, however, is not organized and is not always used to inform instruction.

The faculty is in the process of reviewing and selecting a language arts program that will address all facets of language arts, including writing, and unify grade 6-8 curriculum.

Assuring the appropriate computer equipment and access to implement the online components of the language arts curriculum has been a challenge.

Mathematics

The Math Department priority for the 2012-13 school year was to achieve Safe Harbor. Department goals included improvement in (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces (ALEKS) libraries and the Hawaii State Assessment, along with increasing the “meets/exceeds” in specific strands. With respect to these goals, sixth and seventh grade students met the targets of moving up an ALEKS library within the school year. One of the ALEKS targets was not met for all grade levels. Sixth grade students met the target of at least 70% of students showing improvement in HSA.

Prior to the current school year, the Math Department used Connected Mathematics in grades six through eight. As part of the transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Math in Focus has been adopted as the new math curriculum. Based on the methodology of Singapore Math, it is also aligned with the CCSS. A consultant provided training to all math teachers and educational assistants (EAs). Additional training will provided as the budget allows. It will take time to evaluate the effectiveness of the new math program.

School-wide assessments in math include the Hawaii State Assessment (HSA), STAR Math, and ALEKS. Teachers also use various formative and summative assessments--reflections, interactive notebooks, unit projects, quizzes, and tests.

Teachers have class sets of calculators. Smartboards, manipulatives, and whiteboards are also utilized. In previous years, ALEKS, an online math program was utilized to meet the individual needs of students. There was a double math period built into the schedule to accommodate this; however, due to schedule changes, the additional math period was eliminated. Math teachers noted that when ALEKS is delivered as a full period during the school day, gains in math scores were noted.

Social Studies

The Social Studies Department identified Reading Comprehension and Context, Organization in Writing, and Content Vocabulary Building as areas of need. The following assessment goals were projected:

- 65% of the students will score at the meets or exceeds level on the Spring 2013 HSA
- 80% of the students will include the Level set score by one or more grade levels from Fall 2012 to Spring 2013, and
- 64% of students will score a 4 or 5 on the WMS Writing Rubric for organization
- Although the goals were not met, 65% of the student did increase their Lexile levels by the Spring of 2013.

The 6th grade curriculum focuses on Ancient Civilizations. In 7th grade the curriculum includes a semester of History of the Hawaiian Kingdom and a semester of Pacific Island Studies. The 8th grade curriculum focuses on U.S. History.

The department follows HCPS III Quarterly Benchmark Maps which provide the curricular framework for each class. There is no school wide social studies assessment; however, teachers use formative and summative assessments.

The department incorporates art and 'Ike Hawaii into the program and thus, needs art supplies and 'Ike Hawai'i resources. The department also supports the Language Arts Department by working with students on Teen Biz articles. Students regularly use computers; thus, access to technology and internet resources need to be enhanced.

Science

The Science Department has adopted a new science curriculum to align to common core standards. The Department annually reviews and modifies department assessments to more accurately measure targets and inform instruction. The last few years the department's learning expectations have focused on student growth and proficiency in Numbers, Operations, and Measurement, Conventions, and Skills and Science Process Skills. In 2012-2013 they met three of the ten goals.

The science teachers use inquiry as a teaching strategy, directed, guided, and open ended, and a variety of teaching tools to address student learner needs. Assessments vary in form. They use Science Interactive Notebook, eScience review /Apply Chapter Tests for Content, TeenBiz/Achieve 300, Mala'ai Measurement Pre/Post Assessment as well as teacher made tests and quizzes, notebook logs, projects, lab write-ups, and observations.

Science facilities are inadequate; school community is hoping for a new science and math building. Teachers are hesitant to purchase needed hard and software because of school's current technology infrastructure and server capabilities.

Extended Core (Physical Education/Health/Basic Practical Arts)

There are four Extended Core teachers offering courses in Physical Education/Health, Basic Practical Arts, Technology, and Art. There is no consistent teaching methodology or shared assessment within this department. The P.E. teachers hold class in the gym or the fields but these are shared spaces with both the elementary school and general community, which can occasionally create a scheduling challenge.

Students also attend an exploratory or "X" period, which is a chosen elective such as yearbook or robotics at the same block four days per week and on the fifth day an advisory or assembly period is held. Student requiring further support in math or reading are required to take an intervention class in their area of concern during their "X" period until they increase their proficiency in that particular area. Students also attend a daily advisory period where they build relationships with a significant adult on campus. The school has plans for a schedule change in the coming year that will extend the school day until 3:00pm and allow students two "X" periods.

The 'Ike Hawai'i teachers work with other content area teachers to integrate Hawaiian cultural content with social studies, science, math, and language arts. The Self-Study emphasized that the school emphasized place-based and 'Ike Hawai'i throughout their curriculum, but it was minimally evident in classes. It was very evident in the way that staff and students embraced their school values and how staff and students treated each other. Students perform a school chant on different days of the week and all students perform a brief chant before entering the Mala'ai garden. There was a pervasive sense of attachment to the land and the people of Waimea that was emphasized over and over again in many focus groups.

What Students Learn

The curriculum is being evaluated and refined to better align with the Common Core Standards and the revised school philosophy and purpose. The Common Core Standards provides a relevant framework for the school curriculum amongst departments and grade levels. Math and science departments have adopted new curriculum aligned with the Common Core Standards. Other departments are working to revise and adjust curriculum to meet the standards and the College and Career Readiness targets.

WMS offers an exploratory and intervention period to provide students with opportunities to develop interest or receive additional support. The faculty feels that providing an exploratory period is a key piece of the middle school model that helps students to recognize interests and develop their individual goals and aspirations.

Staff has debated the placement of students in either an exploratory or intervention class. The lack of an implementation plan to guide placement has created frustration and will be addressed in the revision and enhancement of the Response to Intervention (RtI) plan. The

effective implementation of RtI is a priority indicator in the action plan.

Curricular scope and sequence is determined by departments and through the teacher of that grade level. Individual teachers submit a scope and sequence to administration at the beginning of every school year. The scope and sequence are linked to the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards, Common Core Standards, and are reflective of both content and grade level.

The transition to Common Core is prompting grade levels, departments, and individual teachers to further examine current curricular materials. While math and science departments have adopted new curriculum, other core courses are in the process of reviewing new curricular materials.

WMS has adopted the acronym IKAIR, reflecting the core values of 'Ike, Kaizen, Accountability, Integrity, and Respect. The core values have developed into the School Wide Learning Results (SWLRs), and embody the values and morals that students at WMS are expected to develop. Each grade level requires students to develop a portfolio that is used for student-led conferences. All classes post the core values and teacher refer to them on a regular basis in advisory and regular classes. Classes such as Basic Practical Arts and PE/Health offer opportunities for development of character through the curriculum.

Each school year begins with a carefully selected school-wide 'Ike Hawai'i 'olelo no'eau oe proverb that will support the overarching 'Ike Hawai'i theme. "Sense of Place, Sense of Identity" and its instructional scope and sequence provide culturally and academically rich learning opportunities embedded in lessons incorporating cultural traditions, language, history, and values.

'Ike focused character building lessons are based on the school wide Principles of Pa'ahana, cultural Code of Conduct, and school-based Core Values. The Code of Conduct is explained as the presentation of one's "best self" in all situations, but particularly when interacting with community resource presenters. Through place-based lessons targeted to the Waimea landscape surrounding the school, the goal of the 'Ike Hawai'i Program that students will take an active role in taking personal responsibility to malama, take care of and expand their knowledge base in order to make informed decisions about the future of the community.

How Students Learn

WMS does not incorporate a particular teaching methodology throughout all departments and grade levels, although common elements of teaching strategies are used across the school. Recently, WMS has agreed to focus on four areas of learning strategies across all content areas to promote increased learning--close reading, vocabulary, annotation, and habits of mind. There has been consensus on the four learning strategies and a newly-hired instructional coach is providing assistance in implementation.

A series of classroom observations in every classroom on campus reveals that instruction is generally teacher-directed, and sometimes promotes variable levels of student engagement. There are some instances of well-planned, well-delivered instruction and as recognized the administration, faculty, and staff should engage in ongoing professional dialogue that identifies best practices in instruction that will serve to ensure that all students are engaged and understand the relevance of curriculum content and related content and performance standards.

The need to continue articulation and dialogue focused on a teaching methodology and instructional strategies that support learning for all students, along with opportunities to share best practices should prompt the identification of key areas of focus for professional learning and the larger arena of continuous school improvement. A deeper and broader focus on addressing the professional learning needs of the faculty and staff, should serve to enhance learning and achievement outcomes for all students.

The development of an effective Response to Intervention (RtI) system is a priority area of focus. Grade level teachers utilize common planning time to discuss student concerns and identify students who are having difficulties. There is a referral form and process for early identification of needs.

This school year the school has made a huge leap by modifying the schedule to include an intervention period. The vision for this period is to utilize it for Tier 2 and 3 interventions. Currently, STAR math and reading testing data is used to identify students who are in need of “intervention” or “urgent intervention.” There are four intervention classes per grade level, two for math and two for reading. Students are grouped according to their levels of need. In these classes, students are provided a “double dose” in their area of weakness.

Additionally, CSSS has been a long-standing system for identifying and problem solving for students who are having difficulties. There is a recordkeeping system that documents strengths and needs of students, actions, and follow-up. CSSS will ultimately align with the emerging RtI system.

For students with learning disabilities, Special Education teachers provide pull-out instruction for math and language arts classes in each grade level. Special education students access the science and social studies curriculum in an inclusive setting with their general education peers.

WMS also provides varied ELL programs and instructional models to ensure delivery of appropriate instruction based on student needs. Additionally, differentiated and/or modified instruction are used to facilitate access to academic content and English language acquisition. The ELL program has been identified as an area of weakness because it has not seen enough students exiting the program or showing improvement on their WIDA scores during their time at WMS. As a result, WMS should reconsider the way the ELL program is administered and delivered in order to provide adequate support to these students.

A Migrant Education Program (MEP) meets the needs of identified students who may be negatively impacted by frequent moves. The MEP supplements math instruction to help students achieve the state content and performance standards and meet the expectations set by the state and school. The nineteen hours each allotted to the supervisor and tutor are insufficient for providing assistance to students and for completing numerous reports for MEP. The identified students need a more organized program structure and additional time to meet expected achievement goals.

Currently, WMS does not have a formal Gifted and Talented Program, to meet the needs of exceptional students, although each grade level offers a Math and English/Language Arts Honors Class for students. The criteria for the Honors classes include: teacher recommendation, student constructed responses, and a parent/student evaluation. WMS recognizes a need to re-establish a Gifted and Talented Program so that when the need arises, a program that accommodates the needs of these learners is in place. The plan needs to include the process and tools for identifying Gifted and Talented students. This area of focus must include consideration of the current best practices in instructional practices that serve to enhance learning for this population of students.

With respect to use of technology to support and enhance student learning, teachers create lessons and assignments which incorporate the use of Internet search engines and well as a range of available software and online applications. Computers are also utilized for research, publishing student projects, ePortfolios, and student assessment.

Emerging educational technology trends are researched and reviewed to augment the current paradigm. A technology committee, comprised of the principal, vice principal, community liaison, technology coach and technology coordinator, meets twice a month to address technology-related issues, resolve problems, and plan for future needs. Upgrades and enhancements are discussed and approved by the committee. Professional development is provided on an ongoing, as needed basis by the technology coach.

A current technology plan seeks to prepare students, faculty, and staff to be proficient users of current and future technologies, so they are empowered to be productive, contributing members of both the digital and analog worlds. Additionally, the long range plan seeks to incorporate current trends such as Cloud Computing and BYOD (Bring Your Own Device), and integrate the One to One computer initiative. While server infrastructure was recently upgraded, other infrastructure needs have been identified. A new five-year plan is being created to address and incorporate a range of ongoing needs to enhance technology throughout the campus.

How Assessment is Used

Teacher and student use of assessment is frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process. Assessment results are the basis for measurement of each student's progress toward

the expected school-wide learning results, are the basis for regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instruction, and are the basis for the allocation of resources. The variety of assessment methods used, from performance and project-based to traditional paper and pencil tests, allow student opportunities to appropriately demonstrate their learning.

Classroom observations and focus group meetings have revealed the need for school wide focus on formative assessment and other best practices in assessment. As was noted in many classrooms, there were many opportunities for teachers to assess student learning during the course of instruction. This would serve to provide additional opportunities for teacher gather student assessment data, as well as plan for adjustments to instruction when students are not learning as well as they might be. Additionally, it was noted that beyond posing individual questions, many teachers would also benefit from investigating techniques that would improve questioning and student response to questions.

WMS implements student portfolios. The current use of these portfolios is to: 1) show progress over time; 2) showcase exemplary student work based on benchmarks; or 3) provide a venue for student self-assessment and teacher assessment of mastery of the benchmarks. Portfolios are share with families. Eighth graders complete electronic exist portfolios that are shared with peers, teachers, family and community members.

In general, the school needs to be more organized with the use of assessments to prompt changes in both curriculum and instruction. Teachers meet in grade levels three days a week to discuss curriculum, data, and student concerns. Although the focus for each day is designated, the meetings need to be organized for greater efficiency and productivity. Teams would benefit from a format to facilitate dialogue and subsequently, make informed decisions about teaching and learning. Additionally, teams may need tools to evaluate curriculum, use data effectively, and assess student concerns.

Departments meet three to five times a year to discuss curriculum alignment, assessments, and data. In general, departments feel more time is needed to align the curriculum vertically, to effect a transition into the Common Core Standards. (Rec)

Reporting School Performance

The school utilizes letter grades as a grading scale; however, there is not a consistent grading system throughout the school. Some departments and teachers are utilize similar grading systems, but the commonality does not exist school wide. The school needs to adopt common practices for the calculation of grades. The consistency will help students to understand the process and meaning of grades within the system.

The focus on developing a grading system is also linked to using formative assessment to gather appropriate data to quantify student learning. In additional to the more traditional summative assessment, formative assessment serves to ensure that is a broader and deeper focus on the

measurement of student learning outcomes. As such, the reporting of student progress via grades, will also be enhanced.

Jupiter Grades, a web-based, online grading program has been adopted and is used by all teachers. Students, parents, teachers, and administrators have immediate access to grades. The program allows students and parents to check current grade and homework online at any time.

Reports cards and progress reports are sent home with students in their Tuesday Envelope, at the end of each quarter, and at mid-quarter.

Student portfolios are a means of sharing student progress. All grade levels construct a student portfolio, but it is not consistent through the three grade levels. With the adoption of the revised School Wide Learning Results, the portfolios will be aligned to demonstrate progress in meeting the IKAIR statements. Electronic portfolios have been identified as a possible student progress system that could showcase student growth across all grade levels. This would serve to provide a well-rounded evaluation system. The implementation of an ePortfolio system across the grade levels is a priority area of focus.

Student-led family conferences are held in the fall for all grade levels. During the conferences, students present their portfolios to their family members and work collaboratively with their teachers and families to set improvement goals. Eighth graders share their electronic portfolios with their families at the middle of the second quarter and at the end of the year for family members and selected community members.

Co-Curricular Programs

Students have opportunities to participate in various co-curricular activities, often occurring outside of the regular school day. Some courses that were once part of an elective or exploratory program are now offered through advisory and after school programs, along with other student activities. The activities include East Coast, 'Ike Hawai'i, K(Arts), Mala'ai Garden, Student Leadership, Yearbook Club, Middle School Athletics, and Robotics. This year a Leadership and Yearbook class were added back into the school day as part of the exploratory program and thus, offers students who are not on the Student Leadership Team and Yearbook Club opportunities to learn the related skills in a classroom context.

There are several additional programs that are adjunct to the regular program and serve to support student learning and achievement. During the school year, the after school, free Homework Help is offered to all students and includes a healthy snack and free bus transportation home. There are approximately 110 students, who comprise 39% of the student body, who currently participate in the program. Starting this year, Homework Help is offered to students before school to accommodate students who are unable to attend the after school program. There is a need for more teachers to support the program and to explore ways to maintain and facilitate student participation.

The summer Jump Start program originated with the idea of providing incoming 6th grade students and their families a chance to spend time getting to know some of the staff, as well as the campus and expectations prior to the beginning of school. Over the years the programs has expanded to include other grade levels. The summer program in 2013 focused on “empowering students with skills, values, and cultural understanding.” As such, the program combined a strong academic focus and skill-building with place-based experiences, including a weekly learning or service learning excursion. It was felt that the fourteen day program was too short and the program directors have recommended increasing the length of the program next summer.

The range of co-curricular/extracurricular activities allow students explore areas of growth and learning that are not normally found in the classroom. At the same time, the co-curricular context supports learning in an integrated fashion that serves to enhance the quality of student learning. In observing students in some of these learning environments, it is clear to see how the context of their learning has advanced. It must be noted that community/non-profit organizations and members, in addition to WMS staff, devote their time and energy to these various activities and the students who participate in these activities. The efforts that have been built and enhanced over time serve as a testament to the school and community working together to develop and enhance student learning in meaningful contexts.

The timing of various activities sometimes conflict and students must manage their time to balance their commitments. Transportation poses a problem for some students who would like to participate in programs but may not have rides home after school. A bus that takes Homework Help students home at a later hour on Tuesdays and Thursdays helps alleviate some transportation issues. There may be more student participation and exposure to additional programs if there were opportunities during the school day or the school had its own transportation vehicles.

Commendations for *The Secondary Program*

The Visiting Committee commends:

1. The faculty and staff for the ongoing work on aligning the curriculum with Common Core Standards. (self-study, p. 110-114; focus group meeting)
2. The school and its stakeholders for using the Waimea community as a context of learning that reflects and is aligned with the philosophy, beliefs, core values, and SWLR. (self-study, pp. 114-115; observations; conversations with administration and faculty; community and family meeting; LAP meeting)
3. The students for their efforts in utilizing portfolios, technology, and student-led conferences to share their learning along various dimensions that reflect their achievement over time. (self-study, pp. 116-122; focus group meetings)

portfolio/ePortfolio samples)

4. The faculty, staff, and departments for integrating learning with core values and School Wide Learning Results (SWLRs). (self-study, pp. 114-115; focus group meeting; classroom observations)
5. The school and its community partners, who individually and collectively help to create meaningful, relevant learning experiences that extend far beyond the classroom, to promote quality student learning and achievement. (self-study, pp. 129-130; focus group meetings; LAP meeting; community and family meeting)

Recommendations for *The Secondary Program*

The Visiting Committee recommends:

1. The administration and faculty focus on increasing student achievement to promote high quality learning for all students. (self study, pp. 37-40; focus group meetings; meetings with administration; The Secondary Program Evidence Binder)
2. The school and its leadership team, continue to develop and implement a RTI system, including the effective use of data, to be implemented in a school wide framework. (self-study, pp. 123-124; focus group meeting; classroom observations)
3. 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. (self-study, pp. 115-116; focus group meeting; classroom observations)
4. The administration, faculty, and staff, explore a range of formative, classroom-based assessments that would allow teachers to measure student learning and make appropriate adjustments to instruction. (self-study, pp. 116-121; classroom observations)
5. The administration, faculty, and staff continue to assess current and future technology needs, particularly those that support teaching and learning, and develop a technology plan that effectively reflects those needs. (self-study, pp. 132-133; focus group meetings; classroom observations)
6. The school, as a whole, work 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. (self-study, p. 124; classroom observations)

7. 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. (self-study, p. 110-129; classroom observations; teacher planning meetings)
8. The administration, faculty, and staff examine the needs of students in minority populations—ELL, Migrant Education, Gifted and Talented, etc.—to ensure that their special and unique learning needs are being appropriately addressed. (self-study, pp. 124-126; classroom observations)

Evidence about student learning for the self-study and visit that support these commendations and recommendations include:

- self-study report
- classroom observations
- focus group meetings
- meetings with administration
- individual dialogue with faculty, staff, students

Chapter 9: Residential Life

Waimea Middle School has no residential facilities for students.

Chapter 10: Library/Resource Center

Criterion: *The library's collection, facilities, staffing, and budget adequately support the philosophy, learning expectations, and programs of the school.*

WMS utilizes the Thelma Parker Memorial Library, a community-school library. Print and online materials are available to teachers and students and each class is provided with a \$1,000 budget to support classroom libraries. Teachers professional development materials are available in an articulation room. There was no indication of library skills being specifically taught as part of the regular curriculum.

Commendations for *Library/Resource Center*

The Visiting Committee commends:

1. The faculty and staff utilizing the community-school library. (self study, p. 137; focus group meeting)
2. The administration, faculty and staff for having online and print materials available on campus along with classroom libraries, which are supported with funding. (self study, p. 137; focus group meeting; observation)

Recommendations for *Library/Resource Center*

The Visiting Committee recommends:

1. The faculty and staff to develop a curriculum to train students on the ethical use of the internet if they use online resources as part of their school work. (self study, p. 137; focus groups; observation)
2. The administration, faculty, and staff consider ways to share resources throughout the school to enhance student access to appropriate learning materials. (self study, p. 137; focus groups; observation)

Evidence about student learning for the self-study and visit that support these commendations and recommendations include the following:

- self study
- focus groups
- observations

Chapter 11: The School Plant

Criterion: *The physical plant, facilities, and equipment enable the school personnel to effectively implement the school program and meet the learning expectations.*

Founded in 1912, Waimea Middle School campus is located in Kamuela on the Big Island and currently services 280 students in the 6th through 8th grade on 12.5 acres. The school was originally K-8 school but was separated into two campuses, Waimea Elementary School and Waimea Middle School, which operate next to each another and share a gym, field, cafeteria and community library. WMS manages operations of the gym facilities while WES manages operations of the cafeteria.

As a conversion charter school, facilities are still owned and maintained by the State Department of Education. WMS has exclusive use of 20 classrooms, an administration building, and a shop and a cottage building, which both serve as the additional office space for several staff members. Plans are currently underway to add a 9-classroom science building to expand the laboratory science experience of WMS students. The campus also houses a community farm, which brings in revenue and is a source of pride for both the school and the community.

Students did express that they would like to see a better quality field for playing on. They also said that “real” science rooms should be available to all grade levels, not only sixth graders who apparently used the only science lab. The development of plans for the new STEM building is timely as the emphasis on science and math in the curriculum is a nationwide trend. Students realize the importance of being able to learn through hands-on science experiments. They also realized that although they would not be able to use the new science building, other students would benefit from it and have better science experiences because of it.

Commendations for *The School Plant*

The Visiting Committee commends:

1. The school administration, custodians and safety committee for collaboratively working to maintain a clean campus and addressing safety concerns in a timely manner. (self study, pp. 144-145; focus group meeting)
2. The custodial staff for increasing their area of responsibility by taking over mowing and other maintenance responsibilities from the state facilities branch. (self-study, pp. 144-145; focus group meeting)

Recommendations for *The School Plant*

The Visiting Committee recommends:

1. The school administration, custodians and safety committee revise or refine safety protocols to improve annual evaluation rating in health and safety. (self study, p. 140; focus group meeting)
2. The school administration, custodians and safety committee improve the coordination of the shared facilities use with other entities to provide additional opportunities for community to access facilities when needed and expedited response to maintain shared areas such as the field. (self study, p. 140, 142; focus group meeting)

Evidence about student learning for the self-study and visit that support these commendations and recommendations include:

- self-study report
- focus group meetings

Chapter 12: Health and Safety

Criterion: *The members of the school community will pursue the school's mission and purpose in a safe, secure, and healthy environment.*

Waimea Middle School (WMS) actively promotes a safe, secure, and healthy environment for its students and staff. The school complies with applicable safety codes and statutes, and provides food on campus that meets or exceeds federal nutrient standards. The school's facility inspection team conducts an annual self-assessment that includes the grounds, buildings, equipment, sanitation, and health and safety. This report is then submitted for review to the complex area's Administrative Services Assistant (ASA).

The school has developed a Crisis Response Plan that outlines responses procedures to various crises. These procedures are distributed to faculty and staff at the beginning of each school year. Some staff have expressed a desire to receive more training regarding safety procedures, with lockdown and how-to-approach-a-stranger being specifically mentioned. A staff member recently went to school safety training offered by the Hawaii Department of Education and found it valuable. Based on this training, WMS will be updating its Safety Plan for next school year.

The school is in regular contact with other local schools, the complex area ASA, and local police and fire departments to coordinate earthquake, lockdown, and evacuation drills. The school conducts fire drills monthly. WMS recently changed the system faculty use to report staff and student attendance during an evacuation procedure. The new system has proved more efficient at quickly identifying if a student is missing.

WMS experienced two lockdowns during the 2012-2013 school year, during which faculty acted quickly and procedurally. However, these experiences did highlight a weakness in the school's preparation—a lack of lockdown kits. Now, all classrooms are outfitted with emergency kits that include duct tape, first aid supplies, water, snakes, and basic bathroom supplies. The safety committee is in the process of figuring out how to block windows and under doors in the case of an airborne threat.

WMS employs a health aide between the hours of 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. daily. The school will store and administer medication if the proper form is completed and signed by both the parents and physician. The Health Aide only stores and administers emergency medications such as inhalers or epi-pens. All other medication needs to be taken at home before or after school. All medication is stored in the Health Room under lock and key.

All faculty and staff are required to watch videos at the beginning of each year related to blood-borne pathogens, hazard communications, child abuse reporting, and other safety-related issues.

When going on a field trip, faculty receives a fully-loaded first aid kit. Several of the faculty is trained in first aid or CPR but this is not a school requirement. First aid and CPR training has been requested by several faculty members.

A new entry road into the campus has recently been opened. The road, and its one-way traffic pattern during student drop-off and pick-up hours, has provided a safer school environment. However, the school still experiences some safety concerns. Because the campus is in an area accessible to the community, individuals not-affiliated with the school occasionally walk through campus, despite posted signs prohibiting this. A recently added off-campus pathway has helped minimized this behavior.

Commendations for *Health and Safety*

The Visiting Committee commends:

1. The Safety Committee and administration for establishing comprehensive emergency plans and for working with local school, fire, and police departments to ensure the safety and security of students, staff and visitors. (self study, pp. 145-146; School Safety Handbook and Drills Procedure; School Safety/Emergency Plan; focus group meeting)
2. The administration and school community for working with Hawaii County, the Hawaii Department of Education, and state legislators to obtain a new entry road into the school, which has addressed many safety concerns, such as student drop-off and pick-up. (self study, p. 148, 150; focus group meeting)
3. The administration, faculty, and staff for conducting regular safety drills to ensure preparedness, and for reflecting on those drills to improve school procedures and preparedness measures, such as classroom emergency kits. (self study, pp. 145-149; School Safety Handbook and Drills Procedure; School Safety/Emergency Plan; focus group meeting)
4. The administration and faculty for providing healthy food options on campus and for integrating nutrition education into both the school's academic and wellness curriculum. (self study, p. 149; focus group meeting)

Recommendations for *Health and Safety*

The Visiting Committee recommends:

1. The administration and Safety Committee assess both the need and desire of faculty and staff to receive basic first aid and CPR training, and to provide support to those individuals who need to, or who would like to, be trained. (self study, p. 149; focus

group meeting)

2. The Safety Committee and administration address the school's lack of approved policies and procedures related to an airborne threat in its Lockdown Plan. (self study, p. 146; Health and Safety Evidence Binder; focus group meeting)

Evidence about student learning for the self-study and visit that support these commendations include:

- self study
- Health and Safety evidence binder
- focus group meeting

Major Commendations

The Visiting Committee commends:

1. The Board and the Executive Director for developing and implementing a strategic plan and revised organizational structure to guide the future work of the school. (self study, p. 18; focus group meeting)
2. The Administration and Board for supporting the financial strength of the school through the development of a healthy operating reserve fund. (self study, pp. 27-28; Finance Evidence Binder; focus group meeting)
3. The faculty and staff for their dedication to student learning as evidenced by their involvement in co-curricular and special programs, their participation in important school decisions, and their willingness to overlap roles and work beyond the required hours to ensure the job is done. (self study, pp. 49-55; focus group meetings; conversations with students, parents, teachers and support staff; observation)
4. The administration, faculty, and staff for providing a safe, nurturing environment where students can focus on their learning. (focus group meetings; LAP meeting; conversations with administration, teachers, parents, students and support staff; observation)
5. The students for embracing school wide core values and demonstrating them in their relationships with staff, other students, and community. (self study, pp. 76-78; focus group meetings; observation)
6. The administration and staff for assuring that school wide core values are made an integral part of student orientation, staff/student relationship building and student/family support. (self study, pp. 76-78; focus group meetings; observations; conversations with staff and students)
7. The administration, faculty and staff for providing many volunteer opportunities for parents and community members to offer their talents and skills to support the school and become involved. (self study, pp. 92-92, 97-98; focus group)
8. The school and its community partners, who individually and collectively help to create meaningful, relevant learning experiences that extend far beyond the classroom, to promote quality student learning and achievement. (self study, pp. 129-130; focus group meetings; LAP meeting; community and family meeting)

Major Recommendations: (Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-up)

The Visiting Committee recommends:

1. The administration, Board, and HC Staff work toward the preparation and administration of a sustainable budget. (self study, p. 27; Finance evidence binder; focus group meeting)
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. (self study, pp. 35-40; focus group meeting)
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. (self study pp. 81-84; focus group meeting; classroom observations)
4. The school and its leadership team, continue to develop and implement a RTI system, including the effective use of data, to be implemented in a school wide framework. (self study, pp. 123-124; focus group meeting; classroom observations)
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. (self study, pp. 115-116; focus group meeting; classroom observations)
6. The administration, faculty, and staff, explore a range of formative, classroom-based assessments that would allow teachers to measure student learning and make appropriate adjustments to instruction. (self study, pp. 116-121; classroom observations)
7. The school as a whole work 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. (self study, p. 124; classroom observations)
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. (self-study, p. 110-129; classroom observations; teacher planning meetings)

Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

Criterion: *From this evaluation process and self-study, a plan of action will be developed which reflects the school's expectation, possibly recommendations from previous evaluations and/or existing long range/strategic plans. This plan is to address the major areas of improvement identified through the self study and accreditation process and to monitor their implementation.*

Existing factors that support school improvement

The accreditation self-study and visit highlighted the following factors that will continue to support the processes of continuous school improvement:

- The clear, consistent commitment of the entire school community to utilize the accreditation process to attain the larger goals of continuous school improvement.
- Administration, faculty, staff who provide a caring, nurturing, learning environment and genuinely care for and about youth.
- Administration and a leadership team that are committed to engaging in an inclusive process to facilitate meaningful and sustainable change.
- Strong community partnerships and consistent support from parents, families, and members of the community.
- Administration and staff who are committed to building leadership structures among faculty and staff, in order to attend to the critical areas of focus defined by the accreditation process and other related areas of school improvement.

Impediments to school improvement that the school will need to overcome in order to accomplish any of the action plan sections

Rather than impediments, the team acknowledges the following of areas of growth that will serve to support the processes of school improvement:

- Improvement in communication structures across all stakeholder groups, particularly those that support school improvement, sustainable change, and optimal student learning and achievement outcomes.
- The need to focus on building relationships, trust, and other elements of a strong, positive school culture that support change and school improvement.
- The time and attention necessary to enhance professional learning among all instructional staff, particularly in areas related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Developing a comprehensive plan to ensure long-term financial stability, that may continue to enhance the current levels of resources that support school improvement

Soundness of follow-up process to monitor accomplishment of school wide action plan

While many exist, the team has identified the following as foundational in monitoring the progress and accomplishment of the school wide action plan.

- The ability and commitment of current leadership, the school, and its community to utilize accreditation as an ongoing school improvement process.
- Continuing to build distributed leadership throughout the organization to ensure broad participation in all dimensions of the school improvement process.
- Additionally, since the initial visit, the entire school community and its key stakeholders have engaged in the development of a school wide action plan. As the plan is revised and adjusted to reflect new indicators from this report, there is also a commitment to developing a system of accountability and monitoring to ensure the achievement of defined benchmarks and goals embedded in the school wide action plan.