

MID-CYCLE VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

FOR

DEVELOPING VIRTUE SECONDARY SCHOOL

**2001 Talmage Road
Ukiah, CA 95482**

April 7, 2016

Visiting Committee Members

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Mid-Cycle Visiting Committee Report

I. Introduction

Developing Virtue Secondary School (DVSS) was established in 1981 by Buddhist Triptaka Master Hsuan Hua. The school is on the grounds of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB), a 488 acre Buddhist monastery and international community in the rural outskirts of Ukiah.

DVSS operates within a community that is an ideal environment for fellowship and study. The practice of boys and girls being educated and housed separately continues following that philosophy that it creates an environment conducive to academic and personal growth. Some of the facilities, such as the main ceremonial hall, community kitchen and dining hall, and Daoyuan Lecture Hall, are shared with the community. The boys and girls schools each have their own library and computer labs, athletic fields and basketball courts. They share a science lab and a visual and performing arts complex.

The DVSS and the 2013 WASC Visiting Committee identified critical areas for follow-up in the action plan. The critical area and progress is synthesized below.

A1. Implementation of action plan school-wide for management of effective school development

The leadership team meets bi-monthly to discuss action plan progress. The team has organized in-service training for students, created a teacher orientation packet project, faculty/parent/student handbooks, coordinated teacher mentoring, and implemented service learning in the extended community. School improvement has been made in collecting and analyzing data from student test scores to improve performance, curriculum, pedagogy, and school environment. The school has also established a process for teachers to request paid time for collaboration. Progress evidenced by school leadership resume, Dominican University Alumni PR, College PSAT Data 2013-2016.

A2. Continued development and implementation of recruiting, mentoring, supporting, and retaining volunteers to enhance a stable faculty

The school has developed a new teacher orientation packet and mentoring program. A formal survey is being developed in 2015-2016 to gather feedback from new teachers. Progress evidenced by New Teacher Orientation Packet, Mentoring Logs and Teacher Reflections, and BTSA Reflections.

A3. Further improvements to science laboratory and library research resources in order to align with the school's goals of improving students' knowledge and learning

The school has hired two credentialed science teachers and procured a mobile lab station for chemistry and biology experiments. The school purchased new equipment, instrumentation, and created a mini- science library, which led to students participating in local science fairs. The media center in both the girls and boys division have been updated to include better access to reference materials, computers/DVD players. Students are now able to obtain library cards from two separate public libraries. The school continues to focus on technology updates and have recently hired an IT coordinator to upgrade technology and infrastructure. Progress evidenced by AP Science PD Certificate, Science Fair, Student and Teacher Patron List, IT/Technology Coordinator Resume.

A4. Improve systems for communication with all stakeholder groups

The school has been more consistent in inviting parents, staff and other stakeholders to school reviews. There has been an increase in feedback opportunities for staff and faculty through staff meetings and students are able to view information on the school website. Progress evidenced by PTO Minutes, PTO WASC Action Item Presentation, www.igdvs.org. Additionally, student council meetings are held weekly and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting held monthly.

A5. Establish volunteer substitute teacher list for office staff to improve effectiveness in the classroom

The school has set up a substitute teacher list, a process to request a substitute, and a substitute request form. Progress evidenced by substitute list.

B1. Plan, support, develop, and align curriculum conducive to the students' academic and character development

Teachers have participated in in-services to learn about the common core standards and how to implement them in their teaching. The focus has been on writing, listening and speaking, and reading standards. ESLR achievement has been measured by student's work collected in binders. An ESLR committee assessed the student binders and determined proficiency in certain areas and inconclusive results in others, which require additional training and discussion. Assistance for struggling students include tutoring from staff and peers and a student tutoring survey. Progress evidenced by In-Service agenda, CCSS/ELA and math student work and lesson plans, ESLR binder and meeting summary, Memo on revised ESLR binder plan, ESLR rubric, Peer Tutor forms, tutoring schedule and survey.

B2. Providing teacher professional development and on-going instructional assistance needed in correlation to CCSS and ESLR's to ensure that teachers are making necessary changes to improve student learning

Teachers have participated in off-site trainings, professional developments, assessment training, and Common Core training in English Language Arts. Increased Common Core

Standard implementation will occur after training in core areas. Progress evidenced by PD Expenditure, CCSS Math Presentation PPT, Math Units, MARS Assessment, CCSS Math Implementation Plan, Tutoring Protocol Teacher Reflection, In-Service Agenda, and PLC Meeting Minutes.

B3. Increase the assessment of teacher and staff professional development in order to provide intellectual academic and personal growth of teachers and staff

DVSS believes this area needs additional attention. The school leadership conducted a review of teacher and staff professional development and collaboration and determined that there needs to be more consistency in sharing the findings. A teacher evaluation was developed and implemented which increased teacher awareness of professionalism. Progress evidenced by Teacher Professional Development Binder, In-Service Survey and feedback, Course Evaluation, Teacher Evaluation Forms, Professional Biography of Teacher Evaluators, and Teacher Evaluation Summary Yearly Report.

C1. Improve student services, activities, and opportunities that support student learning and achievement of ESLRs

The career exploration action plan was revised to include career exploration planning and implementation by a retired college counselor. Implementation includes career panels, workshops, individual meetings, and student surveys. New student services were developed to help students with study skills, test anxiety, and stress. Progress evidenced by Student Work, Student Survey Form.

C2. Increase student involvement in community services for students to appreciate different cultures and religions, and discover real-world applications of what is taught in the classroom

DVSS provides students with opportunities for community service that include community cleanup and translations of religious texts. The school has increased its outreach to the Ukiah community by becoming involved in the Arbor Coalition which helps struggling youth. Progress evidenced by UDJ Newspaper Article and www.igdvs.org.

D1. Create a unified development plan to support the school's goal and future growth

The school created a development plan that includes school growth and financial sustainability, facilities development, and curriculum development. A five year plan was developed to meet the school's financial needs which includes a fundraising committee. A facilities committee has made upgrades to science facilities, girls' restrooms, and landscaping. Science has been the recent focus on curriculum improvements. Progress evidenced by Five-year Development Plan.

II. Progress on Critical Areas for Follow up/Schoolwide Action Plan

Throughout the visiting committee mid-cycle site visit, the DVSS has made significant progress to include the following:

1. Carrying forward the need to improve technology infrastructure and student/teacher exposure to technology: Progress includes newly hired IT coordinator to upgrade technology and infrastructure and plan to hire an additional IT coordinator over the next three years.
2. Carrying forward the need to incorporate ELL interventions and assessments across grade levels in regards to vocabulary to support ESL students: Progress includes teachers participating in professional development in English Language Learners. Additionally, the visiting committee found evidence that EL students were not only no impacted by the lack on interventions or assessments, but actually excelled in relation to their non EL peers in class.
3. Establish teacher and volunteer instructor assessment: Progress includes the establishment and development of teacher orientation packet and mentoring program. A teacher evaluation was developed and implemented to increase their awareness of professionalism. The DVSS has established a process where teachers are pre-evaluated, observed in a lesson plan, and evaluated by several external consultants that are experience in teacher evaluations.

III. Commendation and Recommendations:

A. Commendations:

- a. The DVSS has made significant improvements in college and career counseling for student preparation in post-secondary education.
- b. The DVSS has made additions to the science department's staff now to include long term faculty.
- c. The DVSS establishment has increased their local and international outreach by increasing community involvement and number of international students enrolled.
- d. The DVSS has increased in state and global scores to include AP, PSAT, SAT, ACT, and NMSQT.

B. Recommendations:

- a. The visiting committee recommends to continue to develop additional teacher evaluations to increase support for teacher improvement.
- b. The visiting committee recommends to continue to implement California Common Core Standards and begin researching appropriate curricula to match the needs for the student population and school goals.