

# The Sage School: Accreditation Status

- The Visitation Committee came last January read our 200+ page report; met with staff, students, faculty, parents, and board members; and has presented their findings to the NWAIS Accreditation Committee.
- The committee decided that the school will remain a 'Candidate School' (not fully accredited) for at least the next 2 years. We have been given tasks to work on to gain full accreditation.
- The school has received a list of our conditions, which we will review next in this presentation, but also a 38 page report from the team that came to visit us in January.
- The 38 page report contains statements that address areas where we are doing well (commendations), areas that we will need to consider developing (recommendations), and areas where they have some ideas for us to improve if we choose to take them (suggestions).
- The 38 page report will be available in the parent portal section of the school website, along with this powerpoint

# Conditions

The Sage School received 3 Conditions on our accreditation. We need to respond- give a written report with our progress and plan- to those on a certain timeframe, and then we will get a 'mini visit' from NWAIS. They will evaluate our progress, and the accreditation committee will review it in order to determine if we have met the condition.

# First Condition- respond by August 2018

- “The school immediately develop policies and take steps to ensure the safety of students engaged in homestay program while abroad.”
- Our Comments and notes right now:
- We don't have policies for homestays, but have worked closely with our 'in country' resources to pay attention to student safety as a top priority- students bring cell phones, they stay with families we know and have relationships with, etc.
- In our general approach to Field Studies, we explicitly state that we 'hire out' liability for high risk activities such as rock climbing and white water rafting. We haven't done that for homestays due to lack of availability.
- We are currently looking into other options for the trip- Do we not do homestays? Can we hire a group that will manage that for us? Do we send Sara to Ecuador ahead of time to do more work with homestay families?

## Second Condition: by August of 2019

- “The school develop a long-range financial plan that includes adequate oversight and checks and balances, as well as an articulated plan for the physical plant.”
- Our Comments and notes right now:
- These are tasks that the board has been working on, and has presented information to the committee about. We are working on finding out, more precisely, where the inadequacies of our planning lie.

# Third Condition: also by Aug 2019

- “The school devise and begin implementing a sustainable plan for an administrative structure that can support the mission of the school now and into the future.”
- Our Comments and notes right now:
- The school intentionally avoided a ‘traditional’ administrative structure in favor of a more ‘flat’ administrative structure with teachers more fully engaged and responsible for administrative functions within the school. Currently, with this feedback, we are looking at what administrative roles do require a full time position and which can be shared effectively.
- We have already shifted our Head of School out of a teaching position.
- We may develop other full time positions, or lessen teaching loads for certain administrative roles (we did that for our Admission Director and College Counselor this year)

# Major Commendations from our Visiting Committee Report

1. The extraordinary manner in which the faculty own the execution of the mission of the school, every day in every corner of the classroom, and in furthering the vision of possibilities for Sage School.
2. The love, care, responsibility and ownership the students take for their school community, and the work and learning they do.
3. The vision, drive, and execution of the enormous work completed by the founders to bring the dream of The Sage School to healthy and vibrant life.
4. The dedicated work and stewardship of the Board of Trustees to help grow and carefully attend to the health of this young educational enterprise, even as they expertly balance supporting a truly visionary Head with the pragmatics of important fiduciary duty.

# Major Commendations, cont'd

5. The School for the creation of an exemplary Diversity Statement that demonstrates its intention to create a culture of inclusion.
6. The founders and faculty for their development of a cohesive philosophy of teaching and learning, grounded in rich study and understanding of the developmental stage of adolescence.
7. The entire school community for embracing and embodying the spirit of the Self Study and accreditation process

# Major Recommendations- we have 3 years to respond to them

1. The School re-evaluate the evaluation and compensation systems to both grow pedagogical skills and to better recruit, train, and retain well-qualified faculty
2. The school develops goals and measures for progress that prioritize actively pursuing the vision articulated in its Diversity Statement to 'expose students, faculty and staff to a wide range of ideas, experiences and cultures, examining and challenging preconceptions'
3. The Board take the steps necessary to revise its Long-Range Financial Plan to ensure it more accurately supports the school's evolving strategic plan, articulates their understanding of the real financial costs of its strategic goals, and includes realistic sources of revenue for funding.
4. The Board consider creating a Board Growth/Development plan to systematically lay out the areas of growth that includes a Leadership Succession Plan, and develop a timeline and plan for achieving it.

Table showing the number of commendations, recommendations, and suggestions for each of the 21 sections of our Self Study.

	Commendations	Recommendations	Suggestions
Process	5	2	0
Mission	3	1	2
Overall Program	7	4	1
Human Ecology	4	0	2
Writing	3	0	0
Spanish	3	3	4
Math	3	2	1
Field Studies	3	3	3
Community Action	3	3	2
Creativity Workshop	3	2	1
Wellness	3	0	1
School Culture	3	1	1
Diversity	2	2	2
Institutional Leadership	4	3	0
Finance	2	3	1
Administration	2	3	0
Institutional Advancement	2	3	0
Enrollment Management	2	2	0
Human Resources	3	3	2
Physical Plant	1	0	0
Health and Safety	3	5	3
Total	64	45	26

# Sampling of Commendations:

- (Program) An approach to teaching that is organic, messy, student-driven--all highly facilitative of adolescent learning and development.
- (Program) Helping create students who leave The Sage School well prepared to live purposeful, healthy and constructive lives as a result of the strong foundation they receive at school.
- (Creativity Workshop) Engaging community experts working in a variety of fields to help instruct students, provide mentorship, and strengthen student and school connection to the greater community
- (Finance) Its sound financial management though the first nine years which has resulted in positive financial operations every year and a strong cash position
- (HR) The creative, inclusive, collegial approach the faculty uses to reflect on their practice, share their strategies and teaching methodologies with one another, and engage in frequent discussions about how they can improve their collaborative efforts.

# Sampling of Recommendations

- (Spanish) Identify and pursue opportunities to engage with the local Latino community in order to provide students with interactions with native speakers to enhance students' cultural competency and exposure to diverse perspectives.
- (Field Studies) Develop a specific administrative position to oversee the Field Studies Program.
- (Institutional Leadership) The Board continue its work in developing a functional evaluation tool for the Head of School.
- (Administration) Consider exploring a shift in the number of teachers on a teaching team, in order to allocate more time for faculty to focus on support or administrative duties
- (Health and Safety) Provide a driver training for all staff members in advance of the school year, including use and management of trailers

# Sampling of Suggestions

- (Mission) Continue its exploration of the distinction between its own mission and the missions of local schools, so as to best define the niche of Sage in its market.
- (Field Studies) Identify and collaborate with a physician advisor (or other medical professional) who can help develop medical screening practices and procedures when reviewing student medical and health information in advance of the Field Studies Program.
- (Culture) Consider new ways to enculturate families new to the community.
- (HR) Consider turning the first year teacher experience into a formal training program where these teachers are 'resident' or 'student' teachers with a different salary scale.