



**Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC)
and
Conference of Educational Administrators of
Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD)**

**REPORT ON THE
ACCREDITATION RE-VISIT**

OF THE

WASHINGTON SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

**VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON
February 16, 2011**



Northwest Accreditation Commission and Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf

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INTRODUCTION

The following report is in response to the validation re-visit made by the NWAC and CEASD chairpersons on February 16, 2011 to the Washington School for the Deaf (WSD). WSD provided a written report of the actions taken to address each of the recommendations made by the two organizations in May, 2008. On February 16, 2011, the chairpersons of NWAC and CEASD made a re-visit to WSD and had a tour of the school and conducted interviews with administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents, the Deaf Community, and the WSD Board of Trustees.

On May 11-14, 2008 Washington School for the Deaf (WSD) hosted a Validation Team visit by the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) which is now known as the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) and the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD). At the conclusion of that visit, the teams delivered a recommendation for a review by NAAS and Provisional Accreditation for WSD to the NAAS Board and CEASD Accreditation Committee. The teams recommended that in order for WSD to be granted non-review status by NAAS and Full Accreditation status by CEASD, the school must produce evidence that the following three conditions are met at any time within three years of the date of the initial site visit:

- Provide evidence of stabilization of the program including increasing communication with stakeholders,
- Provide evidence of attention to the teaching and learning environment with emphasis on curriculum and assessment, and
- Provide evidence that the media center including the library and technology area is expanded.

SECTION ONE: LEADERSHIP AND INTERNAL/EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION

NARRATIVE

WSD is committed to providing a stable leadership team for the students at WSD and for all students who are deaf and hard of hearing in the state of Washington. In interviews with the leadership team, it was evident that there has been a strong commitment to meeting on a regular basis to assure that there is an opportunity for shared decision making.

When the WSD Leadership Team institutes a new program at the school, they set a goal of making the new program sustainable. They have identified areas where more support is needed and are providing that support.

The WSD Leadership team has strengthened its performance evaluations for teachers and described performance evaluations that are now based on teaching and learning and include a reflective statement written by the teacher to detail how student learning is occurring in the classroom based on assessment data.

WSD is administered by a Board of Trustees who works closely with the Leadership Team to assure the students receive excellent opportunities in the instructional realm. The Board receives reports from the Leadership Team on student assessment results.

WSD set a goal of increasing communication with Stakeholders. They use e-mail to alert stakeholders of events and publish a monthly newsletter. Both parents and members of the Deaf community reported that they have seen an improvement in WSD communicating with their stakeholders on an on-going basis. They reported that the Family Academic Night is outstanding and that they would like to see more events like this for families. Parents indicated that they were disappointed that the Shared Reading Project was eliminated because of funding.

COMMENDATIONS

- WSD is to be commended for its Leadership Team establishing a clear vision and involving staff in the decision making process.
- WSD is to be commended for establishing an intentional professional development model that is ongoing and reflective and facilitated by the 90 minute late start Wednesdays.
- WSD is to be commended for solidifying relationships/partnerships with other state and private agencies to better serve all children who are deaf and hard of hearing throughout the state.
- The leadership of WSD is to be commended for attempting to limit teacher preparations to two subjects per teacher whenever possible.
- The WSD Board of Trustees, the Leadership Team, and Staff are to be commended for working creatively to maximize use of existing resources, i.e., financial, time, facilities, and etc.
- The WSD Leadership Team is to be commended for including reflection on curriculum alignment as part of the annual performance evaluation of teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that the WSD Leadership Team utilize Professional Learning Communities to impact the teaching and learning culture and as part of that process complete a Book Study of *Learning by Doing* by Dufour.
- It is recommended that WSD establish a formalized mentoring system to include teachers, para professionals, and related service staff.
- It is recommended that WSD continue to revise, evaluate, and monitor their strategic planning document with a high level of collaboration of all stakeholders.
- It is recommended that the WSD Leadership Team continue their journey to changing the culture and make this the forefront of the school's mission.
- It is recommended that WSD continue to provide programs for families that assist them in communicating with their children.

SECTION TWO: TEACHING AND LEARNING

NARRATIVE

The Leadership Team discussed WSD's commitment to protecting instructional time and to assure that everything presented in academic instruction is intentional. When touring the school, teachers were observed to be teaching bell to bell and to be using a variety of strategies and techniques leading to student learning. In addition to observing classroom instruction from preschool through high school levels, the team also observed a special event in the library.

The teaching, administrative, and related service staff experienced a strong professional development program. WSD participates in the ASL English Bilingual Professional Development (AEBPD) program as a partner with Gallaudet University. Staff read articles on the bilingual approach, write reflective papers on the articles, and meet with mentors who lead discussions about bilingual instruction. WSD staff attended in-service workshops on a variety of other subjects such as using assessment to drive instruction, how to use the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment program, writing IEPs, etc.

WSD teachers are involved in Curriculum Mapping. They were first trained on the process and then provided a plan to complete the Curriculum Mapping process over a specified time period.

Teachers reported how they use assessment to drive instruction. They are using both formative and summative evaluations in their classrooms and also rely on diagnostic tests provided by support staff to guide instruction. In interviews with students, the students reported that they felt their classes were challenging. Students who have attended WSD for a number of years reported that they have seen more rigor in their classes in the past several years.

COMMENDATIONS

- WSD is to be commended for implementing the MAP assessment program and using it to assist in designing instruction.
- WSD is to be commended for using the diagnostic tests given as part of the IEP process to drive instruction.
- WSD is to be commended for implementing the ASL English Bilingual Professional Development (AEBPD) program, involving teaching staff, administrative staff, and related services staff, and committing time to the project.
- WSD is to be commended for protecting instructional time by instituting a seven period day and a Friday schedule which takes into account classes missed during the late start Wednesdays.
- WSD is to be commended for providing intentional attention to best practices including bell to bell teaching, systematic walk throughs, and specific support to teachers and support staff.
- The WSD Staff is to be commended for integrating technology into daily instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that all staff members investigate Standards Based Grading in the body of work by Ken O'Connor.
- It is recommended that Staff visit other schools and observe classes in regular education to research best practices throughout the state and region.
- It is recommended that staff research the effectiveness of SSR in relations to the commitment of using instructional time to the most advantage and to consider if SSR would be a better use of time in the residential program?
- It is recommended that teachers continue to receive hands on instruction on the use of Smart boards in the classroom as more Smart boards are installed in classrooms.

SECTION THREE: MEDIA SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY

NARRATIVE

WSD has expanded its library program. It now employs a full time librarian that provides a variety of programs for the students such as Accelerated Reader, writing and publishing a novel, etc. The elementary and middle school students participate in weekly assigned library times and the high school students attend as needed.

WSD developed a five year plan to increase technology available at the school and to train staff on how to use the technology in instruction. WSD has one full time IT staff person and a teacher who is assigned two periods a day to work specifically with teachers in integrating technology into their lessons. Teachers were also given the opportunity to decide what kinds of computers they felt would best meet the students' academic goals in the subjects they taught. Some teachers chose PCs and others chose Macs

Ten classrooms now have Smart Boards. Teachers applied to have a Smart Board assigned to their classroom by writing a paper explaining how the Smart Board would be used in the classroom. The computers in the classrooms are new or relatively new. On a tour of the school, teachers and students were engaged in learning using the Smart Boards and some classes were using PCs and others were using MACs. WSD has applied for a grant that would provide fifteen additional Smart Boards at WSD.

WSD recently implemented the on-line CISCO Social Studies curriculum. This program will provide authentic resources and is collaborative in nature.

COMMENDATIONS

- WSD is to be commended for re-instituting a comprehensive library program staffed full-time.
- WSD is to be commended for expanding the hardware and software available in its program.
- WSD is to be commended for making excellent strides in implementing cutting edge technology at the school, i.e., new computers, Macs and PCs, Smart Boards, Elmos, and robotics.
- WSD is to be commended for providing initial and on-going training in implementing technology into instruction and the use of technology.
- WSD is to be commended for providing staff support for teachers on how to use Smart Boards and other technology and specialized software in the classroom.
- WSD is to be commended for implementing the on-line CISCO Social Studies curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that in view of the existing economic conditions, future purchases for both hardware and software reflect prudent decisions regarding how the purchase(s) will impact instruction.
- It is recommended that WSD continue to expand the quantity and quality of the use of technology and in addition, continue training and in-service opportunities for all staff.
- It is recommended that WSD improve its website and provide additional information about events at the school on the website as this was a need expressed by parents.
- It is recommended that WSD research the problem parents are experiencing in receiving e-mails from the school.
- It is recommended that WSD expand the Career and Technical Career Opportunities and Counseling for students.
- It is recommended that WSD expand the band width at the school to provide better reception for video phones and other technology.

Summary

The chairperson of the NWAC accreditation team recommended full accreditation status which will be acted upon by the Board of NWAC.

The chairperson of the CEASD accreditation team delivered a recommendation for full accreditation for WSD to the CEASD Accreditation Committee. This recommendation will be acted upon at the next regularly scheduled CEASD Board Meeting.

We congratulate WSD for their commitment to school improvement and the accomplishments they have met so far in the NWAC and CEASD process. We wish WSD much success in their continual work in implementing their comprehensive school improvement plan and hope that our recommendations will be helpful in ensuring a positive future for WSD.