



MARANATHA CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

A SUMMARY OF OUR RE-VISIT COMMITTEE REPORT

For

MARANATHA CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

9050 Maranatha Drive
San Diego, CA 92127

February 28-29, 2016

VISITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Prepared for the accreditation commissions of the
ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL
and the
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Introduction

Maranatha Christian School was well prepared for the mid-term visit. The school board, administration, faculty and staff have been actively addressing the recommendations of the previous committee since our visit three years ago. The changes in administration have taken place without issue because all of the current administration were part of the previous administration and/or staff in other capacities. The change in administration was driven primarily by administrative staff choosing to accept other professional opportunities, rather than because of issues within the school structure.

It is clear in their report that the school tackled the recommendations left by the visiting committee in 2011 immediately and with directed purpose. The report was not put on a shelf and pulled out as the mid-term visit approached. Changes and improvements have been driven intrinsically by an attitude of desiring to serve the school community as effectively as possible rather than by extrinsic motivation from an outside source.

The Follow-up Process

The follow-up committee is made up of several key staff members who led the school by serving on the steering committee during the 2013 accreditation process. Each division of Maranatha Christian Schools is represented by the members listed below. They have played an active role in the achievement of the action plan presented by the 2013 accreditation committee.

Follow-up Committee Selection

The follow-up committee is made up of several key staff members who led the school by serving on the steering committee during the 2013 accreditation process.

Follow-up Committee Members

Pete Plotnik, High School Principal
Bryce Forrester, Junior High Principal
Mary Cook, Elementary Principal
Patrice Andrews, Early Education Principal
Autumn Gray, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Lydia Clark, Junior High Teacher

Major Changes since the March 2013 Visit

Maranatha Christian Schools has experienced significant change and growth since our 2013 visit. In focusing on the four major recommendations from the visiting committee, and in continuing to strive to fulfill their mission, Maranatha has implemented the following major changes:

Academics

To meet the growing demands of a strong STEAM program, the preschool and kindergarten have integrated the Lego engineering curriculum. In 2014 the elementary classes all selected STEAM experiments and displayed them at open house in conjunction with the junior high science fair. Both elementary and junior high programs started robotics clubs which are now competing locally, and the school is seeking co-curricular activities for students to attend, such as the Qualcomm think-a-bit lab and hour-of-code.

Following the established MCS curriculum review cycle the school evaluated, analyzed and selected new language arts and social studies curriculum with the goal to improve critical thinking and writing skills. Student performance and testing scores have both improved.

The preschool and elementary programs brought in a speech therapist and a reading specialist to offer the option of speech therapy and reading recovery as a contracted service for students who need additional support.

In response to community request, Maranatha high school began a PSP program which offers students the option of homeschooling under the umbrella of MCS. These students have the opportunity to take specific classes on campus and participate in extra-curricular activities. A junior high program is currently in the planning stage.

The high school now offers 14 advanced placement courses. Since the time of the last visit, AP Government, AP Chemistry, and another AP Studio Arts class have been added to the schedule. Maranatha also boasts an 89% pass rate on AP exams. All high school classes are now UC approved.

This year Maranatha has dedicated time and resources to train staff on biblical contextualization throughout all subjects. This is being achieved through Dr. Christian Overman's *Worldview Matters* seminars where staff have received practical tools and resources to help integrate God's Word into the curriculum and to instruct through a Biblical worldview.

Arts

In 2013 Maranatha hired a music teacher for band/orchestra. Instrumental music is now taught in grades 5-12. Performances have been added to the schedule and take place at Maranatha Chapel and at special school events.

A drumline and pep band called "The Pulse" has been added to the music program. These students now perform at pep rallies and football games.

A Christmas caroling group, whose main focus is evangelism, has expanded their performance schedule. This group is open to junior high and high school students and performs at community events, nursing homes and churches.

This year Maranatha added a fall musical to the elementary and junior high programs. Their intent for this program is to develop performing arts skills at a younger age and provide opportunities for lead roles to younger students.

Maranatha built a pottery studio for use in the art program. Now all elementary and junior high students complete a pottery project each year. High school has added an after school ceramics club.

This school year Maranatha added a UC approved video editing class. The class is working with the ASB on promotional videos for school events.

A high school contemporary music/worship team has been added. They perform at chapels and school events and hope to add community outreaches and youth group performances to their schedule.

Athletics

Maranatha athletics has experienced significant growth in the last three years. As enrollment has increased, so has the size and quality of the athletic program.

The high school football program has moved from an 8-man to an 11-man team. Student involvement in this program has allowed the addition of a JV football program. Temporary lights have been added to the field allowing for games on Friday nights.

The high school soccer program has experienced success as league champs and has added a junior varsity team.

The school now offers athletic physical education, allowing students to work on general athletic skills and individual sports skills in addition to regular practice times.

At the junior high level 78% of the students participate in sports. The school has added developmental teams to provide for this increased interest and to teach foundational skills.

Progress on Action Items

Action Item 1.0

That the school board and administration continue with the development and implementation of a master and strategic plan that includes marketing, facilities, budget and the establishment of an advancement office, defining financial and facility goals in accordance with the mission of the school.

Commendations:

The committee commends:

1. The school board and administration for developing a formal three-year strategic plan through the hiring of a seasoned consultant, and the development of 20-member steering committee that includes representatives from all segments of the school community, allowing the school to move forward in a planned and organized way increasing the likelihood of success as they move toward their preferred future.
2. The school board and administration the reorganization of the marketing and development departments, including the hiring of a development coordinator, allowing the school to move forward in a better planned and more organized manner.
3. The school board and administration for the development of a detailed plan for the construction of a new 20,000 square foot building, funded through a planned 3-year capital campaign, to better serve the high school program.

Recommendations:

The committee recommends:

1. That the school board, with input from appropriate segments of the school community, continue to modify the strategic plan as needed, and make appropriate adjustments that will allow the school to continue serving effectively as the school continues to move towards its preferred future.

Action Item 2.0

That the school board, administration and faculty generate and then execute a comprehensive technology plan that creates an infrastructure capable of supporting an advanced and ever increasing technology program and will allow for the implementation of digital curriculum and digital citizenship and will include instruction as needed to allow faculty and staff to take advantage of technological advances.

Commendations:

The committee commends:

1. The School Board, administration, faculty and staff for aggressively addressing the now never-ending need to up-grade all areas of technology, thus facilitating a large variety of school operational functions and increasing student growth in the area of technology which is so important in today's world.
2. The school board and administration for the addition of two iPad carts with 30 iPads each now being used by the elementary and junior high programs, facilitating the use of technology by students.
3. The school board, administration and faculty for moving the entire high school to iPads, allowing digital curriculum to be available in every class.
4. The school board and administration for the addition of a new server, providing additional support for the expanding and increased use of technology.
5. The school board and administration for the addition of the edTech position, facilitating the great variety of technologies needed to help the school function well.
6. The school board and administration for the expansion of computer instruction at both the junior high and high school levels, allowing for students to grow in needed computer skills

Recommendations:

The committee recommends:

1. That the School Board, administration, and school community continue to expand all areas of technology to meet the ever increasing demands of twenty-first century education.

Action Item 3.0

That the school board, administration and faculty continue to systematically add additional strategic opportunities for professional development, including opportunities outside of traditional Christian school circles, so that faculty and staff can continue to grow in the execution of professional responsibilities and be aware of current educational trends.

Commendations:

The committee commends:

1. the School Board, administration, faculty and staff for the addition of a very significant number of professional growth opportunities including (but not limited to)
 - hiring an expert from the SDCOE to train teaching staff on new ELA standards
 - the subscription to an on-demand, online professional development website called *Simple K-12* to provide specific training for staff as needed
 - allowing AP teachers attended subject specific seminars
 - providing an elementary and junior high staff in-service from a Pearson trainer to facilitate the adoption of the new Language Arts curriculum
 - the attendance of the administration at a two-day STEM convention
 - providing for six teachers from three divisions of the school to attend a two-day math convention with a focus on Common Core math
 - the completion of an all-day in-service on the use of 1 to 1 iPads in the classrooms, google docs, and other collaborative on-line tools
 - the completion by the elementary staff of an all-day in-service on writing at the elementary level which included the use of digital curriculum and resources as well as teaching strategies
 - the provision of a math specialist from the San Diego County Office of Education to train teachers on math standards, how to analyze curriculum, and ways to supplement existing curriculum in preparation for the adoption of a new math curriculum
 - the attendance by the high school staff at an in-house training lead by the college and career adviser on how to analyze PSAT results and then use those results to establish instructional goals in the classroom
 - the attendance of the preschool teachers at a one-day conference at Biola University which focused on early education topics
 - the attendance of high school staff a two training sessions conducted by Schoology, the new learning management system for the 2015-16 school year

- the attendance of the Curriculum Director and edTech Specialist at a four-day conference in Chicago in preparation for the new learning management system being implemented at the high school level
- the attendance of the AP Government and AP Literature instructors at a one week AP by the Sea Institute approved by the College Board
- the attendance of the elementary principal, curriculum director and math committee chair at a one-day training at the San Diego Office of Education on California math standards
- the provision of two seminars by Dr. Christian Overman/Worldview Matters from Seattle, Washington to train the entire staff EE-12 on biblical integration/contextualization
- the attendance of the elementary principal, junior high principal, and edTech specialist at the NWEA's three-day training in Portland on Measuring Academic Progress (MAP)
- the attendance of the edTech specialist at a two-day conference on google aps for education
- the attendance of the international coordinator at a three-day conference at Wheaton College put on by Wheaton Academy (wAnet) with a focus on biblical integration and placement of international students in host families
- the attendance of the seven members of the math curriculum selection committee at a two-day conference in Palm Springs conducted by the California Math Council
- the attendance of the AP Biology, AP European History, and AP Photography teachers at a college board approved one-day seminar to focus on teaching strategies and exam preparation
- The completion by the principals of a four-month professional development on-line course on Executive Leadership through the Christian Leadership Alliance

Recommendations:

The committee recommends:

1. that the school board, administration and faculty continue to provide for and attend a variety of professional training and development opportunities so that those serving in responsible positions in the school community can continue to grow in their professional fields and in their ability to serve effectively.

Action Item 4.0

That the church board, school board and administration work together to provide a full range of traditional school board documents, including by-laws and standard policies and procedures, that will continue to expand the effectiveness of the board, strengthen the school's mission of partnering with parents and encouraging students to excel in their God-given gifts through academics, the arts and athletics, so that the school can be guided and governed by standard Christian School practices.

Commendations:

The committee commends:

1. The church board, school board and administration for the preliminary development of procedural documents that will allow the school to function smoothly and within standard procedural guidelines.

Recommendations:

The committee recommends:

1. That the school board, representatives from the church governance and/or administration, and school administration continue to work together in the finalization of needed documents that are an essential part of the smooth functioning of a Christian organization, particularly one where there are multiple arms to the ministry and where the possibility of conflict and/or disagreement might exist to facilitate the continued smooth functioning of the entire organization and ministry.

CONCLUSION

The Visiting Committee would like to thank the school board, administration, faculty, staff, parents and students for a great experience in this brief mid-term visit accreditation process. It would be impossible not to be impressed by the level of dedication that seems apparent at every level of the school family. Everyone we met shared in an open and gracious manner. It was delightful to spend time with students who so enthusiastically embraced the philosophy of the school and expressed it so clearly through their daily lives. It was clear that there was no fear or hesitation in sharing with us, further giving evidence to the fact that improvement as the school moves forward is a desire of the entire school community.

We would like to thank all those who so graciously attended to our needs while here. We appreciate the accommodations provided and the gracious way in which our various needs were met.

We would like to thank the administration and steering committee for their effort in preparing the mid-term report. We particularly acknowledge the work of Mrs. Autumn Gray in this process and thank her for her cooperative work with the visiting committee chair in preparation for this visit. It is obvious that since the full visit three years ago, all have worked diligently to bring about improvement to the entire school program.

Again, we want to thank the school for the opportunity to observe a strong Christian educational program. May God truly continue to bless your on-going ministry. It has been a true pleasure for us to share in your growth process now and three years ago.