



Burlington Woods Academy

Self-Study Report

Program Narrative

Visiting Committee Report

Note: *The sample Self-Study Report (Standard 4 and Part II only) and Program Narrative are provided as illustrations of one school's approach and are not intended as a model that other schools must follow. The sample Visiting Committee Report (Standard 4 only) is provided as an illustration of one Visiting Committee's approach. This is not intended as a model that other Visiting Committees must follow.*

July 2017

Burlington Woods Academy Self-Study Sample

Self-Study Report

SCHOOL DATA SHEET

Note: Your completed School Data Sheet may be copied and included with the Visiting Committee Report.

School Name: Burlington Woods Academy

Address: 1234 Main Street
Burlington, MA 01234

Telephone: 617-123-4567

Date of Founding: 1924

Total Enrollment (at the time of evaluation visit):

	PS	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	PG	Totals
Male	15	8	9	9	11	10	8	11	14	13						108
Female	12	12	13	12	9	10	10	15	13	15						121
Day	27	20	22	21	20	20	18	26	27	28						229
Boarding																
Homestay																

International students included in the above table who are not U.S. residents:

Day																
Boarding																
Homestay																

Number of Faculty: 14 full-time; 6 part-time

Number of Administrators: 1 full-time; 0 part-time

Burlington Woods Academy Self-Study Sample

Brief statement of school's history, mission, and culture – what makes this school unique?

Mission Statement: The mission of the Burlington Woods Academy is to provide a foundation in the Catholic Faith and in academics that will enable students to become individuals who value and live their faith, are lifelong learners, and productive members of a global society. Each student's self-esteem is fostered by positive relationships with students and staff.

Burlington Woods Academy was founded in 1924 by the parishioners of Saint Joseph and Saint Brigid parishes in Burlington. With the support of the parish priests, a small elementary school was started so that children of the two parishes would have an elementary school experience grounded in their Catholic faith. For the first two years, classes for grades one through five were held in the parish facilities of Saint Joseph Church. As the fifth-grade students 'graduated' another grade was added each year until eighth grade was added in 1928. In that same year, the school was moved into the renovated convent adjacent to Saint Brigid Church. During these early years, both teachers and administrators were provided by the Sisters of Charity. Over the years, more and more lay teachers were employed and by 1975 there was no longer any religious teaching at the school.

In 1965, a half-day kindergarten program was added. In 1980, kindergarten became a full-day class which became a strong marketing strategy as the public school kindergarten was only half-day. In 1983, a full-day preschool class was added.

Financial support and administrative oversight for Burlington Woods Academy was shared jointly by the two founding parishes until Saint Brigid closed in 1983. Burlington Woods Academy is now considered a parish school for Saint Joseph Church.

With one section of each grade level, preschool through the eighth grade, enrollment was above 250 until the early 1990's. Enrollment dropped below 200 during the late 1990's and it has only been in the last four years that the enrollment has once again reached above 200.

The enduring mission of Burlington Woods Academy has been to provide a quality academic education rooted in the Catholic faith. Despite changes in parish affiliation and local demographics, this mission has not wavered. Burlington Woods Academy is very much a neighborhood school with over 85% of the students being members of the parish. There is a strong legacy among local families and 20% of current students have parents or grandparents who are alums. The school community is diverse and there is a growing need to provide support for English Language Learners.

Burlington Woods Academy was initially accredited by NEASC in 1997.

Person(s) completing this form: _____ Date: _____

Burlington Woods Academy Self-Study Sample

Standard 4 (Program): The school provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that is appropriate to support the school’s mission and core values, and is consistent with the needs of the range of students admitted. Program planning is informed by relevant research regarding how students learn and the knowledge and capacities they will need to lead purposeful and constructive lives.

Assessment of Standard	
Met <i>(The students’ experience is supported.)</i>	Unmet <i>(The students’ experience is compromised.)</i>
SM1. Standard Met: evidences clear understanding, effective implementation and thorough planning for further improvement.	SU1. Standard Unmet: evidences inadequate understanding, implementation and planning for remediation that may foreseeably compromise student experience.
SM2. Standard Met: evidences understanding, evolving implementation and planning for improvement.	SU2. Standard Unmet: lacks understanding, implementation and planning for remediation, thereby compromising student experience.

School’s Self-Assessment: SM1

Brief narrative description of the school’s position with regard to this Standard
(This summary may be copied and used in the Visiting Committee Report.)

Burlington Woods Academy offers a full program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities for all students, preschool - grade 8. There are single sections of each grade level, and these classes are self-contained through the fifth grade. There is a departmentalized team of middle school teachers who work with students in grades six, seven, and eight. Co-curricular classes are taught by certified specialists in the following disciplines: art, music, physical education, Spanish, technology, and library skills. Due to space constraints, many of these teachers are ‘on wheels’ and move into the homeroom classrooms to provide instruction.

Teachers understand that each child matures and develops academically and socially along a continuum and at his/her personal rate. These differences are considered when planning lessons and assessing student progress. Additional time, attention, and strategies are used to support all learners. At all levels within the school, small group instruction, hands-on instruction, and collaborative learning are used.

Per diocesan policy, all classroom teachers at Burlington Woods Academy are certified in the area in which they teach. All teachers and aides have also become certified in the Saint Cyril Faith Formation Program. There are full-time classroom aides in the preschool and kindergarten classrooms. There are two additional, part-time aides who support teachers and students at the other grade levels. At this time, there is no resource room or certified learning specialist to provide support for students who struggle academically or would benefit from ELL services. The classroom aides generally provide support in these areas, although they are not professionally trained to do so.

Teachers are expected to follow the curriculum provided by the Diocese. The Diocese also provides

Burlington Woods Academy Self-Study Sample

a list of approved textbooks to support the curriculum. All the textbooks used at Burlington Woods Academy are relatively current; publications dates within the past ten years. Teachers use an array of supplemental materials in their classrooms. According to the faculty survey, 85% of the teachers agree that they have adequate materials for their classrooms. Teachers in the primary grades expressed the need for additional and more current leveled readers to meet the needs of emerging readers.

Self-Study Committee membership, meeting schedule, and procedures

Jean Jones, Grade 8 Teacher Co-Chair
Ron Rogers, Grade 2 Teacher Co-Chair
Mandy Martin, Preschool Aide
Samantha Spring, Technology Teacher
Debbie Dor, Art Teacher
Sister Margaret, Religion Teacher
Pam Potter, Parent of two current students and one alum

Meeting Dates: 9/15/15, 10/25/15, 11/4/15, 1/26/16, 3/1/16, 4/21/16, 9/23/16

The Program Committee met on the dates listed above. Initial discussions revolved around the program indicators. Committee members were asked to interview other members of the school community for clarification and additional information. All writing was done on a Google document so that all members of the committee could review and revise. The final draft was presented to the full faculty at the opening faculty meeting in August of 2016. The feedback received at the faculty meeting was very helpful and used in finalizing the report. The faculty was polled on the rating for this Standard.

List of background materials reviewed and people interviewed

- Parent survey
- Faculty survey
- Student survey
- Alumni/ae survey
- Department and major program reports
- Publications - Diocesan Curriculum Guides
- Other:

Interviews with school principal and admissions director

Review of standardized test scores for grades 5-8 and DRA levels for K-2

Comments regarding suggested indicators

(Indicator Checklists with comments should be included in the supplementary materials)

Burlington Woods Academy meets all of the suggested indicators, although there is room for improvement with regard to some. According to surveys completed by current school parents, middle school students, alumni, and faculty, Burlington Woods Academy has a strong program which meets the needs of its students. 89% of the parents and 90% of students agree that “the school provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities ...”.

Professional development is offered to the faculty by the Diocese of Springfield, the principal, and veteran teachers. The Diocese determines the topics, themes, and issues to be discussed and studied

Burlington Woods Academy Self-Study Sample

during fall and spring conferences. The topics presented at these conferences focus on teaching and learning styles that can be found in the classroom. The speakers and presenters often include ways to incorporate religious themes and elements of Catholic Social Teaching into lesson plans and practices. Veteran teachers offer professional development for incoming teachers during the summer weeks before the opening of school which focus on technology requirements, such as the gradebook and lesson plan software. Although the faculty finds these professional development opportunities to be beneficial, many expressed an interest in professional development opportunities available beyond the Diocese. Teacher surveys indicated that only 60% of faculty agrees that they “are given opportunities for professional development.” Due to budget constraints and a limited pool of substitute teachers, at this time Burlington Woods Academy seldom supports teachers attending outside workshops or conferences.

The curriculum demonstrates continuity from year to year in the majority of subject areas. Language Arts and Math standards translate smoothly between grade levels. According to the program reports which are available in the supplemental materials, Social Studies and Science standards indicate a slight disconnect between grade levels. The textbooks available do not align with the diocesan curriculum maps, particularly at the upper elementary grades. These teachers need to pull from multiple textbooks and share resources in order to teach all the topics on their grade level maps. The Religion standards are age appropriate and advance as the students grow emotionally and developmentally. At present, there is no curriculum map for technology. In the primary grades, teachers use leveled readers from a variety of publishing companies so that students are reading nightly in books according to their DRA level. The collection of emerging reader texts is limited though and many of the small books are in disrepair. Funds are needed to grow the collection of books so that all students have ample reading materials at their DRA levels.

Burlington Woods Academy’s beliefs about teaching are consistent with the program of study. These beliefs coordinate with the rigorous, age-appropriate standards created by the diocesan curriculum maps. Teachers align lesson plans with the curriculum standards. Instruction is differentiated to address the range of learning styles in each classroom.

Flexible grouping allows students to grow as individual learners and enables teachers to meet students at various levels of learning. Multiple strategies are employed to achieve higher level thinking. Teachers work to create environments in which students can explore their ideas in a comfortable, safe, yet challenging setting. Faculty surveys indicate that 95% of faculty agrees that “the program that the school offers is sufficiently broad to meet the needs of all students” and 82% agree that “the school encourages me to shape my program to include a variety of experience which reflect the diversity of the students enrolled and the multicultural nature of society itself”, and 89% indicate that they “take into consideration the individual needs learning styles, and characteristics of students by providing developmentally appropriate programs and activities to help students achieve their potential”.

Catholic Social Teachings are infused into daily lessons in all areas of the program. These tenets are also the basis for classroom management, conflict resolution, and behavior modification. The students at Burlington Woods Academy speak and understand the language of the Catholic Social Teachings. This allows for the natural integration of these values in all aspects of school life. More than any other subject in the curriculum, Catholic religious teaching defines the nature of the school.

The entire fine arts program is founded on the mantra, “every child can” and the belief that musical and artistic gifts should be used to serve God and others. The visual arts program gives students the opportunity to experience the beauty of artistic expression while also learning the fundamentals of art. Weekly music classes incorporate both religious and cultural music. The liturgical choir meets

Burlington Woods Academy Self-Study Sample

once a week and prepares to lead the school community during Mass. All students enjoy physical education classes twice a week as well as daily recess. On the surveys provided to middle school students, 90% agree that “the school provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities.” There is a strong basketball culture within the school community and 68% of students in grades 2-8 participate on a school basketball team. The school’s policy is that all students on a team will have significant playing time.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are an important mechanism for ongoing curriculum review and conversations about vertical articulation. PLC meetings are held weekly and include the principal and a group of teachers. The PLC groups are arranged by grade levels: preschool through grade 2, grades 3-5, and middle school. Students who are struggling are discussed at these meetings and a course of action planned. At times, this includes a referral for a comprehensive educational evaluation by the local public school system. In circumstances where a diagnosed disability is present, an Accommodation Plan is created and followed.

Based on annual standardized testing, some Burlington Woods Academy middle school students qualify for the John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth Program. These students have the opportunity of participating in online enrichment courses, provided their parents are willing to purchase these classes. Burlington Woods Academy releases these students from some of their co-curricular classes to go online during the school day but there is no clear policy regarding online classes nor any clear oversight by faculty.

The community at Burlington Woods Academy has become increasingly diverse over the past 15 years. Teachers are accepting of all students and, within their classrooms, embrace the culture of each student. At present, there are limited school wide opportunities to recognize and celebrate diversity. There have been conversations among the Home - School Association about organizing multicultural events for families and this initiative is supported by the school administration. Survey data supports the parent interest in an increased emphasis on the multicultural nature of the school community. 64% of the parents agreed “the school offers a variety of experiences to reflect the diversity of the students enrolled and the multicultural nature of society itself.”

Comments regarding alternative indicators proposed by the school

Other comments with regard to this Standard

Notable strengths of the school in this area

Burlington Woods Academy provides students with a warm and supportive environment which is conducive to taking academic risks. Students graduating from eighth grade are generally accepting in the high school of their choice. On the alumni surveys, 90% agreed that they were well-prepared for high school and feedback from the high school admissions offices support this statement.

The curriculum provided by the Diocese is comprehensive and provides a clear set of goals and objectives for teachers.

Teachers seamlessly weave Catholic social teachings into the curriculum. The teaching of religion is not an isolated class period but a part of who we are.

Notable weaknesses/needs

Teachers would like opportunities to attend more professional development activities beyond the

Burlington Woods Academy Self-Study Sample

school and Diocese. In particular, the faculty is interested in learning about differentiation strategies and instructional strategies to support English Language Learners.

Co-curricular teachers who are ‘on wheels’ would prefer a home base for instruction. As these teachers move from classroom to classroom, they are limited in the supplies they can transport. These teachers express that being on wheels compromises the quality of the program that they provide to students.

As the school community has become more diverse, Burlington Woods Academy needs to explore ways to recognize and celebrate the multicultural nature of the community.

Aspects warranting attention

A school policy regarding scheduling, supervision, and evaluation of all online courses should be put in place prior to the next school year.

Recommendations for school improvement and issues for further discussion

- ❖ explore ways to expand the pool of substitute teachers and potential grants or restricted gifts to fund professional growth opportunities for faculty
- ❖ explore the efficacy of all co-curricular classes being ‘on wheels’
- ❖ set aside funds within the annual budget for additional leveled readers, specifically for emerging readers
- ❖ teachers, administrators, and Home-School Association collaborate on how to best support and celebrate the multicultural nature of the school community
- ❖ create policies to cover all aspects of online courses

Burlington Woods Academy Self-Study Sample

Self-Study Part II: Reflection, Recommendations, and Issues for Further Discussion

Burlington Woods Academy continues to thrive, although the demographics of the area have changed. The school continues to live its mission and graduate students who are well prepared for high school, both academically and spiritually. For long term viability, it is clear the school needs to become more proactive in its strategic planning. This Part II document represents the beginning of that process, and a committee, chaired by the School Advisory Board, has already been formed to continue this essential work.

Reflections	Recommendations
<p>GOVERNANCE: The School Advisory Board is responsible for leading the strategic planning process. This Board should reflect, in membership, the demographic of the student population.</p>	<p>The School Advisory Board create a committee to prepare a new Strategic Plan to assure the viability of Burlington Woods Academy. The Principal and Pastor identify new members for the Board in order to bring diversity to the Board.</p>
<p>ENROLLMENT: Although enrollment has been stable for the past three years, faculty identifies the need for a consistent screening tool for students entering preschool and kindergarten.</p>	<p>The preschool and kindergarten teachers, in conjunction with the Admissions Director, should explore screening tools and agree on an effective screening process prior to the next admissions season.</p>
<p>PROGRAM: The Diocese provides comprehensive curriculum guides for most subjects, with the exception of technology. PLC meetings provide the forum for conversation between teachers about curriculum. Teachers need additional professional development and support to meet the needs of ELL students and students with accommodation plans.</p>	<p>Task the technology teacher with networking with other Diocesan schools regarding an elementary technology curriculum. Task the principal with organizing additional professional development opportunities and incorporating additional staff in the Strategic Plan.</p>
<p>EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT: There is no diocesan policy regarding administrative evaluation. There is an effective teacher evaluation practice.</p>	<p>The principal will work with central office staff so that there is some annual evaluation.</p>
<p>COMMUNICATION: Parent communication has been a strength of the school in the past. At this point in the school's history, it is time to explore making key communication available to parents in other languages.</p>	<p>The principal and Admissions Director will gather data regarding the primary language of school families and then take steps to ensure that all parents are included in the school's communications.</p>
<p>INFRASTRUCTURE: In order for long-term viability, the school should explore new sources of revenue and develop long and short term development goals.</p>	<p>Consider beginning with a parent volunteer to create an Annual Fund and to explore available grant funding for some of the new initiatives outlined in the developing Strategic Plan.</p>

Burlington Woods Academy Program Narrative Sample

Program Narrative: English Language Arts

Mission Statement: The mission of Burlington Woods Academy is to provide a foundation in the Catholic faith and in academics that will enable students to become individuals who value and live their faith, are lifelong learners and are productive members of a global society. Each student's self-esteem is fostered by positive relationships with students and staff.

The English Language Arts (ELA) Program at Burlington Woods Academy includes instruction in reading, writing, spelling, grammar, phonemic awareness, and oral expression. The curriculum is rigorous, with scaffolding provided by faculty for those students who would benefit from modifications and/or support. The texts used for Guided Reading and Literature Circles are chosen to reflect a global society and provide a vehicle for conversations about Catholic Social Teachings. Critical thinking skills are woven throughout ELA instruction as the faculty believe this is an important skill for 21st century learners. The ELA curriculum supports the mission of the school.

Teachers at Burlington Woods Academy believe all students should be challenged and learn best in a classroom environment where they feel supported and accepted. This belief, coupled with the school's mission to 'foster positive relationships with students and staff', leads to frequent small group instruction. The faculty also believe that collaborative learning is an effective means for building understanding and student-to-student relationships. For this reason, the primary instructional method for reading comprehension is Guided Reading groups in grades K-3 and Literature Circles in grades 4-8. All classes utilize the Writer's Workshop approach which emphasizes process as well as product. This is a philosophical match for Burlington Woods Academy.

Teachers at Burlington Woods Academy meet regularly in Professional Learning Communities. These PLC meetings provide a regular venue for vertical articulation conversations. Textbooks and supplemental materials used to support the ELA curriculum also provide continuity across grade levels. Preschool through grade 5 classes use the Houghton Mifflin Reading Street series and middle school classes use the Holt McDougal Literature series. All classes use the grade appropriate version of Scholastic Magazine as a supplemental resource to emphasize non-fiction reading strategies. Beginning in kindergarten, a portfolio of each student's Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) materials follows the student until fifth grade.

The Diocesan curriculum map is used by all teachers to plan annual academic goals and objectives. The Principal reviews teachers' plan books on a monthly basis for evidence of alignment between the curriculum maps and classroom instruction.

Teachers differentiate instruction by utilizing a variety of supplemental materials to remediate or challenge students. There are para-professionals who assist students needing additional ELA support in grades preK-5. In many cases, this support would more effective if addressed by an ELL qualified teacher. There are some students with Accommodation Plans based on educational evaluations. Some of these accommodations include shortened writing expectations, additional time for assessments, oral spelling assessments, use of a spell-checker, and use of audiobooks. All teachers offer extra-help after school for students.

Whenever possible, teachers in the primary grades use multi-sensory instruction. Charts are posted around the classrooms to support student understanding of phonemic awareness, reading comprehension strategies, and writing mechanics. All classrooms have Smartboards and technology is used to engage students.

Burlington Woods Academy Program Narrative Sample

As stated in the school's Mission Statement, Burlington Woods Academy would like all its students to become lifelong learners. Nurturing and developing a love of reading is part of this goal. This goal is supported by a well-stocked and welcoming school library which is available to all students. Additionally, the ability to express oneself coherently in writing and speech supports the students in becoming "productive members of a global society."

Burlington Woods Academy teachers have access to ample primary and supplemental teaching materials. At all grades, a minimum of ninety minutes is set in the daily schedule for ELA instruction. During the 2016-17 school year, teachers in the primary grades began to use the online program, Raz-Kids, to encourage independent reading. The library at Burlington Woods Academy is an excellent resource for students as well. Faculty agree that the ELA curriculum would be enhanced by additional qualified support for struggling learners and ELL students as well as a larger collection of leveled readers for the primary grades.

Every year, three Burlington Woods Academy teachers attend the state reading association conference. The attendees are asked to make a presentation to the full faculty after the conference. The school has subscriptions to the following professional magazines which are housed in the faculty room: The Reading Teacher, Language Arts, and Voices from the Middle. Limited Title II funds are available if teachers want to attend conferences beyond the Diocese. Teachers expressed an interest in additional professional development in the Writer's Workshop model of instruction.

Strengths

- Full-time librarian creates a warm and welcoming place for students to find recreational reading materials and discuss literature
- Willingness of teachers to work with students individually after school
- Textbooks are all published within the past three years

Weaknesses

- Lack of an experienced ELL teacher to support growing numbers of students who would benefit from ELL support
- Need for additional leveled readers at the emerging reader level
- Availability of professional development in utilizing a Writer's Workshop model
- Limited Title II funds

Burlington Woods Academy Visiting Committee Report Sample

Visiting Committee Report

Standard 4 (Program): The school provides a comprehensive program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities that is appropriate to support the school’s mission and core values, and is consistent with the needs of the range of students admitted. Program planning is informed by relevant research regarding how students learn and the knowledge and capacities they will need to lead purposeful and constructive lives.

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School’s Self-Assessment SM1
Visiting Team’s Assessment SM2

Brief narrative summary of the school’s position with regard to this Standard

(This summary was copied/abridged/adapted from the school’s Self-Study Report.)

Burlington Woods Academy offers a full program of intellectual, aesthetic, and physical activities for all students, preschool - grade 8. There are single sections of each grade level, and these classes are self-contained through the fifth grade. A departmentalized team of middle school teachers work with students in grades six, seven, and eight. Co-curricular classes are taught by certified specialists in the following disciplines: art, music, physical education, Spanish, technology, and library skills. Due to space constraints, many of these teachers are ‘on wheels’ and move into the homeroom classrooms to provide instruction.

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Burlington Woods Academy Visiting Committee Report Sample

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Observations

Through interviews and observations, it is clear the school has the necessary written curricula to provide a comprehensive program and the program offered is aligned with the mission of the school. During visits to the classrooms of Burlington Woods Academy, the Visiting Committee observed students who were engaged and respectful. In the preschool through the fifth grade, desks were arranged in clusters of three or four. Students were observed conversing and collaborating. When the Visiting Team observed in the middle school classes, students were most often observed working individually at tasks involving textbooks. Smartboards were in use at all levels. Overall, the Visiting Committee observed instructional practices which reflected what they had read in the Review of Major Programs.

It was also observed that Burlington Woods offers a variety of specials which include music, art, technology, foreign language, and physical education to help support the program. The Visiting Team observed these classes which were taught by a qualified group of professionals. Despite some of these classes being 'on wheels', the classes were focused, interactive, and following the prescribed curriculum.

In regards to grade level transitions, the school utilizes weekly PLC meetings, and a June move-up day to facilitate the transition of students from one grade level to the next. After reading through support documents and conducting interviews, the Visiting Committee found that faculty find these institutional practices effective.

In conversation with teachers, the issue of professional development was often raised. Teachers stated that the professional development offered around Catholic Identity was strong and comprehensive. Many teachers said that they would like the opportunity to attend workshops beyond the Diocesan offerings. The school staff strive to deliver effective and creative lessons based on student strengths, weaknesses, and interests. That being said, teachers often articulated that they feel the need to develop more strategies for how differentiation can be employed in their classrooms. There is strong interest in professional development in the areas of differentiation and meeting the needs of ELL students. Teachers with fewer than three years of experience at the school confirmed a climate of collegiality among the teachers and conveyed their appreciation for the informal professional development provided by the more veteran teachers. All teachers articulated their appreciation for the lack of 'silos' and the willingness of their peers to share ideas and resources.

Through student and faculty interviews and observations, it was evident that Catholic Social Teachings and values are ingrained into all aspects of school life and activity. The school requires religion to be taught daily at each grade level. Students are also given opportunities outside the normal classroom setting to experience and appreciate expressions of the Catholic faith.

Burlington Woods Academy has become increasingly more diverse in the past ten years. The school's diversity reflects the local demographic. Efforts have been made to celebrate this diversity by bringing into the school musical and dramatic presentations which explore various cultures. In library classes for the PreK-fifth grade students, the librarian has read books highlighting Black History Month and Chinese

Burlington Woods Academy Visiting Committee Report Sample

New Year. The Visiting Team heard from all constituencies that an acknowledgement and celebration of the diversity of the community is a priority.

It was noted that the technology teacher has informal oversight of the middle school students enrolled in online courses through the John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth. The Visiting Team observed two students working independently in the computer lab during their music class. The students were unclear about their responsibility for the work missed in music. The technology teacher was meant to have a prep period and since she hadn't been advised that the students would be in the lab, was not in the lab during the whole period. Per middle school teachers, the same two students are the only students who have taken advantage of the online courses during the past two years.

Conclusions and Explanation of Rating

Although the Visiting Committee observed a strong, enriching academic program and extracurricular activities taught by a dedicated and experienced cadre of teachers, there are a number of areas for school improvement noted in the Self-Study Report. The Visiting Team concurs with all the school's recommendations. Although the administration and faculty are aware of steps that should be taken to strengthen the school program, due to limited financial resources no firm plans are yet in place to address these issues.

Commendations

1. The Visiting Committee commends the faculty for their collegiality and willingness to work as a team.
2. The Visiting Committee commends those cocurricular teachers who continue to provide rigorous and engaging learning experiences for their students despite being "on wheels".

Recommendations

1. The Visiting Committee supports the school's recommendation to create policies regarding all aspects of online course work for students, particularly scheduling, supervision, and evaluation.
2. The Visiting Committee supports the school's recommendation to allocate funds for the expansion of the leveled reader library for emerging readers.
3. The Visiting Committee concurs with the school's recommendation to explore long term solutions for those cocurricular classes currently "on wheels".
4. The Visiting Committee concurs with the school's recommendation to explore the means to fund additional professional growth opportunities for the teachers.
5. The Visiting Committee recommends that the faculty regularly review their curriculum in light of the need to incorporate multi-cultural awareness and appreciation into the overall program.

