Mid-Cycle Visiting Committee Summary Report

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

FOR

Ocean Charter School

12870 Panama Street

Los Angeles, CA 90066

Los Angeles Unified

Date of Original Self-Study Visit: May 3-5, 2021

Date of Mid-Cycle Visit: April 16, 2024

<u>Visiting Committee Member</u>

Meg Rydman, Chairperson
Executive Director, Olive Grove Charter Schools, Inc.

SUMMARY

Include:
- **General comments about the school, including summary of achievement data**
- **Significant changes and/or developments and their impact on the school**
- **School's follow-up process and process used to prepare the mid-cycle report**
- **Summary of progress on action plan that addresses student and school needs and critical areas for follow-up (growth areas for continuous improvement) and impact on student learning.**

Key Information about Ocean Charter School
- Ocean Charter School (OCS) is a TK-8th grade independent charter school authorized by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Located in the Del Rey community and in its 20th year of operation, OCS serves approximately 565 students with a Common Core standards-based curriculum that is informed by the Core Principles of Waldorf Education.
- Roughly 40 full-time and 50 part-time staff
- 2023-24 Student Demographics
  - Roughly 565 students across grades TK-8
  - Special Education/504 Designated: 15%
  - Students receiving intervention support: 16%
  - English Learners: 6%
  - Free & Reduced Lunch Eligibility: 27%
  - Race/Ethnicity
    - PHBAO: 51%
    - White: 49%
    - Two or more races: 17%
    - Hispanic or Latino: 27%
    - Black or African American: 2%
    - Asian: 5%

Summary of Achievement Data/Dashboard Data
- OCS students outperform the district and the State in CAASPP ELA and math proficiency levels.
- Overall math proficiency levels in 2023 increased from 2022, while ELA proficiency levels in 2023 slightly decreased from 2022.
- Despite the decrease, ELA displays as green on the 2023 Dashboard.
  - Students with disabilities display as red.
  - Socioeconomically disadvantaged students display as orange.
- Math displays as orange on the 2023 Dashboard.
  - Students with disabilities display as red.
  - Two or more races and socioeconomically disadvantaged students display as orange.
- There is no color displayed on the Dashboard, but 52.9% of English Learners are making progress towards English language proficiency, which represents a decline of 10.2% from 2022.
- Chronic absenteeism displays as yellow on the 2023 Dashboard, with 20.7% of students chronically absent. This represents an impressive 20.6% decline from the previous year.
  - Socioeconomically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities display as orange.
- Suspension rate is 0%, displaying as blue for all student groups on the 2023 Dashboard.

- All local indicators are "standard met" on the 2023 Dashboard.
  - All local indicators were "standard not met" on the 2022 Dashboard due to an issue with their presentation to the Board not appearing on the same agenda as the LCAP.
- As OCS is a TK-8 school, there is no CCI nor graduation rate indicator on their Dashboard.
- OCS students outperform the district and the State in CAST proficiency levels.
- Overall CAST proficiency levels in 2023 increased from 2022.

Schoolwide Learner Needs

Note: These are the schoolwide learner needs identified in the school's mid-cycle report, which are the same as the Schoolwide Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement Identified by the Previous Visiting Committee.

1. The administration, teachers and support staff need to work collaboratively to clearly identify measurable Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), and consistently articulate the SLOs with students.
2. Teachers need to work collaboratively within their grade level teams to design and write rubrics that are used to evaluate students for all written work and/or oral presentations.
3. The administration and teachers need to systematically analyze student achievement assessment data to identify at-risk students and use this data analysis to drive instruction in the classroom.
4. To enhance consistency across core content areas, the administration and teaching staff need to collaborate on a model framework at each grade level that reflects Waldorf principles and CCSS alignment.
5. The administration needs to develop a formal high school articulation process that allows the families to make an informed decision about which school or schools their student should consider.

Significant Changes and/or Developments

The school underwent several significant changes and developments since the last full visit, each with its own impact on staff, students, and overall operations.

1. There was a leadership transition at the end of the 2022-2023 school year, resulting in the consolidation of two executive director positions into one executive director and one assistant director role. This restructuring altered the division of responsibilities, moving away from the previous model based on grade levels to a structure focused on programming and topics.
2. The removal of dedicated classroom aides from grades 1-8 due to the expiration of COVID-19 relief funding had notable effects. This change resulted in reduced individualized attention for students throughout the day and increased responsibilities for teachers in terms of discipline, accommodations, and record-keeping. To mitigate this, rotating aides were added to the intervention program.
3. The school experienced a significant turnover of classroom teachers, with roughly 45% being newly hired over the past three years. This shift led to an increased need for professional development opportunities linked to Waldorf education fundamentals to support the new teachers.
4. There was a shift in the internal testing platform from easyCBM to NWEA, leading to ongoing learning and training to optimize the new technology. While the transition to NWEA has facilitated easier data analysis and alignment with classroom learning, it also presents challenges such as higher cognitive demands for students and the need for mindful technology implementation, particularly in lower grades.

School's Follow-Up Process
The school initiated an effective, collaborative process involving faculty members, administrative staff, board members, and various committees to develop, monitor, and implement its schoolwide action plan. Input was gathered through narrative discussions during faculty meetings, administrative meetings, Governance Committee meetings, intervention team sessions, aftercare supervisor meetings, Parent Collective discussions, and DEIB committee meetings. This inclusive approach ensured that perspectives from all educational partners were considered in evaluating the previous plan's progress and identifying future goals and needs.

Faculty, staff, and board members were invited to contribute to a shared Google document to indicate progress and implementation of the action plan. Simultaneously, surveys were distributed to parents, students, and staff, with findings analyzed by the administrative team and discussed with the board.

After gathering input from these various sources, the feedback was analyzed and integrated with the current LCAP to develop a revised action plan. This process aimed to ensure that the plan is comprehensive, inclusive, and aligned with the goals and priorities of all educational partners.

Summary of Progress
Following their last full visit, OCS did not explicitly interweave the growth areas for continuous improvement identified by the previous visiting committee into their schoolwide action plan. However, they did attend to both the VC-identified growth areas and their action plan items over the last three years, and they analyzed their progress towards each element in two separate charts in their mid-cycle report.

Summary of Progress on Major Areas Identified in the Schoolwide Action Plan:
Over the past three years, OCS has made commendable progress in fostering a positive school climate, though areas such as diversity representation, Waldorf education understanding among parents and teachers, and sustainability initiative utilization require further attention. While achievements in educational excellence, particularly regarding Hispanic/Latino student achievement and specialty program expansion, are notable, challenges persist in ensuring equitable outcomes for all student groups, necessitating targeted interventions and ongoing professional development. Efforts to establish schoolwide learner outcomes should be expanded for coherence in educational objectives. Despite not pursuing new grants as planned, OCS has effectively maintained financial stability through proactive fundraising strategies and community engagement.

Summary of Progress on Schoolwide Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement Identified by the Previous Visiting Committee:
OCS made significant progress in several key areas related to academic planning, curriculum development, data analysis, and high school transition support. While strides have been made, there are areas where further development and consistency are needed, such as standardizing the adoption of SLOs, rubric development, data analysis practices, and model framework implementation. Continued efforts and refinement in these areas will contribute to the school's ongoing improvement and effectiveness in supporting student learning and success.

Detailed Progress on Major Areas Identified in the Schoolwide Action Plan
Major Area 1: Positive School Climate
1. Diversity and Inclusion:
   ● Initiatives such as establishing a DEIB Board Committee, organizing cultural

celebrations, and implementing diversity-focused professional development have contributed to fostering a more inclusive environment.
- While the school has made strides in increasing the representation of Hispanic/Latino and socioeconomically diverse students, there's room for improvement in increasing the representation of Black or African American students.

2. Communication with Parents:
- Efforts such as parent information meetings, parent workshops, and specialized presentations on Waldorf education have aimed to enhance communication and engagement with parents.
- Scheduled events and orientations for incoming families indicate a proactive approach to facilitating communication and understanding of the school's educational philosophy.

3. Environmental Sustainability:
- OCS has made significant progress in creating an environmentally sustainable campus, including the elimination of single-use plastics, implementation of recycling and composting systems, and expansion of gardening programs.
- However, there's a need for further education and utilization of these systems to maximize their effectiveness.

4. Campus Safety and Orderliness:
- Establishment of rules, safety protocols, regular cleaning schedules, and the formation of a Student Safety Patrol Team have contributed to maintaining a safe and orderly environment.
- High parent satisfaction rates regarding the cleanliness and safety of the school reflect the success of these efforts.

5. Teacher Development:
- Participation in professional development programs, summer trainings, mentorship, and faculty meetings has supported teachers in developing a deeper understanding of child development based on Steiner's principles.
- Integration of professional development agendas with aspects of child study, biography, and arts integration demonstrates a holistic approach to teacher development.

6. Community Relationships:
- Various initiatives such as parent collective meetings, buddy class projects, conflict resolution strategies, and student leadership electives have promoted healthy relationships among all members of the community.
- The establishment of student clubs and regular council circle practices further enrich the school's culture of inclusion and respect.

7. Collaborative Leadership:
- Various initiatives such as parent collective meetings, student leadership electives, and Board committees have promoted collaborative leadership and shared decision making.

Major Area 2: Educational Excellence
1. Increasing Achievement for Latino, EL, and Low-Income Pupils:
- Professional development initiatives, adoption of EL literacy curriculum, and targeted teacher training have positively impacted student achievement.
- Hispanic/Latino students have maintained success on CAASPP testing and demonstrated notable growth in internal benchmark NWEA testing, indicating progress in

both ELA and Math.
- EL and socioeconomically disadvantaged students have also shown growth in internal benchmark NWEA testing, albeit with some fluctuations. OCS's socioeconomically disadvantaged students underperformed on the 2023 CAASPP ELA and math assessments when compared to their peers.

2. Maintaining or Improving Reclassification Rate for EL Students:
- Adoption of ELD curriculum programs and ongoing EL instruction have contributed to maintaining growth among EL students, although the reclassification rate has seen a slight decrease.
- Progress monitoring and intervention strategies such as weekly assessments and Launch to Literacy program have shown positive outcomes in language acquisition.

3. Maintain Growth in Scores of Students with Special Needs:
- While professional development efforts have been implemented, students with special needs have shown growth over time but at a lower rate compared to their peers.
- OCS's students with disabilities underperformed on 2023 CAASPP ELA and math when compared to their peers.

4. Increasing Scores of Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students:
- Despite various interventions and monitoring strategies, there has been a decrease in CAASPP scores and success on internal benchmarks among socioeconomically disadvantaged students, this student group underperformed on 2023 CAASPP ELA and math when compared to their peers.
- The school has also seen an increase in the population of socioeconomically disadvantaged students, indicating a growing need for targeted support and intervention.

5. Development of Schoolwide Learner Outcomes:
- While progress has been made in developing outcomes and assessments for specific grade levels in ELA and Math, the overall goal of establishing schoolwide learner outcomes has not been fully achieved.

6. Sharing Principles of Public Waldorf Education:
- The school has successfully shared principles of Public Waldorf Education through various events, alliances, and presentations, contributing to community engagement and understanding.

7. Supporting Digital Literacy
- Efforts to support students and families in navigating digital literacy have been effective, with high participation rates in Cyber Civics curriculum implementation and related assemblies.

8. Maintaining Unique Waldorf-Informed Practices:
- OCS has maintained its specialty program and expanded offerings such as sculpture, theater arts, gardening, and Spanish language classes, enriching students' holistic growth.

Major Area 3: Financial Sustainability
1. Increase Foundation Grants and Private Fundraising Revenue:
- While no new grants were pursued, OCS successfully increased its fundraising revenue through other channels, such as expanding goals for fundraising events and separating

the Silent Auction from the Gala event.
- Evidence indicates a tangible increase in funds raised at the Winter Faire and through the silent auction/Gala, demonstrating effectiveness in diversifying fundraising strategies.

2. Increase Annual Family Giving Revenue:
- OCS expanded its goals for Annual Family Giving and engaged room representatives to facilitate fundraising efforts.
- A consistent upward trend in Annual Family Giving revenue over the past three years indicates successful engagement and support from the school community.

3. Increase Grandparent Giving:
- In-person Grandparent's Day events held in 2023 and 2024 aimed to increase donations from grandparents.
- While specific data on grandparent giving is not available due to anonymous donations, an overall increase in Annual Family Giving suggests a positive impact on grandparent contributions.

Detailed Progress on Schoolwide Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement Identified by the Previous Visiting Committee:
1. Identifying Measurable Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
- Administration and teachers are actively engaged in the process of identifying measurable SLOs, particularly in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math for grades 1-4. While measurable outcomes and Power Goals have been established, consistent adoption and reference to these goals across the faculty remain a challenge. Further progress is needed in standardizing the adoption and integration of SLOs across all grade levels and subjects.

2. Designing and Writing Rubrics Collaboratively
- Faculty has made significant strides in developing rubrics, facilitated by collaborative efforts within grade level teams. A shared drive for OCS resources, including a folder for rubrics, has been created. Rubrics have been developed in alignment with core curriculum standards, although more work is needed to fully develop and integrate rubrics consistently across all grade levels and subjects.

3. Analyzing Student Achievement Data for Instructional Improvement
- OCS has implemented a systematic process for analyzing student achievement data, including internal benchmark testing and CAASPP results, to identify at-risk students and drive instruction. However, consistent practice in data analysis and instructional adjustment across all staff members remains a work in progress. Further development in collaborative data analysis and instructional response is needed to ensure comprehensive support for all students.

4. Developing Model Frameworks for CCSS Alignment
- OCS has received curriculum frameworks, tracking sheets, and Power Goals for ELA and Math from the Gradalis Waldorf Teacher Training Program, aligning Waldorf objectives with Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Despite this progress, teachers demonstrate inconsistency in focusing on goals or using provided documents. Further efforts are required to familiarize faculty with the model framework and ensure its consistent implementation across all grade levels and subjects.

5. Developing a Formal High School Articulation Process

- OCS has developed a comprehensive set of resources, including a High School Terms Sheet, High Schools Attended by OCS Alumni List, High School Checklist, and High School Comparison Tracking Sheet, to support families in navigating the high school transition process. Annual events such as the High School Information Meeting and Alumni Night provide additional support and guidance. Ongoing provision of these resources and events will continue to support families in making informed decisions about high school options.

Schoolwide Strengths:
1. There is evidence of a cohesive organizational culture with excellent staff dedicated to the mission of the school and its continued success.
2. The positive climate of the school has continued to increase over the last three years. Community and relationship building continue to be a cornerstone of the school's philosophy.
3. OCS students outperform the district and the State in CAASPP ELA and math proficiency levels.
4. OCS has successfully maintained financial stability over the past three years.
5. OCS has developed and implemented an effective high school articulation process.

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement: The visiting committee concurs with the school's identified areas for growth:
1. The administration, teachers and support staff need to work collaboratively to clearly identify measurable Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), and consistently articulate the SLOs with students.
   - *VC comment:* Further progress is needed in standardizing the adoption and integration of SLOs across all grade levels and subjects.
2. Teachers need to work collaboratively within their grade level teams to design and write rubrics that are used to evaluate students for all written work and/or oral presentations.
   - *VC comment:* More work is needed to fully develop and integrate rubrics consistently across all grade levels and subjects.
3. The administration and teachers need to systematically analyze student achievement assessment data to identify at-risk students and use this data analysis to drive instruction in the classroom.
   - *VC comment:* Further development of processes for effective use of data and data analysis to drive instruction for all students is needed.
4. To enhance consistency across core content areas, the administration and teaching staff need to collaborate on a model framework at each grade level that reflects Waldorf principles and CCSS alignment.
   - *VC comment:* Further efforts are required to familiarize faculty with the model framework and ensure its consistent implementation across all grade levels and subjects.
5. The administration needs to develop a formal high school articulation process that allows the families to make an informed decision about which school or schools their student should consider.
   - *VC comment:* OCS has developed and implemented an effective high school articulation process.

Additional Areas for Growth:
1. The school continues to see a need for more parent and teacher education on Waldorf principles and child development. Despite having developed frameworks and shared documentation of standards, teachers demonstrate an inconsistency in their focus on the

goals or use of the documents.
- ○ Reflected in 2024 action plan - Pedagogical Development, targets #4 and #5
2. Students with special needs and those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged underperform on academic assessments when compared to their peers.
    - ○ Reflected in 2024 action plan - Major Area 2: Educational Excellence, targets #2 and #4

Link to School's Most Recent Action Plan:
📄 WASC 2024 Action Plan