

**SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

**FOR**

**CENTRAL VALLEY CHRISTIAN HIGH  
SCHOOL**

**5600 West Tulare Avenue**

**Visalia, California 93277**

**April 20-22, 2009**

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## **Chapter I: Student/Community Profile**

### **1. Community Profile**

Central Valley Christian High School was established in 1982 by a group of people dedicated to Christian education. The school is located in Visalia, California, Tulare County which is the second largest agricultural producing area in the United States. The school is situated on a 33 acre site and there is a plan to add 13 more acres in the near future. The current enrollment is 332 in grades 9 – 12. A large percentage of the students come from the middle class families engaged in the dairy or other agricultural business.

The school provides a safe and attractive learning environment. The athletic facilities are excellent. All classes are equipped with relevant technological tools to enhance learning. In 2003, an Academic Classroom/Media Center building and two new, modern science labs were added. A chapel auditorium was completed in the spring of 2007. The auditorium provides an excellent facility for music and drama productions as well as an ideal place to hold meetings.

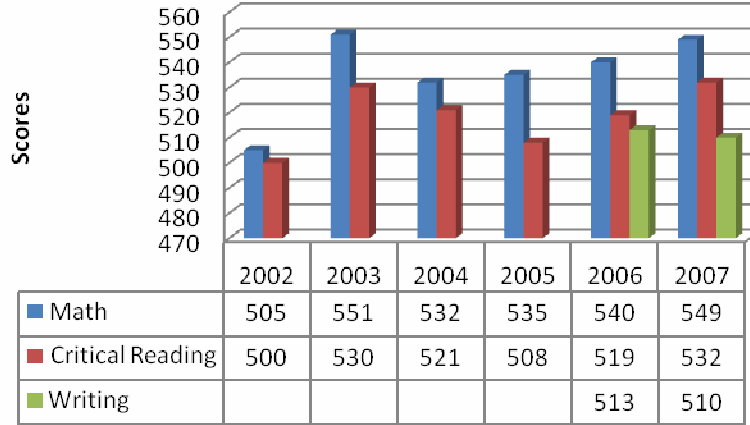
Central Valley Christian High School is a comprehensive high school which provides a traditional curriculum and also offers a rich variety of Advanced Placement and Honors courses. In addition the school has strong music, arts, and industrial arts programs. In the most recent parent survey the vast majority of the 33% who participated indicated that they were well satisfied with the school and the programs being offered.

### **2. Students**

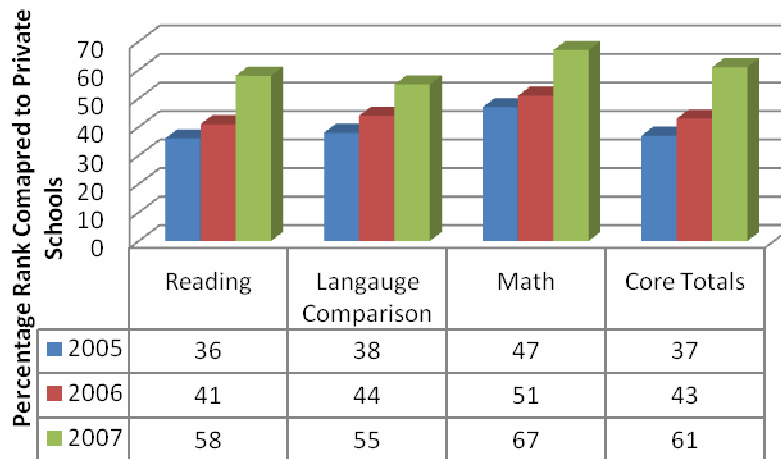
The students are highly motivated and involved in both the academic and extra-curricular programs that are offered. Each student is required to perform ten hours of community service each year and most students exceed this requirement. Each year students who are 15-18 years old are invited to spend two weeks of their summer vacation ministering in various ministry sites in Magdalena, Guatemala. The work sites include agriculture, technology, education, art, a medical clinic, and social work at the hospital. The foreign language chair leads these trips. Seventy-four percent of the students participate on one of 27 interscholastic athletic teams.

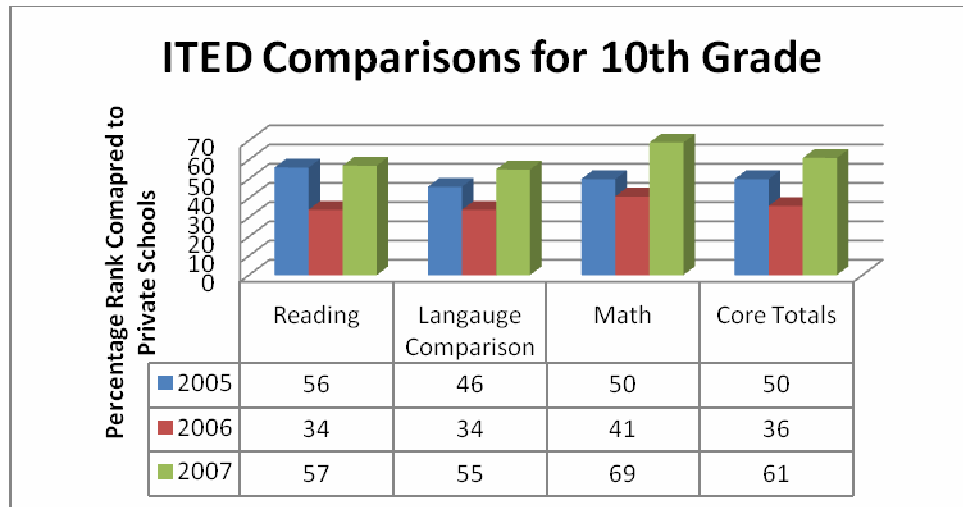
The students represent 60 evangelical churches. Ninety-five percent of the students are Caucasian and the vast majority come from stable, middle class families. The parents are not only interested, but involved in the educations of their students. The daily attendance rate of over 90% and the student performance on standardized tests including tests including the ITED, SAT, ACT, and AP reflect the values of the parents and the motivations of the students. Sixty percent of the students in the class of 2008 were accepted into 4-year colleges. The school encourages students to exceed the University of California A-G requirements. The performance of students on the standardized tests is shown on page 3. On the most recent survey, 91% of the students responded that CVCHS is a safe place to learn and a pleasant place to be. Ninety-four percent of the students indicate that they found the classrooms and facilities adequate.

### SAT Scores



### ITED Comparisons for 9th grade





## Chapter II: Progress Report

The 2003 WASC Visiting Committee left the school six recommendations. Excellent progress was made on all of the recommendations. One of the recommendations was directed at expanding the elective curriculum. The school has continued to add electives with student input. Some classes that were added are: Advanced Computers, a Custom Car Interior Design Course, AP Microeconomics, Honors U.S. History, Science Fiction Movie Myths, and AP Spanish Literature. The school also added a Chapel/Auditorium in 2007 and a full-time female counselor and guidance secretary in 2003.

The 2006 Visiting Committee left the following five recommendations:

- 1. Focus and Home groups should be reformulated to evaluate the four WASC/FOL categories.**

The school has addressed this recommendation by establishing a new steering committee to oversee the WASC process from year to year, reestablishment of Focus and Home Groups, developing a 75 page WASC handbook for the faculty and providing faculty in-service days to discuss WASC requirements.

- 2. Additional effort should be made in gathering both summative and formative assessment, not just from standardized tests, but also from student work such as portfolios, projects, writing, and oral presentations.**

The school has met this recommendation.

**3. The school community needs to begin using standardized test scores to drive change on campus.**

The guidance office provides staff with test result data which is used by departments to modify their curriculum. It has also enabled the department heads to develop departmental rubrics as well as cross-departmental rubrics.

**4. Schoolwide rubrics and grading keys need to be developed to assist the faculty in analyzing, in an objective manner, what it means to accomplish each of the ESLRs at CVCHS.**

Much progress has been made in this area with regards to assessments. Rubrics have also been created for English essays and cross-departmental rubrics for term papers. The curriculum mapping project has helped teachers become more aware of aligning their instruction with the ESLRs.

**5. The school should consider hiring a part-time curriculum coordinator to help with the implementation of standards, the development of rubrics, and help facilitate the WASC process.**

The school was unable to implement this recommendation due to budgetary constraints. However, two teachers were given an extra planning period to facilitate the WASC process. In addition, department heads have assumed much of the responsibility for adopting standards and developing rubrics.

### **Chapter III: Self-Study Process**

The school's mission statement is to develop students who are:

- *Cultivating responsible Christian adults*
- *Valuing academic excellence*
- *Connecting Biblical truths with everyday living*
- *Shaping Christ-like character*

The philosophy of education reads:

*The educational philosophy of Central Valley Christian High School is based on the firm foundation of God's Word as it is revealed in the Bible and interpreted in the Reformed confessional standards. The design of the curriculum of CVCHS reflects a desire that our children and their children after them may fear the Lord their God as long as they live by keeping his decrees and commands (Deut. 6:2)*

#### **Expected Schoolwide Learning Results**

The Central Valley Christian High School ESLRs were first developed in the beginning of 2001 by the faculty. In 2002, two faculty members revised, edited, and presented them to the entire faculty, School Board, and the Executive Committee for consideration and approval. The ESLRRs were also posted on the website and input from the families at large was solicited. This edition of the ESLRs was adopted in 2003. The current ESLRs were reviewed and modified by a faculty committee and presented to the Education Committee, School Board, and Executive Committee prior to the school's WASC mid-term review in 2006. After approval, the ESLRs were communicated to the students and parents. Each classroom and student area has the ESLRs posted in a prominent place.

#### **Parameters of the Self-Study**

##### **1. Involvement and collaboration of all stakeholders in the self-study.**

All Central Valley adult stakeholders were actively involved in the self-study process. The current ESLRs were developed by the faculty and approved by the Education Committee and School Board. Focus groups consisted of faculty, staff, and parents. Students were able to give feedback to the committees through the student home group.

##### **2. The clarification of the school's purpose and schoolwide learning results.**

The Focus On Learning process was the basis for the school's self-study and resulted in some discussion of the school's ESLRs. The last revision of the school's ESLR's took place in 2005-2006. There is a process to review and revise the ESLRs, but it does not occur on a regular basis.

##### **3. The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria and expected schoolwide learning results.**

The school is justifiably proud of the high quality of the education that the students of CVC receive. The teachers are qualified and dedicated to the mission of the school. The school offers

comprehensive academic programs and rich, varied, and responsive co-curricular programs. The parents, school, and students are especially proud of the athletic, music, art, and drama programs which have brought honors and accolades to the school from various competitions.

The school provides Honors and Advanced Placement courses as well as a full industrial arts program. The Learning Resource Program supports students in their core classes while also providing remedial instruction. The guidance office provides the administration and faculty with ample data to help in the assessment of student progress. The departments have developed rubrics for their courses and curriculum maps that include the standards and ESLRs addressed during different units of study. Lesson plans identify which ESLRs are being addressed during the lesson. Departments have also developed rubrics that assess the ESLRs to be used at various times during the school year.

**4. The development of a schoolwide action plan that integrates subject area/program and support plans to address identified growth needs.**

The school has developed a schoolwide action plan that has five components. Not all of the components have evolved from the growth areas in the self-study. The action plan items should be reviewed to insure that all portions address areas that impact student learning

**5. The development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the action plan.**

The school has developed an adequate system to monitor the implementation of the school's action plan.

## Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

### CATEGORY A. ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING

#### A1. School Purpose Criterion

- **To what extent has the school established a clear statement of purpose that reflect the beliefs and philosophy of the institution?**
- **To what extent is the purpose defined further by adopted expected schoolwide learning results that form the basis of the educational program for every student?**

Central Valley Christian High School has clearly articulated a mission statement and philosophy of education and goals which are found on the school website and in the Student Handbook. The mission statement (which was adopted by the Education Committee, School Board, and Executive Committee) reads:

- *Cultivating responsible Christian adults*
- *Valuing academic excellence*
- *Connecting Biblical truths with everyday living*
- *Shaping Christ-like character*

The philosophy of education reads:

*The educational philosophy of Central Valley Christian High School is based on the firm foundation of God's Word as it is revealed in the Bible and interpreted in the Reformed confessional standards. The design of the curriculum of CVCHS reflects a desire that our children and their children after them may fear the Lord their God as long as they live by keeping his decrees and commands (Deut. 6:2)*

Accompanying the philosophy of education are goals that "are clearly stated expressions of what is educationally important to CVCHS." These goals are *God at the center, A Love of Learning, Developing a Value System, and Reflected in the High School Curriculum*. Each goal has an explanatory paragraph that accompanies it which specifies what the students are expected to do and includes expected levels of performance and relevant Scripture references.

These statements reflect the emphasis CVCHS places on academic achievement, learning the Reformed doctrine, and learning to live one's faith daily. The parent survey shows that 98% of the respondents agree that the goals of the school are directed toward student learning in light of its philosophy of Christian education.

The current ESLRs were revised from the 2003 version in order to be clearer, easier to relate to, and easier to focus on. The Education Committee, School Board, and Executive Committee were involved, and the faculty community that re-wrote the ESLRs presented them many times to the faculty and groups of parents from the various committees that comprise the Board of Education.

A template for daily lesson planning that focuses on the ESLRs is in use. The template is very comprehensive and helps teachers intentionally create lessons that address the ESLRs. Departments were asked to develop discipline-specific rubrics to measure the effectiveness and alignment of the ESLRs to instruction. These rubrics are used informally by teachers at various times during the year. The curriculum maps contain the ESLRs that are addressed during each unit of study.

Currently CVCHS has two sets of goals that are not as concordant as they could be. The level of student performance indicated in the ESLRs is not as rigorous as the language used in the goals. The ESLRs contain language like “*with comprehension*”, “*clearly enough*”, and “*have an opportunity to*”, while the goals state that the school’s “*emphasis will be on synthesizing, applying, and implementing*”. CVCHS might consider revising the ESLRs in order to combine the two sets of goals to reflect what all stakeholders CVCHS want each graduate to achieve.

## **A2. Governance Criterion**

- **To what extent does the governing authority adopt policies which are consistent with the school purpose and support the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results for the school?**
- **To what extent does the governing authority delegate implementation of these policies to the professional staff?**
- **To what extent does the governing authority monitor results?**

The School Board was involved in the crafting and approval of the mission statement and ESLRs. The Board Policy Manual clearly states policies and procedures regarding the selection, composition, and specific duties of the Board. The Board sees its role as keeping the schools actions and programs consistent with the vision and mission of the school. The Board sees itself as a policy-setting body, and is in frequent communication with the administrators. The Superintendent and Principal are empowered and expected to implement the policies that the Board adopts. CVCHS faculty has been encouraged by the Board, both verbally and financially, to attend WASC and curriculum mapping workshops, create WASC-themed faculty in-service days, and develop co-curricular activities like mission trips to support the achievement of the ESLRs. The Board has been very involved in the WASC self-study process and formulation of the ESLRs.

The Board has approved a significant resource allocation toward RenWeb, a comprehensive school management program that allows for administrators and department heads to, among many other functions, check grades against standardized testing data that can be used to evaluate the achievement of ESLRs.

The Board has tasked the Education Committee with conducting a curriculum review of three to four departments per year in regards to school purpose, standards, ESLRs, and student achievement. The fact that the Education Committee is made up of current CVCHS parents ensures more stakeholder participation in program decisions. The Education Committee is in

close communication with the administration and department heads. A faculty representative also sits on this committee ensuring that the faculty has a voice.

Board members conduct random monthly campus-wide observations in order to monitor the results of the school's programs. The Education Committee provides monthly WASC updates to the Board. Through the evaluation of the administrator, the Board reviews the progress on yearly goals that are developed in light of WASC/ESLR-related concerns. Besides conducting their own research, the Board also receives reports from various committees that involve administrators, parents, and teachers.

### **A3. School Leadership Criterion**

- **To what extent does the school leadership make decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the school on student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results?**
- **To what extent does the school leadership empower the staff?**
- **To what extent does the school leadership encourage commitment, participation and shared accountability for student learning?**

The curriculum mapping project has led the faculty to focus on standards and the ESLRs in formulating courses and lesson plans. The principal has developed a lesson plan template for classroom observations that requires the teachers to focus on standards, ESLRs, and essential questions. The RenWeb software includes grade books that help the appropriate faculty and the principal compare classroom grades and standardized test data. The RenWeb software also includes data analytics that will assist faculty and guidance counselors in interpreting test data.

The principal also spends significant time with new teachers, providing mentoring, orientations, and professional development regarding proven teaching methods and practices. He helps facilitate an atmosphere of collegiality that permeates that faculty. Many faculty mentioned the relationships, academic freedom, and support present at CVCHS as their favorite things about working at the school.

The principal is actively involved in ensuring that the ESLRs are being addressed in the school programs. He conducts student WASC observations in the classrooms to document what activities are taking place and how they address the ESLRs. Professional development time was used to create a WASC In-Service information manual for all faculty. During end-of-the-year meeting with staff, the principal asks how each staff member is promoting the ESLRs in their teaching and well as ways that he can help reduce any anxieties or provide support.

A curriculum guide, which includes departmental standards and course mapping, and a WASC handbook were developed for the faculty. In-services have focused on student achievement, rubrics, research-based instruction, and multiple intelligences. The principal has asked departments to analyze testing data in order to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. The guidance department has been reorganized in order to focus more on student achievement and helping students plan for their post-high school goals.

The principal allows department heads to be involved in setting yearly budgets and interviewing prospective teachers. There are several volunteer groups and committees comprised of parents and faculty who work with the principal in improving the school and monitoring progress toward the ESLRs and school purpose. The department heads communicate regularly with the principal in regards to budget, course offerings, professional development needs, and student achievement. The principal maintains an open door policy.

#### **A4. Staff Criterion**

- **To what extent are the school leadership and staff qualified for their assigned responsibilities?**
- **To what extent are the school leadership and staff committed to the school's purpose?**
- **To what extent does the school leadership and staff engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning?**

The Principal holds a Master's degree in Administration and Supervision. The faculty holds a variety of degrees (6% Ph.D., 29% MA/MS, and 62% BA/BS) and is encouraged to maintain or obtain their credentials. Generally, teachers are teaching within their fields of expertise. The average teaching experience is 12.8 years.

The faculty has been a part of the process of developing the ESLRs and 93% respond that CVCHS has a clear mission statement of philosophy that reflects the beliefs of the institution. Eighty-six percent of the 28-member staff responded that the ESLRs are incorporated into the curriculum.

Funds are available to faculty members to participate in workshops, conferences, or seminars as well as take discipline-related graduate level courses. A mentoring program has been developed for new teachers in order to acclimate them to the culture and expectations of CVCHS. The principal uses research-based professional development to show new teachers effective methods and routines for use with high school students. The department heads structure professional development, both formal and informal, within their departments. The faculty comes together for professional development both before and during the school year. Teachers are given the opportunity to participate in national and local conferences as well as regional workshops off-site.

Student achievement data shows a promising picture. Generally speaking, SAT data shows sustainable gains in Math with increasing gains in Critical Reading. SAT writing scores are trending downward by 3 points, but have only been administered for two years. The school is offering writing courses for juniors and seniors during the 2009-2010 academic year to address this need. ACT data is inconsistent with large gains (16 NRP points on the Composite Score for 2006-2007) to moderate losses (-4 points in 05-06 and -6 points in 07-08). The data provided shows a marked difference in cohort groups when analyzing the ITED scores with gains being made by younger cohorts, a good trend to maintain. After identifying any significant gains or

losses in standardized test scores in a cohort group, the faculty can analyze teaching practices, program changes, or other factors that may have contributed to the change in scores. This process can validate new methods or resources and help teachers to maintain and improve upon gains.

The 2007-2008 school year shows an increase in the number of students enrolled in AP (7 students) and Honors classes (15 students). All students who took the AP Calculus test in 2007 received the highest score. Students who took the AP Spanish Language test all received scores that qualify for college credit, a marked improvement from 0 in 05-06 and 04-05. The number of lifetime CSF members is also on the rise from ten students in the class of 2005 to twenty-seven students in the class of 2008.

It is important that a staff development plan be established that clearly identifies areas of focus and the most efficacious manner to provide the faculty with meaningful tools for growth. The communication and collegiality that exists between the department heads, faculty, and the principal will facilitate this without much extra effort. Interpreting assessment data, professional learning communities, research-based teaching methods, and a method for evaluation and accountability for implementation of new strategies are all relevant topics in forming the plan.

#### **A5. School Environment Criterion**

- **To what extent does the school have a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that reflects the school's purpose?**
- **To what extent is the school environment characterized by a respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support, and high expectations for each student?**

CVCHS has an honor code that emphasizes biblical integrity and the development of good Christian character. The conduct section of the student handbook outlines consequences for misbehavior in various areas like substance abuse, tobacco use, weapons, and vehicle policies. The student dignity policy in the handbook states that “*CVCHS intends to provide its employees and students an environment that is free of offensive kinds of behavior.*”

Faculty members are held up as role models for responsible behavior and mentors in cultivating a Christ-like character. Ninety-four percent of the parents surveyed responded that the teachers and staff provide good role models for adult behavior. Each student is required to take an honor pledge that upholds the school's mission statement. The mission statement aims to shape a Christ-like character that emphasizes trust, caring, and support. The school's discipline policy is redemptive and restorative rather than punitive. Eighty-seven percent of the parents who responded to the survey agree with the school's approach to discipline, and 85% of the students surveyed feel that CVCHS is safe and pleasant.

The staff, students, and parents interviewed during the visit overwhelmingly commented on the feeling of community and family that exists at CVCHS. Care and concern are expressed both on and off campus between stakeholders. There is a strong sense of a learning community unified

by a shared purpose of quality and relevant Christian education paired with rigorous academic instruction that glorifies God and develops the unique talents of all individuals.

CVCHS takes precautions to ensure the safety of its stakeholders. All substitute teachers, coaches, and school employees are fingerprinted and undergo background checks. All employees are First Aid and CPR certified. Written policies for code red and fire drills exist and are given to all school employees. Fire escape plans are posted in buildings on campus. To make sure that these procedures are second nature, regular drills should become a calendared event on the master schedule.

The WASC parent survey reveals that 92% of the parents believe that CVCHS has high expectations for student performance. The school offers a Learning Resource Program in addition to Honors and AP classes to make sure that all students are able to maximize their potential. Cavalier Preview Day opens up the school to students from other schools in the interest of increasing the exposure of CVCHS to the public and attracting a more diverse student body.

#### **A6. Reporting Student Progress Criterion**

- **To what extent does the school leadership and staff regularly assess student progress toward accomplishing the school's expected schoolwide learning results?**
- **To what extent does the school leadership and staff report student progress to the rest of the school community?**

There are formative and summative assessments used frequently at CVCHS. Lesson plans show a variety of assessments used at various time during the cycle of instruction to ensure that students are achieving the ESLRs and satisfying lesson objectives. The principal conducts informal observations, walk throughs, and formal observations in order to assess the alignment of instruction with the ESLRs and school mission. The School Board members conduct monthly visits to classrooms and report their findings during the monthly Board meetings.

Standardized testing information is made available to all staff members. This information would be a welcome addition to the school website in order to further publicize the success of the CVCHS program to the public at large. The administration requests that teachers and department heads use this information to drive instruction and refine course emphases and/or curriculum maps.

The self-study makes mention of new strategies to align the program intentionally with the ESLRs and school goals linked to the mission statement like lesson plan templates, ESLR specific rubrics, and curriculum maps. Departments may consider developing anchor assignments aligned with specific ESLRs as an additional, formalized way to check student progress towards achieving the ESLRs.

Quarterly report cards are distributed and grades are available on-line or by asking for a hard copy from the teacher. The RenWeb program allows access to grades, assignment calendars, and lesson plans by staff, students, and parents. Depending on the level of implementation, this can be a vital tool in assessing and reporting student progress.

#### **A7. School Improvement Process Criterion**

- **To what extent does the school leadership facilitate school improvement which is driven by plans of action that will enhance quality learning for all students?**
- **To what extent does the school leadership have school community support and involvement?**
- **To what extent does the school leadership effectively guide the work of the school?**
- **To what extent does the school leadership provide for accountability through monitoring of the schoolwide action plan?**

The self-study includes action plans with items that will help enhance quality learning for all students. The professional development and graduate study work that is supported and encouraged by the leadership will make a difference in the classroom. The department heads are empowered to be responsive to their colleagues in terms of resource allocation and professional development based on the needs of students and courses in their disciplines.

The school leadership is made up of many people in the community of CVCHS and enjoys a large amount of support. Parents respond to needs of the school that involve time, talent, and treasure. The four foundational churches that started the school guarantee that any congregation member's child who wishes to attend the school will be given the resources to do so. Competitions, social, and athletic events are well attended by the community at large. Parents are a constant volunteer presence on campus.

#### **Areas of Strength for Organization for Student Learning Category**

- CVCHS has a clear mission, purpose, and philosophy of education.
- CVCHS has strong community support for students, staff, and the administration.
- CVCHS has structures and procedures in place to assess student achievement.
- CVCHS offers resources for professional development for staff.
- The School Board is a policy-making body and delegates the daily running of the school to the administrator.
- The Principal empowers and supports the faculty.
- CVCHS has high expectations for students and is a safe, caring campus.
- The school has procedures and routines in place to share student achievement results with the community.

#### **Key Issues for Organization for Student Learning**

- Consider calendaring regular code red and fire drills on the master schedule. Examine/define the roles and procedures for evacuation of students, control of the media during a crisis situation, notification of parents, and release of students.

- Develop a staff development plan using data to identify areas of focus with the greatest impact on student achievement and achieving the ESLRs for all students. The plan should include specific evaluation procedures and timelines.
- Fully develop the capabilities of the RenWeb program providing education for all stakeholders on how to use the program effectively.
- Revisit the school goals and ESLRs in order to make a cohesive set of goals to drive the school's program.

**Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Self-study report
- Standardized testing data
- Interviews with focus groups
- Classroom observations
- Website
- RenWeb brochure
- Professional development logs, in-service agendas
- Parent, staff, and faculty surveys
- Rubrics
- WASC and student handbook
- Curriculum maps
- Lesson plan template
- School Board Manual and Policy book
- Agendas and meeting minutes

## CATEGORY B. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

### B1. What Students Learn Criterion

- **To what extent does the school provide a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the school's purpose and results in student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results through successful completion of any course of study offered?**

The school's curriculum mapping project provides important scope and sequence of information that allows departments to provide a coherent curriculum throughout the high school experience. The published set of competencies, skills, and assessments allows for intentional alignment to national/state standards, the school's Christian focus, and the ESLR's.

The CVC course description guide helps maintain continuity and consistency when staff changes occur. The course description guide includes a philosophical statement, course description, objectives, course requirements, assessments, materials needed, entrance requirements, and the curriculum maps. The parents see a strong emphasis (98% of respondents) on Christian education in the goals of the school. The emphasis placed on intra-departmental collaboration results in a coherent curriculum that is aligned with the school's purpose and ESLRs.

CVCHS works diligently to craft a curriculum that meets the school's purpose and mission of providing a quality Christian education. Five of the nine departments use the California State standards to drive instruction which helps students who transfer in or out of CVCHS. Four of the nine departments use either National or proprietary standards. This decision was made based on the rigor of the national standards and the use of the ITED which measures achievement based on national, rather than state standards. The Bible Department has written its own standards under the guidance of a faculty member who holds a Master of Divinity degree. The Science Department has developed its own origin standards which address the dissonance between the Reformed faith and the current philosophy of science. Importantly, students are instructed in how to critically evaluate scientific theory, methods, and philosophies.

The student community profile indicates a high rate of attendance, verifying that students are receiving the intended curriculum. The enrollment in Honors and AP courses increased last year over previous years. AP Calculus and AP Spanish test results show a steady increase (at least 50% each year) in the amount of students receiving a score of 4 or higher validating the rigor of the instruction.

The course offerings at Central Valley Christian High School exceed the minimum requirements by subject for University of California admission. The number of students accepted to four-year universities has steadily increased over the past three years, validating the relevance and effectiveness of the courses offered at CVCHS and the excellent quality of instruction provided by the faculty. The staff survey reflects that 83% consider CVCHS as having high expectations

for student achievement.

The curriculum is differentiated in order to meet the needs of high achieving students through AP and Honors classes, as well as special needs students, who receive academic support through the LRC and modified Math and English classes. Teachers take advantage of opportunities for continuing education to enhance their professional expertise in their fields through attending conferences and seminars as well as participating in post-graduate course work. Intra-department collaboration helps faculty mentor each other and problem-solve solutions for challenges that present themselves throughout the year.

CVCHS has developed electives that reflect the post-graduate goals of the student body and reflect the agricultural community in which it is located. CVCHS has developed a process for forming elective classes with input from all stakeholders. Elective course proposal forms are available for download from the school website. Proposals are accepted every fall for the following academic year. Suggestions of electives that are and have been offered have come from parents, teachers, and students. Every spring the principal circulates a list of prospective classes for student sign ups. The principal, in consultation with the Board and Education Committee, examines budgetary and scheduling concerns alongside student demand and course relevance before publishing a list of electives to be offered the next year.

CVCHS needs to examine the writing components of all classes as SAT writing scores are lower than the other subtests. The new writing course that is offered next academic year is a positive step toward improving student achievement in this area.

## **B2. How Students Learn Criterion**

- **To what extent does the professional staff use research-based knowledge about teaching and learning?**
- **To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results?**

CVCHS faculty uses a variety of research-based teaching methods. Instruction is geared towards a variety of learning styles through the use of lecture, videos, graphic organizers, mnemonic raps/poems, authentic assessment, and a good balance of collaborative and independent work. Portfolios, guest speakers, projects, and discussion groups are used in addition to the traditional lecture-based teaching model. Students are encouraged to become producers of knowledge rather than consumers due to an instructional emphasis on critical thinking, problem solving, and the application of knowledge.

Hands-on learning and project-based instruction prepare CVCHS students for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. The variety of teaching styles prepares the students for the challenges of higher education. The faculty is intentional about their methods and show great professionalism in their unit and lesson planning. The majority of the faculty is very open to searching out new ideas and honing their craft to positively impact student achievement.

The real-world experience of the staff help guide them in making instructional decisions that reflect the skills graduates will need in the work force. Classes in personal finance and accounting are taught by an instructor with over 30 years experience in the field. The administration's support of professional development and conference attendance creates a community that welcomes new ideas. The faculty is encouraged to evaluate available research and take advantage of professional development opportunities in order to improve the program of CVCHS.

There is an emphasis on creating a curriculum that operates at the synthesis and evaluation levels of Bloom's taxonomy when designing lessons. Instruction is created in order to accommodate a variety of learning styles and reinforce the strengths of the specific students in that particular section of the course.

Departments work together to identify professional development needs, conferences, opportunities, and activities. Sharing these needs with the principal will help develop a comprehensive staff development plan that tackles relevant issues and supplies staff with the tools they need to achieve the ESLR's and continue to improve upon their high levels of student achievement .

Service learning is incorporated into individual classrooms as well as in cohorts in order to address ESLRs. This gives opportunities for students to live their faith through actively strengthening the horizontal relationship of all humans because of the vertical relationship they have with God. Electives and co-curricular offerings provide a wide variety of courses to address a myriad of interests and gifts (athletics, fine arts, performing arts, Film Studies, Agricultural Science, Microeconomics, and Medical Science). The Learning Resource Center allows students with learning challenges to receive equal access to the curriculum.

The inclusion of current research regarding 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching methods and how to apply them to the high school classroom should be considered in future professional development planning. Routinely discussing effective pedagogy and reflecting on implementation of new ideas will improve the effectiveness of professional development. These professional learning communities can use assessment data to inform instruction and methodologies in a collaborative setting. The staff responded that 82% believe that sufficient resources are provided for professional growth, while students responded that 79% felt that teaching methods are conducive to student learning.

### **B3. How Assessment Is Used Criterion**

- **To what extent is teacher and student use of assessment frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process?**
- **To what extent are the assessment results the basis for measurement of each student's progress toward the expected schoolwide learning results?**
- **To what extent are the assessment results the basis for regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instruction?**
- **To what extent are the assessment results the basis for the allocation of resources?**

Teachers have developed an effective system of summative assessment that includes daily activities, projects, and exams for each course. Chapter 3 lists a variety of formative and summative assessments used at CVCHS and the self-study identifies this as a strength. The Science Department has formalized their data-driven instructional methods. As units are planned several formative and summative assessments are designed to specifically address objectives and ESLRs. All lesson plan templates and curriculum maps list assessments used to ensure that students are learning and have the opportunity to be successful in fulfilling the requirements of the class and ESLRs.

Students are given opportunities to revisit assignments and other informal assessments and improve on them in light of instructor feedback. The RenWeb program allows for assignments to be downloaded at home if a student is absent so they can keep current with the class. Some teachers have homework binders in the classroom for students to reference in order to be ready for assessments. Teachers use multiple measures (test and quizzes, hands-on projects, and dramatic presentations) to have students demonstrate the ownership of knowledge and concepts taught.

Currently the guidance department disseminates the ITED, PLAN, PSAT, and SAT data to department chairs and the administration in order to inform and personalize instruction for the unique needs of each class. The administration, guidance department, and department heads of areas tested review the data from the ITED, PLAN, PSAT, SAT and ACT assessments in order to determine how CVCHS scores in comparison to local, state, and national public and private schools.

Informal conversations among department members and comparisons with testing data do affect course criteria. The Chemistry teacher interviewed students who took the SAT 2 test in order to find out how he could improve the preparation of his students. The interview resulted in an increase in labs covering a specific subject and his revision of objectives based on the standards. The teacher then reviewed his grade book and validated that his new approach significantly increased the amount of students who mastered the concept.

ITED and PLAN assessments are administered in the Fall providing vital information for instructors regarding the strengths, interests, and needs of their particular students. SAT data can give valuable feedback to instructors regarding trends that might point to strengths and growth areas for departments, while PSAT data allow for instructors of senior level classes to target needs with laser-like focus. The data should be presented in a longitudinal fashion in order to facilitate cohort analysis (following a class from grade to grade in order to assess the rate of student achievement from year to year). Using the assessment data from these instruments, departments can set measurable goals and targets for students and reflect on pedagogical practices that may have yielded the results.

Rubrics have been developed to assess the attainment of specific ESLR's by students. Curriculum maps for classes include which ESLR's are addressed in the course, how they are assessed, and what rubric is used for the assessment. Reflective assignments like journaling or surveys can help teachers understand the extent to which the students see the link to course work and attainment of the ESLR's.

Curriculum assessments are used to help adjust objectives, pacing, and assessment techniques, proving effective in Physical Education and the Visual Arts in particular. Teachers use information gleaned from formative assessments in making decisions regarding re-teaching important course concepts. AP and CLEP scores are used in evaluating the efficacy of upper-level classes.

According to the survey, parents have a high level of satisfaction with the school's curriculum in all subject areas with 59% of respondents rating the school as excellent and 36% rating it as good. Students surveyed responded that they have a high level of satisfaction with the fair and accurate evaluation gained by teacher assessments.

### **Areas of Strength for Curriculum and Instruction Category**

- The CVCHS course guide includes intentional mapping of the curriculum to ensure a rigorous and effective program of instruction for all courses.
- The high level of intra-departmental collaboration results in a cohesive curriculum addressing the needs of all students in a meaningful way that connects to the school's purpose.
- The faculty of CVCHS provides a variety of ways for students to show their ownership of vital concepts and knowledge.
- A variety of pedagogical styles and assessments is used throughout the campus.
- Data driven instruction is evident throughout the campus.
- Opportunities are provided for children with a need for accelerated or remedial curriculum.
- CVCHS students score high on national standardized and criterion –referenced tests.
- Classrooms and the library display high quality student work.

### **Key Issues for Curriculum and Instruction**

- Consider developing a staff development plan that includes research-based teaching methods and fully utilizing RenWeb capabilities. The plan should include means to assess if the professional development has any impact on student achievement.
- Provide longitudinal data for analysis by departments in order to check on patterns of student growth and reflect on practices that may have caused these changes.
- Develop a document that includes the standards used for each department that can be included in the CVCHS course guide, syllabi, or on the website.

**Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Parent/student survey

- Standardized testing results
- Interviews with all stakeholders
- Classroom observations
- Focus group interviews
- Service learning logs/records
- Rubrics
- Faculty meeting minutes
- Collaboration meeting agendas, minutes, and observations
- Professional development logs
- Student work examination

## C. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

### C1 Student Connectedness Criterion

- **To what extent are students connected to a system of support services, activities and opportunities at the school and within the community that meet the challenges of the curricular/co-curricular program in order to achieve the expected schoolwide learning results?**

CVCHS has built support for students into its organizational structure, expecting their staff to model positive behavior and to counsel students for success in school and in their daily lives. From the school secretary to the coaches, school staff works to keep students connected to daily opportunities at the school. Students have many choices about their courses, sports, religious activities, and recreation. Students also may get help academically from the guidance counselor, the librarian, the technology specialists, the resource specialists, and the faculty.

If a student needs a referral or an intervention because of difficulty in school, the teachers often talk with the student to find out how they can help. Teachers design their lessons to engage students with different learning styles. If the student in need is enrolled in the Learning Resource Program, the resource specialists provide him or her academic support. The guidance counselors are knowledgeable about referral services for crisis intervention in the Visalia area. Discipline at the school is seen by students and teachers as fair and consistent.

CVCHS has connections with the larger educational community in the area. Teachers have used resources and training from the local school districts and the County Office of Education. Students also take classes in the local community college if they are interested in subjects not offered at CVCHS. Students from the music and art program participate in countywide programs and competitions. Sports teams compete with teams from the Central Sequoia League and beyond. Seventy-four percent of students enrolled during the 2007-2008 school year participated in the athletic program. CVCHS has 27 teams that participate in any of 12 different sports. The school has won many championships. Many teachers indicated that they join with other Christian School International teachers for in-service training.

Students have leadership opportunities on the student council, in theater productions, in chapel, and sports. They are challenged to avoid risky behavior through STEP UP, which offers monthly safe social events. Students are required to earn community service hours, which provide them valuable experiences serving in both local and international projects. Their service learning is carefully tracked in students' files and is included on transcripts. Students have opportunities to explore career options through fine arts, industrial arts, finance, agricultural science, medical science, and service projects. The counselors have used an interest inventory with some students as a tool for career exploration.

## **C2 Parent/Community Involvement**

- **To what extent does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to ensure that parental and community involvement is integral to the school's established support system for students?**

The school's mission, philosophy, and practice emphasize the connection between family and education. Parents participate in planning, fund-raising, coaching, and offering alternative recreation, such as STEP UP events. Parents serve on the School Board and various committees, where they play a part in the ongoing program of the school. Parents have started a Cavalier Preview Day, to draw potential students to the school. Parents meet and work together in many events from sports games to graduation.

CVCHS shares information with families through its website, back to school night, newsletters, and information kiosk. An interactive system, RenWeb, allows parents and students to view grades, homework, and due dates for assignments.

The community is involved with CVCHS through a Fall Festival and a spring dinner and auction. The school facilities are available to community groups for use. The foundational churches promote school activities through their church bulletins. School games, drama, and music performances are open to the public.

The school contributes to its surrounding community through charitable service. Canned foods are collected every year at Thanksgiving. A social studies teacher has instituted a pay-it-forward project which requires students to research, plan, and implement a service project. A Spanish teacher takes students to Magdalena, Guatemala during the summer to perform mission service. Also have the opportunity to travel to Mexico or Los Angeles to practice their Spanish while providing mission service. Students work in local non-profit programs, earning at least 40 hours of service towards graduation. Some non-profit agencies served have been Visalia Rescue Mission, SPCA, and Miracle Baseball League. Students are encouraged to find service opportunities where they can share their talents with the community and beyond.

### **Areas of Strength for Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth**

- The staff and school leadership are committed to positive outcomes for all students.
- Ninety-one percent of students say the school is a safe place to learn.
- Ninety-eight percent of parents say the school goals lead to a good Christian education.
- Consistent interaction continues with the foundational church community.
- Parent volunteers are involved in school activities and planning.
- The school website provides access to schedules and resources.
- RenWeb provides grades, assignments, and handouts to parents and students who are able to access it.
- The excellent resources in the library, computer labs, and classrooms are available to all students.

### **Key Issues for Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth**

- The school needs to complete implementation of its on-line tool (RenWeb).
- The school should consider offering more career exploration for students.
- The Learning Resource Center should explore using assistive technology to integrate accommodations with the instructional programs.

### **Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Self-study
- Job descriptions for staff
- Survey results from parents, students, staff
- Interviews with focus groups
- Observation in classrooms
- Resources from the counseling office and the LRC program

## **D. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **D1. Resource Criterion**

- **To what extent are the resources available to the school sufficient to sustain the school program and effectively used to carry out the school's purpose and student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results?**

Central Valley Christian School has a Development and Planning Committee as a function of its Board. The primary concern of the Development and Planning Committee's master plan (developed in the mid 1990's) has been student growth and structural development. All buildings that have been added in the last 10 years, such as the Classroom/Media Center, two science labs, and the chapel auditorium, have been paid for, leaving the school debt free.

Eighty-eight percent of the school's income is derived from tuition accounts, with the remaining funding coming from various fund drives, church donations, and individual donations. The school has an independent "Fall Drive" which is used for debt reduction and capital improvements. The primary commitment of the last Fall Drive in 2008 was directed towards the acquisition of 13 of the 26 acres annexed to the city of Visalia. The property would be used primarily for athletic practice fields.

A Human Resources Director has been hired by the Board to assume some of the responsibilities of the school's Finance Director and the Superintendent to allow each of them more time to focus on other respective duties, such as funding, building of the endowment, and development.

The school has also hired a full-time director of technology, as well as an assistant director. Fiber optics on the campus has made online computer access available at most computer locations, including the library and two computer labs. The school has created a web-site that "parents faculty, staff and students have appreciated." To ensure compatibility and best pricing, all computer and technology purchases are first approved and then made by the technology director with approval from the Superintendent.

All teachers are given the opportunity to express their budgetary needs for the following school year to their respective department heads. Textbook requests are reviewed and purchased on a rotational basis. These proposals are presented first to the principal, then the Finance Director and, finally, reviewed by the Superintendent, Human Resources Director, High School Education Committee, and Finance Committee for approval or adjustments based on budgetary constraints.

Teachers are salaried based on experience, credentials, and education. There is a comprehensive benefits package including a matching pension program at 6%. Faculty members with children receive discounts for enrollment at the school. Funds are made available to faculty to enroll in graduate classes and an allotment is made for each staff member to attend a professional seminar of their choice.

## **D2 Resource Planning Criterion**

- **To what extent do the governing authority and the school execute responsible resource planning for the future?**

The Board is comprised of parents with different vocational backgrounds in the community and are members of one of the four foundational churches of the school. Committee members may be parents do not have to be a member of the School Board and may be from other churches. Individual recommendations are reviewed by the Development and Planning Committee for appropriate research and review. The Development and Planning Committee has the final approval for any long range planning recommendations. The non-voting members of the Board are the Superintendent, Human Resources Director, and three school administrators, who are there for informational and planning purposes.

The Board has also instituted a committee called the Christian Education Promotions Committee who are charged with creating an efficient marketing and fundraising plan for the school. This committee is comprised of various staff members and administrators. This Committee has created “The Cavalier Preview Day”, which has been designed for potential 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and their families to get the feel for the high school for possible enrollment.

### **Areas of Strength for Resource Management and Development**

- The school is debt free.
- The Board is grounded in the mission of the school and proactive in regards to development.
- An attractive benefits package of medical, dental, life insurance as well as school matched pension plan of 6% with an available 403B plan is offered to all staff.
- The hiring of one full-time and one half-time technology employee suggests that the use and implementation of technology at the school is a priority.
- A clearly outlined budget approval and adjustment process exists.
- The newly created Cavalier Preview Day acts as a type of Open House for prospective students.
- The creation of a Human Resources Director position allows the Superintendent to spend more time in the area of fund raising and development.
- The potential acquisition of 13 acres from the city of Visalia will be used primarily as athletic practice fields.

### **Key Issues for Resource Management and Development**

No issues need to be addressed at this time.

**Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Self-study
- Interviews with Human resources and Finance personnel
- Focus group interview
- School Board reports

- Copy of the budget
- Conference with the Executive Committee
- Copy of the master plan for facilities and development

**Part B:**

**General Comments:**

**Schoolwide Areas of Strength**

1. The school provides excellent facilities that enhance the learning of students and are clean and safe.
2. There is a strong sense of pride in the school held by all stakeholders.
3. The campus is debt free and the Superintendent is working on developing the school's endowment and third source funding.
4. The leadership, faculty, and staff are competent and dedicated to the mission, philosophy of education, and purpose of the school.
5. Teachers are actively engaged in planning instruction to meet the ESLRs.
6. There is significant parental support and involvement of parents.
7. The Board is a policy making body that delegates the running of the school to the administrators who in turn empower their staff.
8. The students' positive behavior and motivation contribute to their high achievement on standardized tests.
9. The open and friendly attitude of students is evident in all settings on campus.
10. The students engage in relevant and meaningful community service that satisfies course requirements and helps put their faith into action.
11. Students have a voice about the programs that take place on campus like the chapel services, electives offered, and mission /recreational opportunities.
12. The school provides a rich academic and co-curricular program for all students.
13. CVCHS has an exceptional choral music and band program.
14. The counseling department is seen as an asset by the faculty and students, providing college, academic, and personal guidance through a variety of programs and activities.

**Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up**

1. The school should examine the mission statement, philosophy of education (and accompanying goals), and ESLRs in order to create one set of goals to guide the school program and clarify the school purpose.
2. The school should consider modifying the current process of staff development into a formalized staff development plan that addresses needs identified by assessment data, the faculty, and the community.
3. There is a need to include student input when revising the ESLRs.

## **Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement**

The schoolwide action plan consists of three components:

- *Action Plan # 1: A major effort will be made by CVC to educate the faculty and students regarding the school's theological and world view commitments.*
- *Action Plan # 2: Implement full abilities of Ren Web.*
- *Action Plan # 3: CVC will make better use of standardized test results for student counseling and curriculum review.*

### **Existing factors that support school improvement**

The schoolwide action plan was developed as a result of the school's self-study. The three components of the action plan, when satisfactorily completed, will enhance student learning. Provisions for staff development are included in the plan.

### **Impediments to school improvement that the school will need to overcome in order to accomplish any of the action plan sections**

The only potential impediment to the satisfactory completion of the schoolwide plan is funding. Funding for the resources has not been clearly identified and the total cost of implementing the action plan has not been determined.

### **Soundness of follow-up process to monitor accomplishment of schoolwide action plan**

The leadership team and school staff is committed to the satisfactory completion of the plan. A general concept of the follow-up process that the school will employ to monitor the progress in the completion of the schoolwide action plan is in place. The principal and his leadership team will be the primary group to monitor and also to report progress.