

Accreditation Standard #4:

Teaching and Learning: Assessment

Guiding Principle

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its purpose is to inform students regarding their learning progress and teachers regarding ways to adjust the curriculum and instruction to respond effectively to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates to the school community the progress of students in achieving the school's expectations for student learning as well as course-specific learning goals. Assessment results must be continually analyzed to improve curriculum and instruction.

Assessment needs to become an integral part of the teaching and learning process at Vancouver School of Arts and Academics. The PLC work has enlightened staff with regards to utilizing the concept of Formative Assessment and our plan is to engage in Professional Development and assist teachers with better understanding its value. Once teachers believe it informs instruction and students are more successful based upon the teacher actually knowing the student's level of understanding the buy-in will become more evident. (4.10) Our Superintendent has encouraged us to know every student by name and need ... Additionally we need to know what learning targets haven't been met as well.

The school improvement process at Vancouver School of Arts and Academics is challenging. Being in the top 5% of the schools in the State of Washington and a US News and World Report Silver Medal Winner 3 years in a row indicates that our students are overwhelmingly successful. But that is not true for all of our students. We need to continue the strategy of asking the Richard Dufour questions ... "how do we know they've learned it... What do we do when they don't... What do we do when they do?" Students know what learning is expected and how progress is measured (4.3). We're not certain we know if they've actually learned. On an every other week basis, teachers participate in Professional Learning Communities in order to collaborate generally support each other (4.6, 4.7). Our next challenge is to formulate assessments which provide more detailed information about learning.

Assessment of student learning at Vancouver School of Arts and Academics is formally presented to students and their families on a regular basis (eight times per year) via Progress Reports (4.8). In addition, in meeting our obligation to our parents, the Principal provides a newsletter chronicling our school improvement efforts and progress and/or meets with those students not meeting a standard of success to develop a plan for success. Additionally, staff members speak freely to parents and students about our efforts to improve and what our next steps may be, based upon data (4.9, 4.10).