

SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

**ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS,
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
FOR**

Shekou International School

Jingshan Villas, Nanhai Blvd.
Shenzhen, Guangdong Province,
People's Republic of China

April 13 - 17, 2014

WASC FOL 2013 International Edition

Visiting Committee Members

William Huyett, Chairperson

Retired Superintendent

Peter Corcoran

Director of Schools Seoul International School

Karen Rohrs

Director of Professional Learning, Hong Kong International School

Daniel Eschtruth

Head of ECE, Shanghai Community International School

Leanne Stanley-Rainbow

LS Digital Literacy Coordinator, Taipei American School

Christopher Schuster

High School Assistant Principal, Concordia International School Shanghai

Wang Guizhen

Guangdong University of Foreign Studies

Zhao Lixia

National Center for School Curriculum and Textbook Development

WASC FOCUS ON LEARNING OVERSEAS

VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

Chapter 1: Student/ Community Profile

Shekou International School (SIS) was established in 1988 by multiple oil companies. In 2004-2005, governance of the school was passed to International School Services (ISS), who oversees management operations today. An advisory council consisting of school community stakeholders provides feedback to the head of the school. SIS is accredited through WASC and the Chinese accreditation board, NCCT. SIS is also an International Baccalaureate World School that runs the IB Diploma Programme in the High School. SIS is located in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, in mainland China.

SIS serves expatriate students and is barred by Chinese law from serving host country nationals. Many SIS families are in China for jobs related to manufacturing. Samsung, LG, Daimler Northeast Asia Ltd., Husky Oil China Ltd., IKEA, Schlumberger, Wal-Mart, and Newfield contribute to the largest numbers of student enrollment.

The school currently serves approximately 760 students from its three levels of pre-school known as the Early Childhood Learning Center (ECLC) to the K-12th grade programs. Elementary is from Kindergarten–5th grade, middle school is 6-8th grade and high school is 9-12th grade. The school has been consistently growing at a rate of 16% per year. The student capacity for the school in its current state is 850-900 students.

SIS has a positive relationship with Shekou community businesses and governmental agencies and is located on leased land owned by the China Merchant Properties and the Bank of China. SIS is a member of both the European Union Chamber of Commerce and the American Chamber of Commerce in the Pearl Delta Region.

Current students come from 31 different countries with 21% USA, 20% Korea representing the largest populations. Hong Kong, Canada, France and Japan each make up approximately 7% and German and UK students each represent about 4% of the

population.

In the 2012-2013 school year, the elementary school had the largest division with approximately 345 students. The ECLC had approximately 150 students. The middle school had 144 students and the high school had 115 students. The school is closely balanced by gender. Student turnover is approximately 30% per year.

Facilities:

SIS has two campuses, the Bayside campus and the Jingshan (Mountainside/Parkside and French Bilingual Program) campus. The Bayside campus was renovated in 2006-7 and became the middle and high school campus in 2007-8. The Parkside building was renovated in 2008-9 and serves Grades 2-5. The Mountainside Campus was renovated in the summer of 2012. Facilities include gymnasiums, a swimming pool, sports field, theater, multipurpose room and a rooftop court. Both campuses provide wireless internet.

Programs:

There is an English as an Additional Language program (EAL) that serves approximately 107 students from K-8 with largest number of students being served from the elementary level. Instruction is in English, except for world language classes and the ECLC and elementary French Bilingual Program. Students can take Chinese, French, and German.

A Community Service/Service Learning Program is in place with a MS and HS requirement. A Guidance and Counseling Program exists in the ECLC, elementary, middle and high school levels.

Sports and Activities:

SIS is a member of the Association of China and Mongolia International Schools (ACAMIS) and the Southern Delta Region Conference (SDRC) sports conferences. Students play in tournaments in track, volleyball, badminton, swimming, basketball, touch rugby, and soccer.

After school activities also exist to provide students with new educational opportunities. There are programs in the ES, MS and HS.

Student Performance Data:

100% of SIS graduates matriculate to university. The high school GPA is consistently near 3.5 over the past three years and SAT averages range between 1700-1800 over the same period.

Class of 2013 GPA, SAT and PSAT Scores

| Name | GPA | SAT | PSAT |
|----------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1 | 4.01 | 2330 | 225 |
| 2 | 3.87 | 1730 | 144 |
| 3 | 3.08 | 1330 | 107 |
| 4 | 3.02 | 1230 | 116 |
| 5 | 3.87 | 1980 | 174 |
| 6 | 3.41 | 1850 | NA |
| 7 | 3.84 | 1990 | 170 |
| 8 | 3.66 | 1750 | |
| 9 | 3.92 | 2080 | 168 |
| 10 | 2.74 | 1640 | 146 |
| 11 | NA | NA | |
| 12 | 3.6 | 1450 | 121 |
| 13 | 3.74 | 1680 | 135 |
| 14 | 3.47 | 1730 | 141 |
| 15 | 3.37 | 1560 | 129 |
| 16 | 3.87 | NA | |
| 17 | 3.68 | 1710 | 131 |
| 18 | 3.84 | 1320 | 116 |
| Average | 3.6 | 1710 | 144.5 |

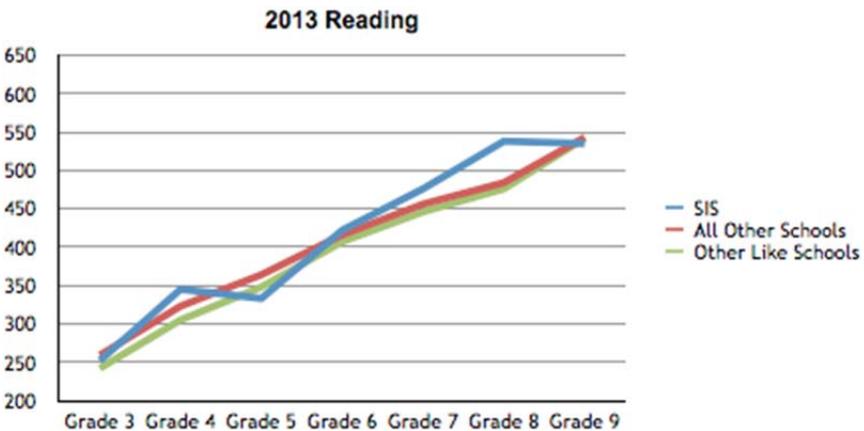
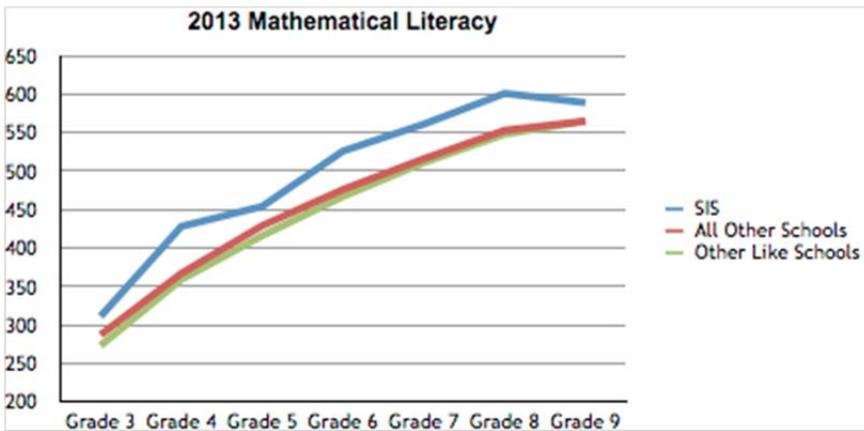
The IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) is open to all students but students may also receive IB certificates for individual classes and not participate in the full IBDP. The IBDP started in 2009 and the first cohort graduated in 2012. The first cohort scored above average when compared to other first cohort groups and at the world average for all IB graduates. SIS student averages grew in all areas in 2013.

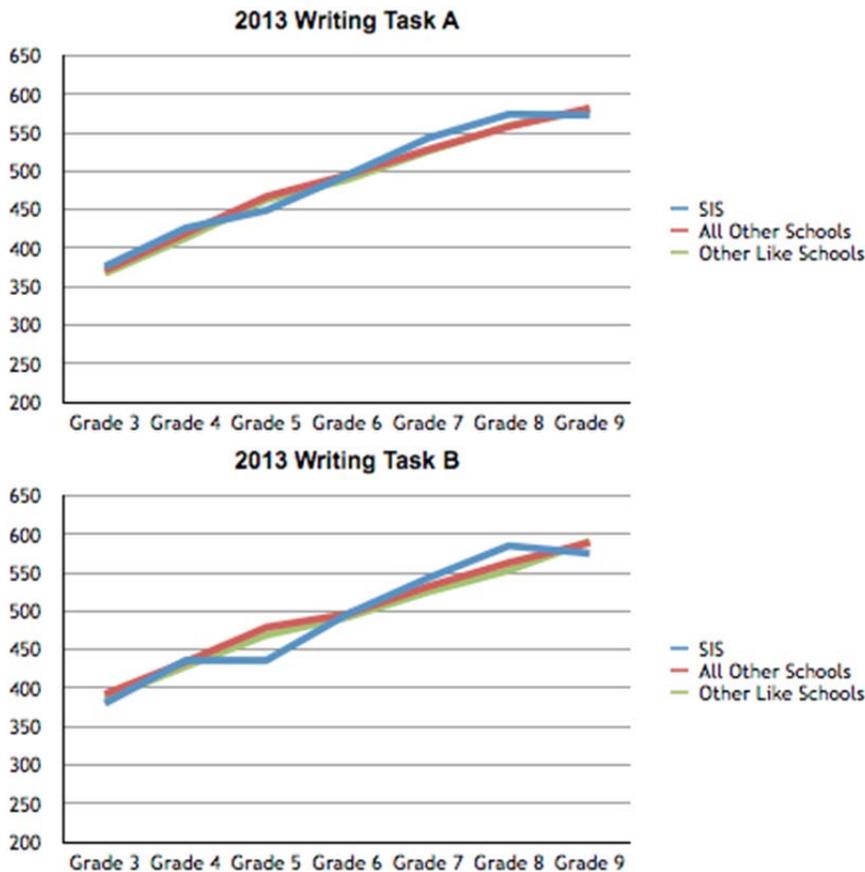
2012 and 2013 IB Diploma Programme Results Compared to World Averages

| | CO2012 | CO2013 |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Number of Full Diploma Students | 17 | 14 |
| Number of Courses Students | 1 | 4 |
| Total number of IB Students | 18 | 18 |
| World Average Pass Rate | 78.5 | 78.5 |
| SIS Average pass Rate | 71 | 86 |
| World Average Diploma Score | 29.5 | 29.5 |
| SIS Average Diploma Score | 29 | 32 |
| World Average Score per Subject | 4.6 | 4.6 |
| SIS Average Score per Subject | 4.63 | 5.22 |

Each year, in October, SIS administers the International School Assessment (ISA) tests in grades 3-9. SIS scores above most other schools in math and is near the same as other international schools in reading and writing.

ISA Data (SIS in Blue)





Staff:

SIS employs 169 people including seven administrators, 90 credentialed teaching faculty, 44 teacher assistants and 28 full-time support staff.

There is a school director who oversees all operations, a principal and assistant principal for the ES, a principal for MS/HS as well as a coordinator for the MS and an IBDP Coordinator for HS. There is also a Director for Curriculum and Learning and a Director of Learning Innovation who oversees three e-coaches.

SIS continues to add faculty as the school numbers grow. The majority of the 97 faculty are from the USA and 65% hold a Master’s Degree or higher. All staff are certified in their area of assignment, including all specialists. Professional development is funded through a combination of personal PD funds and school initiated programs.

By examining the data found in the profile, the Visiting Committee (VC) recognizes:

- SIS enrollment is at its highest ever and the population continues to grow.
- SIS students perform on average near or better than world averages on external assessments such as the SAT, International School Assessment (ISA), and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP).
- The SIS staff is highly trained and certified in their subject area(s).

Chapter II: Progress Report

Private education in China is increasingly attracting domestic and foreign investment, especially international schools. These schools serve the increasing middle class of both nationals and expatriates in China. The international school market has experienced explosive growth.

Enrollment at SIS has grown from 165 to 760 students during the past decade. To accommodate this growth, Bayside Campus was leased and renovated in 2006-07. In addition, the school renovated Mountainside Campus in the summer of 2012 to bring all three campuses up to modern school facilities standards. SIS is investigating options to improve its facilities to increase capacity to no more than 850 to 900 students.

One change in demographics is the increase in the number of EAL students. The school has responded to this change with the hiring of several EAL specialists who support student acquisition of English and help coach teachers to use differentiated strategies for English language learners.

Since the last WASC accreditation, the school has implemented a new International Baccalaureate Programme in the 11th and 12th grades.

Another significant change in the past six years is the school's upgrade of its Wi-Fi capacity. Recent improvements are allowing the school to use one-to-one devices as instructional tools and strategies. There is evidence that students are using iPads for presentations, writing projects and collections of work for their portfolios.

The school received a mid-term visit in 2011 that confirmed that they had made significant progress on the five recommendations from the Visiting Committee Report in 2008. The

mid-term visit also added two more recommended areas for critical follow-up. Listed below is a description of the progress made on the seven recommendations during the past three years.

Progress since 2011 on the Critical Areas for Follow-up from the 2008 and 2011 Visiting Committee Reports

1. The administration and stakeholders should establish a growth management plan to guide future school growth and expansion, including facility usage, operating procedures and student enrollment.

SIS renovated buildings at Mountainside during the spring and summer of 2012. This included repurposing the main administration building into classrooms and moving administration to a newly acquired building. Some minor modifications have been made to add an ECLC program to the French Center. From May to December of 2012 a complete overhaul of the internet service was completed leading to a change in platforms from PC to Apple equipment. To support this educational change spaces were converted into e-Learning spaces called Genius Bars at both Parkside and Bayside sites.

Recent student enrollment has been stable but increasing slowly. A study was done about the feasibility of moving to a larger site but it was concluded that the risks outweighed the benefits for the school to expand to another location. The current facility plan is to continue to modify and repurpose existing spaces to accommodate modest growth.

2. The administration, staff and all community stakeholders should investigate ways to enhance and improve classroom teaching and student learning in the Mandarin program, thereby ensuring a higher level of language proficiency and respect for the Chinese culture.

Mandarin teachers have done some revisions and enhancements to the curricular maps, performance standards and benchmarks. There has been some work done on finding appropriate reading materials at various levels to facilitate differentiation of reading instruction. Two teachers are enrolled in a Master's degree program at Hong Kong University in Teaching Mandarin as a second language. Since April 2013, the K-5 teachers

have been working with a consultant to define three streams of classes, differentiating for students based on their language background.

3. The administration and staff should continue the refinement of the written and delivered curriculum, which flows sequentially through the grade levels, with a special emphasis on varied and differentiated instruction to more fully maximize student performance.

SIS is following a curriculum framework for grades K-10 based on the United States national and state standards; Common Core (CCSS) for English Language and mathematics, NCSS for Social Studies, NextGen and AERO for Science, ACTFL for Foreign Languages. Grades 11 and 12 have adopted the IBDP curriculum. ECLC adopted the Te Whariki model as a supplement for early childhood education. The French immersion program follows the French national curriculum.

Beginning in 2009, SIS made a commitment to train teachers in the Understanding by Design (UbD) unit planning framework and then apply their knowledge to units of study in Rubicon Atlas, the curriculum-mapping program used as the main guide for teachers and administrators. SIS has continued to follow its curriculum review cycle and since the mid-term visit has completed a review of language arts. SIS is currently reviewing mathematics.

There have been many curricular initiatives started since 2011. Among them, the effort to implement the Common Core standards has produced significant engagement. The school has incorporated the new standards into their assessment and reporting practices. There has been extensive training in the Teacher's College Readers and Writers Project (TCRWP) model with consultants brought into the school and teachers sent to Columbia University for training.

4. The administration and staff should continue to improve the ECLC division through recruiting additional qualified and experienced early childhood teachers, facility improvement and consistent implementation of policy and practice to improve the learning environment.

All teaching faculty either hold a degree or are credentialed. Over half of the faculty also has Masters degrees. Many of the staff took part in an on-site professional development course on best practices in early childhood education during the 2011-12 school year. During 2012 the staff worked with the new Director of ECLC to revise and simplify the

report card. There have been significant improvements made to the facilities, as noted above.

5. The administration and staff should define, develop and ensure a consistent application of best practices in instruction, common assessment, reporting and analysis of students performance to improve student learning and achievement.

The school has worked diligently to meet the requirements of this very broad statement to improve instruction and learning. Action plans have all focused on instructional practices, unit planning and analysis of student work. The school has made a significant investment in the UbD program training every teacher for three years through the implementation of the three phases of the program. There is a variety of professional development opportunities available to the staff. The school has created Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to collaborate about student progress and review teaching practices. In the last three years, staff has been encouraged to align resources with courses and units of study.

In March 2013, administrators began revising the report cards to report student progress on standards instead of individual benchmarks. This involved giving parents information and training on how to interpret the report card. The school has received feedback from parent conferences that the report cards have been helpful.

6. Investigate the need for a learning specialist to help with the differentiation within the classroom for specific learning needs.

The school has revisited this issue during the WASC Self Study process. In the absence of a specialist, the counselors, administrators, teachers and parents work together to provide differentiation and support for students who struggle and for those who need enrichment in various subject areas. Using existing programs, SIS teachers address the range of needs, talents and skills children bring into the classroom. There is recognition in the school's action plan to more fully address this concern in the future.

7. Administration should continue to provide early childhood professional development for current staff, search for teachers with early childhood qualifications and investigate current program practices to see if there is a need for the addition of music, art, and PE specialists.

The school aligned the ECLC curriculum with the Kindergarten curriculum during the 2012-13 year. An outcome of this experience was to improve the transition between ECLC2 and Kindergarten. The school has brought in consultants in curriculum and language development. Currently music, art, and PE are all delivered by the ECLC classroom teacher with only Chinese taught by the instructional assistants.

Chapter III: Self-Study Process

The school has reviewed and revised their Expected Schoolwide Learning Results (ESLRs). They are as follows:

SIS Learners will be nurtured to become:

Communicators who...

- Listen, read, write, and speak effectively
- Express needs, knowledge, desires, and opinions appropriately
- Initiate reflective and meaningful conversations

Independent Learners who...

- Exhibit confidence, initiative, and personal management
- Apply appropriate strategies for producing and retaining information
- Develop habits that maintain responsibility along with mental and physical health

Collaborators who...

- Foster positive relationships in diverse settings
- Establish and accomplish goals within groups
- Ask questions in diverse

Global Citizens who...

- Contribute to their immediate and extended communities
- Promote an ethos of care and empathy

- Model compassion for fellow human beings

The SIS Self Study Process

The school has fully engaged the professional staff during the past eighteen months in the Self Study process. They have participated in key processes to review and analyze data sources and identify school strengths, areas for growth and strategic opportunities for school improvement. The staff reviewed, revised, and affirmed the school's mission, beliefs, and ESLRs. The self-study process involved 16 committees that engaged all professional staff in review of the data in the context of the Focus on Learning (FOL) guidelines and prompts. While support staff, parents, and students did not participate in the Focus Group discussions, results and findings were shared with these stakeholders.

In addition to the FOL process, the school conducted strategic planning involving a large portion of the staff as well as significant parent and student representation. The administration has reviewed and collated the results of these two processes and integrated them into a single coherent plan for school improvement. This plan reflects the school's recognition of the value of using appropriate data to guide the various aspects of the school's academic program. It also reflects the school's need to build upon current programs to provide more appropriate programs and support for students with special needs. From the analysis of the school's program and results of examining data, the school developed three specific questions to guide the content of the school improvement plan and two additional questions to guide implementation.

Three Questions that Guide the Content of the Action Plans

- How do we establish and embed data driven processes to improve student learning?
- How do we support the growth of our students who are learning English or who have special learning needs?
- How do we support student learning by providing fully documented standards and benchmarks in a comprehensive, clearly articulated ECLC-12 curriculum?

Two Questions that Guide the Implementation of the Action Plan

- How do we provide for the collaboration and common planning among teachers for curriculum planning and student support?
- How do we plan our school improvement to address the school's strategic goals of

challenging, authentic, and personalized learning for all students and helping students seize opportunities to make a difference in society?

Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

Part A: Based on the self-study and visiting committee findings, for each criterion in the following categories:

- A. Organization for Student Learning**
- B. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**
- C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth**
- D. Resource Management and Development**
- E. The China Context (for schools conducting a NCCT/WASC self-study)**

CATEGORY A. ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING

A1. School Purpose

To what extent has the school established a clear vision and mission (purpose) that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the institution?

To what extent is the purpose defined further by adopted schoolwide learner outcomes that reflect defined global competencies and form the basis of the educational program for every student?

This most recent self-study prompted the school to revisit, review and revise their mission statement, beliefs and ESLRs. The Visiting Committee (VC) commends the school for the thoughtful, thorough, and inclusive approach taken in this review process.

The revised mission statement, beliefs, and ESLRs are purposefully aligned with the current vision and expectations of the school community and those of the IB philosophy and learner profile.

While these revised statements are now included in digital and print communications, the VC supports the recommendation of the school to disseminate this information more widely throughout the campus and to periodically formally review their efficacy and

relevance.

A2. Governance

To what extent does the governing authority adopt policies which are consistent with the school's mission and vision and support the achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes, i.e., global competencies?

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 Visiting Committee (VC) found evidence of clear policies and procedures related to the selection, composition and specific duties of the Board.

The VC recognizes the contribution and involvement of the current Board in the review and development of the newly revised mission statement, beliefs and ESLRs.

The VC concurs with the findings of the Self Study Report that the larger school community does not completely understand the role of the governing board and International School Services (ISS) in school governance. There is a lack of formal opportunities for SIS staff to represent and receive feedback on their opinions from the board.

A3. School Leadership

To what extent does the school leadership make decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the school on student achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes, i.e., global competencies?

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 in a global environment?

SIS school leaders make effective, thoughtful decisions based on a shared vision, mission and set of values. Staff is empowered to work collaboratively in the best interest of students and is collectively committed to the achievement of school wide goals.

The VC commends the school for having transparent leadership and encouraging

collaborative communication through structured meetings, including: grade level, departmental and Critical Friends Groups (CFG).

While communication and collaboration is abundant, the VC supports SIS's recommendation to more clearly delineate decision making processes, teachers' engagement in decisions which affect teaching, learning and student achievement, and the role of the School Improvement Teams (SIT).

A4. Staff

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 do the school leadership and staff engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning in a global society?

The Visiting Committee (VC) found evidence that the school engages in employment practices and hiring strategies that have significantly improved the qualifications of current teaching staff. Currently 65% of teaching staff have advanced degrees. In support of efforts to attract and retain the most qualified teachers, the school has implemented a highly effective teacher orientation program that focuses on best practices, the school philosophy and curriculum.

Evidence reveals a wide range of professional development opportunities provided by and for the professional staff over an extended period of time and for the variety of leadership opportunities afforded teachers around curriculum development and school planning.

The VC concurs with the findings of the Self Study Report that the school examine additional ways of collecting and analyzing student achievement data to drive meaningful discussion around professional practices and improved student learning.

A5. School Environment

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?

The Visiting Committee (VC) found evidence of a caring and supportive environment, in which diversity and cultural understanding is valued and students are comfortable learning.

Three divisional counselors and outside consultants provide direct services to students, professional development to teachers, and support for parents on critical issues related to student learning.

Evidence shows that the school utilizes the ESLR's as a major foundation for both setting and communicating high expectations for student learning and behavior. SIS recognizes students for meeting and exceeding these expectations through assemblies and awards. SIS supports a culture of communication between the school and the community with the direct intent of fostering trust and deeper understanding. The frequency of communication, posts/calendar updates/etc. are made weekly, use of translation programs, and offering of information sessions all work toward the goal of increasing community connection and broadening understandings of the school program.

There is broad support for professional development for faculty to build on their abilities to support student growth. The VC supports the school's identified need to clarify its plan and program for supporting students with learning differences.

The VC commends the school for providing an environment where students feel safe and comfortable. Clear policies and procedures are in place to address health issues, crisis management, and security. Additionally, criminal background checks are a part of the hiring process.

A6. Reporting Student Progress

To what extent does the school leadership and staff regularly assess student progress toward accomplishing the schoolwide learner outcomes?

To what extent does the school leadership and staff report student progress to the rest of the school community?

The Visiting Committee (VC) recognizes SIS provides regular feedback to students and parents on student progress toward mastery of specific standards, as well as growth in the ESLRs. Monitoring of student progress at the division and grade level includes regular collaborative meetings of grade level, divisional, and vertical teams. The VC supports the school's intended plan to review and analyze existing assessment data to drive meaningful discussion around professional practices and improved student learning.

A7. School Improvement Process

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?

There is clear evidence of a comprehensive and collaborative approach to school improvement which engages professional staff, along with students and some parents. The strategic planning process has laid the foundation for their action plans that guide the long term improvement of the school.

The VC supports the school's finding that a more clear delineation of roles and responsibilities of the School Improvement Team would facilitate improvement. Evidence from the Self Study Report shows the parent community to be supportive; however, the level of engagement of parents in the WASC process seemed indicative of a more systemic lack of parent involvement in decision-making at the school.

Areas of Strength for Organization for Student Learning Category (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

- A highly-respected and caring team of educational leaders who work collaboratively

to build instructional capacity and improve student learning

- The revised mission and ESLRs permeate all aspects of the school
- A caring and committed professional teaching staff who collaborate effectively within and across grades around student learning
- The long-term commitment of the school to a program of professional development tied to best practices and improved student achievement

Key Issues for Organization for Student Learning (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

- Greater clarity for staff around the structure, roles and responsibilities of the governing Board
- More formalized structures for professional staff to have meaningful input on critical decisions related to school improvement
- A clearer delineation of the roles and responsibilities of the School Improvement Teams (SITs)

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

- Creation of the School Improvement Teams
- Documented facility and safety improvements over the past three years
- Historical Student Enrolment by Division (Table Below)
- Self Study Report
- Focus Group A meeting
- Meeting with the leadership team and operational staff
- Parent interviews

SIS Enrollment Data 2008-2013

| Division | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| ECLC | 114 | 117 | 146 | 148 | 159 |
| ES | 309 | 294 | 301 | 336 | 345 |
| MS | 122 | 136 | 118 | 139 | 144 |
| HS | 89 | 100 | 100 | 111 | 115 |
| Total | 634 | 647 | 665 | 734 | 763 |

CATEGORY B. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

B1. What Students Learn

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 schoolwide learner outcomes through successful completion of any course of study offered?

SIS has made commendable progress in curriculum development in recent years. Since the hiring of the current Director of Curriculum and Learning three years ago, almost every department at SIS has begun a thorough curricular review process which has involved adopting internationally recognized standards and benchmarks and determining department goals. Progress has been made in the area of articulation and alignment through regular and common curricular meeting times supported by the Director of Curriculum and Learning. Documentation is in progress on Rubicon Atlas. On the unit level, many units of study have been fleshed out using the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework but there are still a large number of incomplete units. All evidence suggests that faculty and administration are serious about and committed to thoroughly and thoughtfully articulating these unit plans.

Curriculum development occurs collaboratively and regularly in grade level department groups. Additionally, the Director of Curriculum and Learning and division administrators attend these meetings. There are occasional opportunities to meet vertically and in interdisciplinary teams but scheduling and separate campuses make this a challenge. SIS teachers are to be commended for the initiative faculty members show in meeting informally with each other to ensure some interdisciplinary work and vertical alignment is occurring.

Although the language of instruction is English, SIS has endeavored to provide special programs to small pockets of students that need instruction in English as an additional language, or in French or German. In the elementary school, the French students complete a portion of their school day in French but then join the main student population for specialists' classes and recess time. German students may opt to receive an hour of German instruction every day. In secondary school, there is not a specialized program for these students, but they may opt to take French as their world language class or German after school. EAL students are mainstreamed into classes with in-class support in the elementary school. Some support also exists in middle school, but there is no current EAL support in the high school. SIS could consider assessing additional needs in EAL support

to better meet their EAL population.

The early childhood program appears to be in the greatest state of flux at the moment. The teachers have identified a need to better define and commit to a shared teaching philosophy between classrooms. Regular curricular planning support in this area may be helpful to better define and bring consistency to this program.

Across the school, the ESLRs comprise an important and significant piece of SIS's curriculum. They are clearly posted in every room and are regularly incorporated into units, lessons and conversations. Students can easily speak to each ESLR and generally understand when they are practicing one of these skills. Teachers routinely discuss ways to integrate ESLRs into their unit plans during their collaborative planning periods. At the end of each reporting period, teachers report out on individual student progress in each of the ESLR areas. Although there is a clear commitment and integration of ESLRs into the curriculum, there has been little documentation of this integration on Rubicon Atlas.

In terms of student engagement with the curriculum and ESLRs, there is strong evidence that students feel ownership of how they are learning and how they demonstrate their learning. Students and teachers consistently speak to a learning environment where teachers welcome students taking ownership of and individualizing or reflecting on their own learning. Although this is done in many ways, both students and teachers quickly credit the recently developed e-Learning program as being a big piece in leveraging this philosophy. Evidence of student work suggests that regardless of individual choice on a particular assignment, the unit standards are still key regardless of the learning activity that is chosen. At this point, a possible future area of growth would be evaluating assessments to ensure there is academic rigor. Academic rigor is included in the SIS mission and has been identified by the parent community as an area of possible growth.

There has been a clear focus on curriculum and instruction in recent professional development initiatives. SIS hosts annual conferences in both e-Learning and EAL support. While these conferences in part, showcase the talent and skills of SIS faculty, they also provide an avenue to bring in regional leaders in these areas. Additional professional development opportunities have been provided as the school commits to curriculum and instruction programs such as Columbia Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project, WIDA, Te Whariki, and Dr. Helena Curtain for world languages.

Great strides have been made in curriculum development in a short period of time and there is a clear commitment to further curricular development.

B2. How Students Learn

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 schoolwide learner outcomes?

The Visiting Committee recognizes the experience, training and expertise of the faculty. As reported in the Self Study, SIS prioritizes teacher learning, "supported by a robust school-wide professional growth culture, a generous annual personal PD allotment, and contractual requirement to pursue professional development" (p. 115). In addition, SIS staff contracts include an expectation that they will participate in two days of individual professional development each year. SIS faculty engages in learning experiences, taking advantage of internal expertise as well as that of leading experts and programs. SIS reports 1.5 hours per week devoted to professional development activities in addition to four professional development days each year. Anecdotally, SIS faculty reflected on ways that they ensure that PD opportunities make a difference to student learning, including self-reflection of teacher goals, reading/writing workshop implementation and reflection, e-Learning processes and products, language assessment information and collaboration with EAL teachers around support and modifications. An area for further exploration will be how the school intentionally measures the impact of professional development on student learning.

SIS has a clearly articulated teacher evaluation system including goal setting, standards and walkthroughs for all faculty. In addition, faculty in their first year at SIS participates in a formal classroom observation process and conversation with their supervisor. In practice, implementation has lacked consistency and alignment.

Revised in 2008, there are six teaching standards with descriptors of practice that administrators use as part of the process. The standards draw upon the work of Charlotte Danielson, Merris Page-Smith and Bambi Betts. The teaching standards bring together thinking about the mission, ESLRs, instruction, assessment, professionalism and professional development. In particular, standard three speaks to effective teaching and learning practices, observable through class observations and teacher collaborative time. SIS teachers shared that administrators have the intent to look for examples of a caring environment, evidence of ESLR language and reference within lessons (e.g. collaboration, communicating effectively, global citizens) and structures and practices that speak to a

high level of engagement. Faculty reported that students are asked to provide feedback each year and that this is used to adjust instructional practices as appropriate.

It is clear that there is a strong commitment from the faculty to collaboratively develop and refine a strong curriculum. As reported in the Self Study, SIS uses structured protocols to look at student work and to norm student writing across each grade. Foundation to this collaboration was the training faculty received in Critical Friends Group processes. SIS reflects that collaboration around student formative assessments can be more consistent and systematic.

SIS has structures in place to encourage collaborative curriculum design and alignment, and lesson planning. The Director of Curriculum and Learning meets with teams and is responsible to monitor collaborative efforts around teaching and learning, curriculum planning and alignment, ordering instructional materials and professional development. In addition, faculty in the MS reflected on Focus on Learning Tuesdays where they have an opportunity to share their practice. HS faculty has similar meetings on Thursday mornings.

SIS expects its professional staff to regularly commit to ongoing professional development, committing 1.2% of its operational budget to professional learning. As reported in the Self-Study, SIS narrowed the number of areas of foci to include improving writing using the Reading and Writing Workshop model and implementation of e-Learning across the school. Both teachers and administrators reflected on SIS thinking about initiatives as multi-year and planning resources and outcomes accordingly. The emphasis for all faculty has been writing to communicate understanding. In addition, SIS hosts annual e-Learning and EAL conferences for educators within the region.

Students at SIS are engaged in a variety of high quality learning activities and assessments. The learning is visible through the evidence provided as part of the Self-Study and classroom observations. In many classrooms, the agenda and/or learning outcomes are posted for student reference. To increase student achievement of the learning targets, teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and engage students in thinking. Some classrooms were observed using graphic organizers, student led conversations, reflection and discussion prompts, collaborative projects and mini-lessons targeting specific knowledge and skills. During observations, evidence on how technology is used to enhance the learning experience was evident. The learning environment is filled with student work samples and teacher and student created posters/materials to support learning. Student work lined the common spaces throughout the school. Faculty reflected positively on the impact technology has had on teaching and learning. In classrooms,

students were using devices (e.g. iPads) for collaborating and accessing class and research information.

Faculty reflected that differentiation was an area of focus in previous years and as such they have implemented various strategies into classroom experiences to meet student needs. Students reflected that they feel comfortable talking with their teachers about an alternate way of demonstrating learning. Both faculty and students shared that courses have choice in assessment products. Technology has provided a tool by which authentic tasks include performance level products.

The languages department is looking at using the STAMP assessment to triangulate school data about appropriate language acquisition levels. Language faculty has worked with Dr. Helena Curtain on refining their program, including instructional practices. Parent survey results and administrative observations suggest that the Chinese program could be strengthened. SIS continues to provide resources and monitor implementation of learning in classrooms.

In addition, SIS students share their progress through goal setting, student led conferences, portfolios and reflective learning logs. Such reflections include specific examples of how they have applied the ESLRs to their learning. Faculty noted the intentional embedding of mission and ESLRs into classroom experiences. Examples shared included delivery of lessons within the advisory/guidance program that align to each ESLR, building classroom culture and behaviors and student/teachers identifying examples of the ESLRs in practice.

Students use resources for learning beyond the limits of the textbook such as effective use of collaborative activities, technology, library/media resources and community resources. SIS has a well-resourced library, both print and online. Resources are available for students to do research. For fine arts subjects, in and outside school music concerts, art festivals, and drama performances are performed. The T*H*I*N*K* acronym is used as a way for students to self monitor their online presence, aligning with their ESLR on global citizenship. Students in MS/HS shared that they feel comfortable talking with teachers about alternate assessment or ways to demonstrate learning.

B3. How Assessment Is Used

To what extent are the 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 student learner outcomes and academic standards?

To what extent are the assessment results the basis for regular evaluation, modification, and improvement of curriculum and instructional approaches?

To what extent are the assessment results the basis for the allocation of resources?

SIS has an assessment philosophy in place, built on best practices. Teachers effectively assess student progress. Evidence reveals that SIS teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments. Internal assessments are measured with a standards based reporting system that culminates with a newly revised report card delineating academic standards from ESLRS. The reporting system clearly explains student progress in subject specific areas and ESLR growth.

Standardized test data serve as an external reference point for student achievement levels. SIS has external data from ISA and IBDP, providing information about student progress and achievement. There is no systematic process for how the data is reviewed and used to identify specific issues and/or meet student-learning needs.

There is some evidence of assessment impacting instruction, such as the TCRWP teachers using assessment data to guide the program; however, the school has identified that they have not yet adopted a systematic approach to reviewing assessment data to inform instruction. Faculty teams are beginning to more systematically look at student work and identify patterns related to learning. The VC agrees with stakeholders that continued collaboration in horizontal and vertical assessment alignment is a growth area. SIS has identified a need for data-driven dialogue around ESLR integration, rubric development and alternative assessment methods.

Students are involved in the assessment of their own learning through an established goal setting and reflection process. Evidence reveals technology plays an integral role in student reflection. Student work is also regularly displayed to the community through curriculum sharing events. Teachers noted an increase in learning as a result of the goal setting and reflection process.

Assessments are correlated to the curriculum and instruction through Rubicon Atlas using an Understanding by Design framework. Evidence shows that assessments are linked to standards; however, ESLRs are not formally tied to assessments within Atlas.

Conversations with staff reveal that ESLRs are considered in the creation of assessments in some instances.

Resources for EAL students were allocated based on assessment data and have led to the growth of the EAL program. The WIDA test is used to identify and monitor EAL students on a regular basis.

Areas of Strength for Curriculum and Instruction Category (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

- SIS has embraced the ESLRs as the defining characteristics of what it means to be a member of the SIS learning community
- SIS values learning; providing and supporting multiple professional development opportunities both internally and externally. Such opportunities encourage staff to maintain a current and deep understanding of curriculum, assessment and instructional practices.
- SIS faculty and administrators are strongly committed to the development, revision and delivery of their written curriculum
- SIS faculty and leadership team are dedicated to improving student learning. SIS has narrowed their initiatives to improve student learning by focusing on the areas of literacy and technology
- Technology is used widely to enhance education because it is fast, reliable, and easily accessible. Technology and curricular support is readily available.
- SIS uses formative and summative assessments across subject areas to assess student progress and growth

Key Issues for Curriculum and Instruction (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

- Continue to articulate and document performance indicators, assessments, ESLRs and teaching strategies
- Systematically gather, analyze and use relevant data about student learning to inform instruction and ensure congruence between written and taught curriculum.

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

- SIS Self Study and supporting evidence

- Rubicon Atlas
- Handbooks, including Professional Growth Handbook, MS and HS Program
- Teacher blogs, Edmodo sites
- Meetings with Focus Group B, EAL teachers, counselors, administrators
- Student work e.g. posted in classrooms, in shared spaces and online
- Observation

C. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

C1. Student Connectedness

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

The Visiting Committee commends the school for their focus on students - it is evident that students are at the center of conversations amongst faculty and administrators. Faculty is committed to student learning and welfare. As noted in the Self Study Report, SIS has a variety of structures and approaches to offer personalized support to most students based on their needs. SIS provides a range of services across the campuses to support the different learning, social and emotional needs of students. Student needs are met within a supportive learning environment and through a collaborative approach. Life Skills and Advisory are also in place for MS and HS students. Families are invited to meet teachers before school begins as a valuable way to connect with them on a personal level. Counselors have developed a dynamic and meaningful guidance/advisory curriculum to meet the needs of students.

SIS is commended for the systems that they have in place for supporting learners. Counseling, guidance, research/libraries, and EAL structures and services are well resourced. Across the divisions there are EAL teachers, eCoaches, support staff and opportunities for team teaching to meet the learning needs of students. Particularly noted in the report was mother tongue support for French and German speakers through Grade 12.

After reading the self-study and speaking with faculty, suggestions were made that it would be valuable for SIS to evaluate the need for Learning Support services, and explore

ways to address remedial and enrichment needs of students. In discussions, SIS felt they were doing a good job of supporting students, but have identified additional student needs that they currently are unable to meet.

There are varying levels of student support in place at SIS. The ES EAL teachers offer in class support and faculty support during collaboration time. MS support is delivered through scheduled in class support in Grade 6 and by all students participating in a semester literacy course, facilitated by the MS EAL teacher. In HS, the literacy coach works with faculty and teaches the writing for academic purposes course. Of late, the literacy coach is teaching courses in writing and will spend more time supporting EAL students going forward. ES, MS and HS teachers are available after school to support students.

Additionally, SIS has dedicated time and energy to transition programs for new students to SIS, which include buddies and new student orientation. A progress report for each new student is facilitated by the MS and HS Counselors about six weeks into joining SIS and shared with parents.

SIS has a Student of Concern referral and intervention procedure. Teacher meetings, and as appropriate, referral to either the Educational Psychologist or external referrals to Therapeutic Support Services helps to identify the needs of students. EAL support is provided through the sheltered immersion model. Reviewing the results of MS/HS Search Assets Survey help to identify issues that can be addressed through the advisory program. The general consensus is that said initiatives have been helpful in identifying student needs in a more effective manner.

SIS has identified a need to explore ways to enhance support for students, particularly those with learning differences and language issues. SIS shared that faculty and administrators are doing the best they can to support student needs within the parameters they have. Given the high caliber of faculty and their commitment to student welfare and learning, classroom strategies are in place to support students. Teachers are committed and work collaboratively to best meet the needs of students, implementing strategies discussed either as internal teams or through the suggestions of outside consultants. Counselors and teachers have a formal process for bringing a student to the group for discussion about needs and possible support.

SIS recognized that the lack of support services impacts possible interventions; all groups talked about the need for expert knowledge and skills to help develop a program, provide targeted intervention with students and help build capacity of teachers' skills through PD. SIS is first encouraged to build a shared understanding of their desired outcomes by exploring program needs, student needs and ways to bridge the gap between current and desired practice.

SIS provides a variety of learning environments to meet the individual learning needs of students. This environment includes online learning, labs, fine arts learning spaces, performance spaces, field trip experiences and service learning within the local community and beyond. SIS continues to explore effective learning environments to enhance program effectiveness, student learning, student development, and faculty experiences. Faculty collaboration enables co-planning, co-teaching and reflective discussions about student learning. HS students take two required courses, one in grade 9 and the other in grade 10 that focus on writing for academic purposes and strengthening speaking and presentation.

SIS has a strong counseling program across all divisions. Elementary school students meet once per cycle with the counselor for a program that provides education, prevention and intervention services. In the MS and HS, students participate in an Advisory Program and semester long Life Skills program. Lessons are given on self-awareness, stress management, human growth and development, and health and nutrition; with reflection an essential component of the class. In addition, the counselors have a strong transition process, where students leaving have an opportunity to process upcoming changes and then are celebrated by their peers through assemblies.

SIS offers an array of co-curricular activities, including athletics, across the school to enrich and add value to the regular curriculum. SIS has an Activities and Athletics director to facilitate participation in ACAMIS, SDRC and PRC sporting and cultural activities. Although limited by facilities, SIS intentionally structures their ASA program to maximize student participation. Co-curricular experiences for MS/HS students include Week Without Walls, Service Learning and CAS, China Day celebrations and programs such as Model United Nations and Global Issues Network. SIS is commended for making significant efforts to ensure that co-curricular activities connect with the mission and ESLRs. Regular meetings between principals, EAL and counselors, coupled with feedback on ASAs, provide information to review the needs of students and effectiveness of programs provided.

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?

SIS is a safe and caring school environment where everyone feels welcomed. SIS communicates with parents about academic/non-academic information through written and online communication as well as personalized meetings. The ESLRs have a prominent position through assemblies.

SIS provides a number of ways and opportunities to involve parents and the community in the educational experiences of their child(ren). As reported in the self-study, "parental and community involvement are integral to the school's established support system for students" (p. 135). Parents appreciate the opportunities their children have to participate in extra-curricular activities and feel that SIS provides opportunities for parents to volunteer at the school.

SIS launched their new website in 2013, providing parents information about the academic program and important dates/events. Parents have easy access to such information with access through their mobile device. Although language translation services are available on the website, SIS recognizes the need to continue to find ways to involve parents for whom English is not their first language.

SIS is commended for wanting to collaborate with the local community as much as possible e.g. local materials and staff. The Service Learning School Improvement Team continues to look for other opportunities to leverage resources. SIS recognizes that there are opportunities for outreach, albeit mostly linked to private expats, but they would like to explore resources from the broader Shenzhen community.

SIS does a very good job of reporting student achievement and progress throughout the curricular program. Parents are able to access curriculum and program descriptions via the parent portal on the website. In addition, standards-based reporting and parent meetings educate parents. Dialogue is promoted between parents, faculty and students in conferences, including goal setting, student-led and student-involved.

Areas of Strength for Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth Category

(if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

- A wealth of opportunities for extracurricular activities, athletics and programs for students throughout the school; SIS works to ensure that there is something for every student
- A coherent, well-articulated counseling and EAL program supporting students in all sections of the school
- There are a wide range of opportunities, and established avenues at SIS, for parents to be involved in both curricular and co-curricular activities

Key Issues for Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth Category (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

- Continue to evaluate the structures and program to support the needs of students with learning differences and language issues
- Explore parent opportunities for involvement in all aspects of the school, including leveraging parents as educational and co-curricular resources

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

- SIS Self Study
- SIS Website
- Teacher and student blogs, Edmodo sites
- Meetings with Focus Group C, EAL teachers, counselors, administrators, students

D. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

D1. Resources

To what extent are the resources available to the school are sufficient to sustain the school program and effectively used to carry out the school's purpose and student achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes, i.e., global competencies?

Collaborative processes have been put in place to involve representatives of the faculty with administrators in decisions related to the allocation of resources. This is a well-managed school where resources are allocated in ways which best support the school mission, values and student achievement.

The school has an annual budget and a variety of creative approaches are used to maximize the use of what will always be a finite set of resources and limited facility space. School funds are audited on an annual basis and the results of that audit are presented to the board. Standard accounting procedures and practices are in place to protect against the mishandling of institutional funds.

The school is to be commended for the significant improvements and additions made to the campus since the last accreditation. These improvements have added enrolment and program capacity as well as supporting the development of existing programs. Although there is general satisfaction with the facilities and management of resources, some specific issues related to increased pressure on facilities as a result of growing student enrollment and limitation on Physical Education and After School Activities were brought to the attention of the VC during focus group discussions.

Regardless of the division, students have access to technology tools and applications to enhance learning e.g. blogs, learning applications, and social media. Students in Grades 3-12 have a device, iPad for those in Grades 3-8 and MacBook Pro for HS students. Students in MS and HS access the online environment for instruction, resources, enrichment and assessment. Evidence seen in many classrooms suggests that teachers have integrated the technology into their work and routines. During observations, students were using the tools to create, collaborate and communicate learning. To support this work, SIS has committed resources, both financial, infrastructure and personnel e.g. Director of Learning Innovation and e-Learning coaches at each campus.

The school is to be commended for the significant financial investment it has made in the professional development of the teaching community. This is a highly qualified, well-resourced, caring and committed learning organization.

D2. Resource Planning

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

As a result of concerns related to prior ad hoc resource planning, the school has identified the need to more systematically address future facility, resource and marketing issues involving a wider range of stakeholders. The Team supports the school's recommendation to develop a long range marketing strategy that will establish their school brand, increase

enrollment and allow for the systematic acquisition of future resources to support learning.

Areas of Strength for Resource Management and Development Category (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

- This is an effectively managed, well resourced and financially stable international school that constantly seeks to improve the quality of its facilities to support student learning

Key Issues for Resource Management and Development Category (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

- The school has made impressive facility improvements since the last external visit. In the development of its long-range strategic resource plan it will be important for the school to build consensus with the entire range of stakeholders on how the change process is to be managed.

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

- Self Study
- Meetings with operational staff
- Focus Group D meeting
- School Policy Manual
- SIS Faculty Handbook
- SIS Staff Handbook

E. THE CHINA CONTEXT (FOR NCCT/WASC SCHOOLS ONLY)

E1. Standard One

Local cultures are incorporated into the curriculum in appropriate ways.

The Visiting Committee (VC) commends SIS for offering Chinese language programs for K-12 students: classes in Chinese language are required of all students K-7 and available as an elective after that. SIS sets as its primary goal of the program as to increase the students' communicative proficiency in daily situations appropriate to the age group. The Chinese Department has, along with the world languages facilitator, created new standards and benchmarks for K-12 Chinese as an Additional Language (CAL) and Chinese for Heritage Learners (CHA and CHB) based on the standards and benchmarks developed by the American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages. The program has been modified and students are grouped according to their Chinese language

proficiency. A Mandarin beginner level, a higher-level, CH, and IB Language A have been added to the program to better meet the needs of the students.

The VC commends the school for making the Chinese language and culture a thread that runs through a wide variety of curricular lessons and extra-curricular activities in the school. Field trips to local museums, parks, and businesses are arranged as part of the curriculum in all divisions. Theme activities include the following: Chinese traditional exercise, music, dance, festivals and celebrations, maps and famous sites of China, environmental study of the local area and biodiversity, ancient civilizations of China, the Silk Road, history of Shenzhen, history and government of China, traditional dances and games. China Day is a major community event occurring annually in January when cultural performances and exhibits feature the art, music, dance, foods, and other traditions of China. Proceeds from China Day are donated to a variety of local charities and projects.

The VC recognizes that SIS regularly reviews the curriculum content and educational resources and consults with the school attorney to make sure that they conform to Chinese laws and regulations. The School policies on academic programs comply with the principles of respecting the culture and sensitivities of the local Chinese and the Chinese nation.

Evidence shows the Chinese Department regularly reviews and evaluates the effectiveness of the Chinese language and culture program and modifies the teaching and learning in those classes. In the last three years the K-5 Chinese program has been revised to reflect learning targets for Chinese A, Chinese B, and Chinese as an Additional Language. Chinese Teachers meet on a regular basis to collaborate, share work, and discuss common practices and assessments. The Chinese Department has also established a sustained training relationship with an international consultant, who has been helping the teachers develop an articulated Mandarin curriculum with supporting instructional strategies, a placement assessment and units of study that are aligned to the standards, benchmarks, and learning targets for each grade level's classes in the elementary school.

E2. Standard Two

The governing body and the school management comply with all applicable statutes, government laws and regulations.

To what extent are the governing body and the school management complying with all applicable statutes, government laws and regulations?

Evidence shows that SIS has the required registrations and licenses/certificates for school operation, including the School Operation License, the State and Local Tax Register, an annually renewed Hygiene Permit for the School Kitchen and the examination report of its fire protection system. The school is operating in accordance with the permit issued by the relevant authority with a school scope of Kindergarten, Elementary, Middle and High School for expatriate families.

The VC commends the school for its admissions policy which shows clearly that all applicants should have the appropriate and required ID documentation according to Chinese regulations. Applicants are required to submit current copies of all relevant documentation.

Evidence shows that the school is not affiliated with any religious organizations and does not support any religious activities. It maintains a neutral position in political and religious issues in that all students from different nationalities and religious backgrounds are treated equally with respect. Staff who are foreign nationals who wish to attend religious activities are advised to do so in accordance with local regulations regarding such activities. The school administration advises its staff periodically through bulletins and staff meetings on legal issues related to the school and to foreigners living in China.

The VC commends the school for conducting its affairs in accordance with local immigration law and labor law, and maintaining a high standard of cooperation and compliance with local laws and legal authorities. The staff handbook provides guidance to staff on relevant issues and the school retains the services of a Chinese attorney to provide essential advice and support on compliance issues.

E3. Standard Three

The management of the school's finances and property shall be, at all times, in accordance with the standards which operate in China and shall be consistent with best practice in international schools.

To what extent is the management of the school's finances and property at all times in accordance with the standards which operate in China and consistent with best practice in international schools?

Evidence shows that the school follows accepted international and Chinese practices for finance and accounting. It has its annual audit carried out in accordance with China's Independent Auditing Standards by Shenzhen Red Sun Certified Public Accountants, and results are reported to the school administration and board of directors. The school's business manager is trained and competent in both Chinese and international business practices and in both the Chinese and English languages. All imported materials are handled through International School Services in accordance with Chinese laws. The

school manages foreign currency in accordance with Chinese laws and the policies of International School Services.

The VC commends the school for complying with local requirements regarding taxation, income tax for employees, social insurance, and other relevant areas. Staff is trained and competent in the application of Chinese laws to both local and expatriate employees.

Evidence shows that the school facilities are leased long-term from local entities according to standard business practice and Chinese laws. School facilities are used for the accomplishment of the school's mission and the teaching of its curriculum. The public is allowed to use school facilities during off-hours by application, which requires them to provide appropriate documentation of the activities and declare their compliance with Chinese laws.

E4. Standard Four

The governing body and the school management are familiar with Chinese laws and regulations related to the rights and obligations of the employees and comply with those laws and regulations.

To what extent are the governing body and the school management familiar with Chinese laws and regulations related to the rights and obligations of the employees and comply with those laws and regulations?

The VC commends the governing body and the school management for complying with the requirements of local government bureaus in meeting the obligations of Chinese laws for expatriate and local employees regarding employment contracts, work and residency permits as well as those related to the rights and obligations of its employees. The school provides insurance for all employees, and makes timely payments for all social insurance benefits as required by the law. SIS has an independent account in a local social insurance agency that pays the full amount of social benefits according to the highest national standards. Regarding social insurance and benefits required to be paid for foreign employees, SIS is ready to proceed when the local government provides the necessary process and payment procedures.

The school has reviewed all of its policies for compliance with Chinese laws with a competent local attorney. It provides work and residency permits to foreign employees as required by the Chinese labor law. Employees are given guidance and instruction regarding their obligations to obey Chinese laws through orientations, the staff handbook, and staff meetings.

Evidence shows that the Mandarin teachers have had various opportunities to participate in professional development opportunities such as the Teacher's College Reading and

Writing Project and UbD training. Each Mandarin teacher has an annual PD fund of USD 1600. This reflects an increase in line with their international counterparts. As a result of the professional development, collaboration, co-planning, and assessing, teachers have seen significant progress in student language learning. The school has recently made a decision to provide teaching assistants for Chinese language classes in the elementary school to help the learning process.

E5. Standard Five

The school shall actively promote intercultural and international awareness.

To what extent does the school actively promote intercultural and international awareness?

Evidence shows that SIS has a variety of activities integrated into the content curriculum to help the students' understanding of the host country culture. Cultural exchanges have also been designed and carried out between SIS and other local schools, including a Week Without Walls project of teaching English in a remote Chinese school, a literacy project at a Chinese school for disadvantaged girls, and visiting a residential school for disabled children. The administration met recently with the Nanshan Education Bureau to develop exchanges with local schools.

The VC commends the school for a variety of service projects with local educational resources which have created learning opportunities for SIS students and staff. Students and staff have been involved in the award-winning bio-gas project, dog rescue, the Seng Girls' literacy project, various field trips, service projects and travel to sites in the surrounding community, which extends to service projects during Week Without Walls.

SIS strives to maintain a harmonious relationship with the local community and responds appropriately when issues arise. The administration meets regularly with leaders in the China Merchants Bank and in the Nanshan Education Bureau to communicate school progress and to solve problems. The Assistant to the Director meets regularly and maintains a close relationship with Jingshan and Coastal Rose so that the school can share resources with community members at the Jingshan campus and to make play areas and resources available to the community.

Areas of Strength for China Context (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

- SIS Chinese language teachers are dedicated and committed to the continuous improvement of the language program to help the students' learning process
- The Chinese department has achieved significant progress in the development of an articulated Mandarin curriculum with supporting instructional strategies for the

school under the guidance of an international consultant provided by the school administration

- The school administration provides more resources for the PD training of the Chinese language teachers and for providing TAs in Chinese language classrooms in the elementary school
- The school administration abides by Chinese laws and regulations in school operations

Key Issues for China Context (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students:

- The Chinese Department needs to refine the current elementary curriculum and complete the middle and high school curriculum
- The school administration is encouraged to explore the need for the coordination and integration of existing and future Chinese language and cultural activities into the current program
- The school administration is encouraged to continue its efforts in building positive relations with the neighboring community through ongoing communication on the Bayside campus
- The school administration needs to make sure that when the community members are sharing the school resources, they should declare their compliance with relevant Chinese laws and regulations

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

- SIS Self Study Report
- SIS Website
- Meetings with Focus Group E, Chinese teachers, Counselors, Leadership Team
- Handbooks
- Licenses/Certificates for School Operation
- Annual Audit Reports of the Last Three Years
- Parent Interview

Part B: Schoolwide Strengths and Critical Areas for Follow-up

Schoolwide Areas of Strength

1. A caring, committed and innovative professional teaching staff who collaborate effectively within and across grades around student learning
2. A highly-respected and caring team of educational leaders who work collaboratively to build instructional capacity and improve student learning
3. A dedicated support staff that works tirelessly to support programs and student learning
4. A school culture that has embraced the ESLRs as the defining characteristics of what it means to be a member of the SIS learning community
5. A school community that values learning; providing and supporting multiple professional development opportunities both internally and externally. Such opportunities encourage staff to maintain a current and deep understanding of curriculum, assessment and instructional practices
6. A wealth of opportunities for extracurricular activities, athletics and programs for students throughout the school; SIS works to ensure that there is something for every student
7. An effectively managed, well-resourced and financially stable international school that constantly seeks to improve the quality of its facilities to support student learning
8. The dedicated efforts of SIS Chinese language teachers who are committed to the continuous improvement of the Chinese language program and helping students learn
9. A regionally recognized culture of learning innovation that focuses on the integral use of technology to boost creativity and support student learning

Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up

The Visiting Committee concurs with the school's identified areas that are outlined in the schoolwide action plan. These are summarized below:

1. Create a rigorous, well-documented, aligned curriculum that defines the learning expectations for each grade in all subject areas and balances skill acquisition with application and innovation.
2. Systematically gather, analyze and use relevant data about student learning to inform instruction and ensure congruence between written and taught curriculum.
3. Work with the school community to implement structures and practices that appropriately support the needs of students with learning differences and language issues.

Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

The school has developed an action plan from the results of both their WASC analysis and their strategic planning process. Three of the four Action Plans are direct outcomes of the identified Critical Academic Needs as represented as “Key Themes or Big Questions” found in Chapter 3 in the Self-Study. It is the opinion of the Visiting Committee that the fourth Action Plan is a set of activities that support the other three plans and should be integrated into them.

There are several factors that support the probability that the plan will be successfully implemented. First and foremost, SIS is a talented, dedicated, and caring professional learning community where the ESLRs permeate the culture of the school. Staff shows a continuous commitment to improving their instructional practice and providing high quality learning experiences for students. Additionally, the school has a demonstrated track record of implementing and sustaining positive educational change to improve student learning.

The school has implemented many new programs and changes that all stakeholders recognize as beneficial to students. Additionally, there is broad support and a desire for positive change at the school. There are adequate financial resources to provide materials, professional development and technology infrastructure that will be needed.

The school will need to consider how to balance time, energy and resources to sustain implementation efforts during changes. The goals are very time intensive and will require that SIS schools manage and organize its limited available time carefully to ensure that the work can progress with some degree of continuity. This school will need to carefully prioritize and sequence the implementation of the action plans.