

ROLLING HILLS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

Final Report
Programmatic Audit Site Visit
Conducted September 20-21, 2011



Idaho Charter School Network

Prepared by
Idaho Charter School Network
PO Box 1166
Boise, ID 83701

ROLLING HILLS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL



Address: 8900 Horseshoe Bend Road
Boise, ID 83714

School Phone:
208-939-5400

School website:
www.FalconRidgeCharter.org

Date School Opened: September 2005

Authorized by: Idaho Public Charter School Commission

Administrator: Dr. John Montgomery

Programmatic Audit Site Visit Team:

Diane Demarest, Executive Director, Idaho Charter School Network, Visit coordinator
Jani Knox, Founder Village Charter School
Don Keller, Principal, Sage International School
Tamara Baysinger, Idaho Commission of Public Charter Schools
Keelie Campbell, Idaho Commission of Public Charter Schools
KT Mac Donald, observer, ICSN

ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

School Year represented by this data:	2010-2011	
Enrollment		
Range of grades offered:	K-8	
Students enrolled	275	
Student demographics		
Ethnicity:		
Caucasian		
Hispanic		
Black		
Asian/Pacific Islander		
Multi-racial		
Native American		
Other		
Total Number of Students enrolled:		
Wait list data:	Wait lists in 1st - 5th grades	
	Number	Percent
Free and reduced lunch		
Students with IEP		
English Language Learners		
Other special populations		
Staff Make Up:	Number	
Head of School/ Principal	1	
Asst. to the Principal	0	
Business Mgr (Clerk of the Board)	.25fte	
Certified teachers	8	
Non-certified teachers/Education Assts.	4	
Office/Administrative staff	1	

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

We submit this report to Rolling Hills Public Charter School (RHPCS) as a summary of our observations. We recognize that in our brief visit, covering two days, we were only able to see a cross-section of the school's full program. During this visit the team focused its attention on all four of the goals of the accountability plan. In all areas, the team endeavored to triangulate data from several sources to provide evidence of discrete performance indicators. The team focuses on validating the self-study conducted by the school and provide evidence of agreement or variance from the self-study.

We wish to express our gratitude to RHPCS for extending hospitality and openness to us during our visit. They provided the team with an array of organized documents and artifacts as evidence of their progress in the areas identified in the Accountability Plan. We commend Principal, John Montgomery and his team for their attention to organization of all documents in preparation for this site visit. Additionally we would like to thank all members of the school community - students, parents and board members - who took an active role in the site visit by providing documentation, attending focus group discussions, inviting the team into their classrooms or providing interviews.

To validate the performance of RHPCS in all areas of school administration and performance relevant to the Accountability Plan, the site team conducted interviews and observations and reviewed school documents and records. The ICSN Accountability Plan for Idaho Public Charter Schools has four goals related to quality indicators for the operation of a charter school. RHPCS invited an outside team to the school to assess the school's performance on the four goals of the Accountability Plan; namely,

- 1) Governance and Administrative Obligation
- 2) Quality academic program,
- 3) Stakeholder support, involvement and satisfaction, and
- 4) Continuous school improvement.

Our general impression is that RHPCS successfully fulfills most governance and administrative obligations as provided in the state and federal law in fulfillment of their charter and in the execution of a Harbor Methods educational program. The team worked to validate the self-study provided by RHPCS and expresses the consensus of the team in the following documents. The stakeholders, including the board, parents, students and the school staff and leadership are very optimistic about the future of RHPCS . Our team is grateful for the opportunity to visit and we submit our report in a spirit of collegiality and in the quest for educational excellence.

Leadership Team at Rolling Hills Public Charter School:

RHPCS Director:

John Montgomery

RHPCS Board of Directors:

Cyndee Larson - Board Chairperson
Jonathan Giles – Board Vice-Chairperson
Leann Gilberg – Board Treasurer
TBD – Board Secretary
Uschi De Rose
Rick Hart
Camille Olson
Glen Stephenson
Clerk of the Board – Niki Crow

Rolling Hills Public Charter School

VISIT CONDUCTED September 20-21, 2011

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rolling Hills Public Charter School's mission is to kindle understanding and knowledge, imbue students with wisdom; and, cultivate the ability of each student while inspiring genius where we find it.

It is clear to the site team that Rolling Hills Public Charter School (RHPCS) is a school committed to actualizing its vision of establishing a school philosophy which holds that when there is low threat and content is highly challenging, accelerated learning takes place. Rolling Hills Public Charter School strives to create a low-threat environment and safe harbor with a unique character education curriculum that focuses on kindness. The atmosphere created by such a focus on kindness was designed to allow the children at RHPCS to excel socially and academically.

Based on observations and research conducted over two and days, the team had an opportunity to learn a great deal about the school; however, the group is also keenly aware that such a visit, while informative, offers a limited view of the school's characteristics. The team wished to commend Rolling Hills Public Charter School for their commitment to the students and families. In summary:

Rolling Hills continues to use the Harbor recommended curricula and instructional strategies. Parents and students are very happy with the culture of the school and the use of the five pillars for character development is not only illustrated in the hallways but embraced by the faculty and students. The building is well used and ample classrooms are comfortable for their large classes. The school is commended for supporting the needs of their special education population which considerably exceeds the state average in a small school (RHPCS 14% v. 9% state average). We commend Rolling Hills for their persistent efforts to improve the fiscal sustainability of the school.

In addition to identifying many of the strengths of the school, the visit serves to help the school to identify areas for improvement. The collection of this data provides the basis for the recommendations to the board and educational leaders that are summarized below:

Completing the process of evaluation at all levels, the board, the leadership and the staff of the school will insure an opportunity for continuous improvement and growth. Identifying measurable goals and outcome will get all stakeholders on the same page. Create a plan for board training and implementation. The sustainability of the school and its governance will be supported by the availability of a board handbook and the commitment of procedures of the school to an operations manual. A comprehensive set of policies and procedures will support continuity for all employees and stakeholders. Additionally, the team recommends that the board and leadership outline a process for creating a strategic plan to guide future growth. We encourage the board to look at the job descriptions and work load of the administrator and support him in strategically discharging his duties as well as delegating to other staff.

A team consisting of the administrator, secretary, special education director and board chair completed the self-study for the school. The visiting team gathered a variety of data to validate the school's self-study and offer the following commendations and recommendations. The team believes that RHPCS, under the leadership of Dr. Montgomery and the current board, is making significant gains and positioning themselves to continue the important work of implementing its mission. There is evidence that school leaders and staff are seeking more effective ways of implementing their school mission and realizing goals set forth in the school charter. Their vision, while an ambitious one, has strong support among their stakeholders and fund raising efforts have demonstrated the determination and support of the school's stakeholders.

Goal One: The charter school will fulfill all governance and administrative obligations as provided in state and federal law and in the school's charter.

Purpose/Intent of Goal: Ensure that the charter is currently meeting all legal requirements including being aware of and abiding by current and relevant state and federal statutes, creating and maintaining an effective governance structure, filling required reports in a timely and accurate manner, maintaining a fiscally sound budget and practices, and providing strong administrative leadership for the school.

Six areas of governance were reviewed including: documents, relevant federal and state laws and procedures, governance structure, financials, administrative leadership and federal and state reporting and testing requirements. Overall Rolling Hills Charter School can be described as meeting the standard; however, a rating is assigned for each of the six areas of governance and administrative obligation so that strengths and opportunities are more readily discerned. RHPCS provided individual team member scores and these were averaged. All scores will be rounded to the nearest .5 score.

OBJECTIVES	SELF STUDY SCORE	TEAM SCORE	COMMENT
a) School retains all legal documents pertaining to opening, operating, and reporting progress on the charter. These documents are accessible to or held by all people who would likely use them to perform their job duties.			
1. Access to legal documents	3.5	3.5	<i>Update are current on legal documents including the lottery.</i>
2. Personnel files	2.5	1.0	<i>All personnel files should be stored in a locked, fire-proof cabinet. Several files are missing items. All files should have official transcript and teaching certificate and evidence of background check completion.</i>
3. School filing system for student data	3.0	3.0	<i>Files look well kept and organized. Appropriately stored.</i>

b) School is aware of and in compliance with current relevant state and federal laws.	<u>Self Study Score</u>	<u>Team Score</u>	<u>Comment</u>
1. Charter is knowledgeable about newly passed and existing legislation and state procedures	3.0	2.0	<i>Be sure to have principal or his representative attend all SDE meetings. Middle school credit requirement needs to be articulated as well as pay for performance plan.</i>
2. Leadership has a reliable way to	4.0	4.0	<i>Use outside legal counsel as</i>

address legal obligations.			<i>needed. One board member is an attorney.</i>
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c) School maintains effective governance structure.	<u>Self Study Score</u>	<u>Team Score</u>	<u>Comment</u>
1. Charter has bylaws that include major obligations, procedures regarding governing structure, guidelines for elections, dismissals, and other changes in the governing structure	4.0	4.0	<i>By-laws are clear and are posted on website.</i>
2. School has a policy or procedure manual of their own or an adopted version from another district with waivers if necessary	3.5	1.5	<i>The Board indicated that they are adopting the ISBA model policy manual; however, they do not have a full copy available at the school. The portions under consideration at this time (5000 HR Section) have not been modified to reflect any unique conditions at RHPCS.</i>
3. Conflicts of interest policy in place.	3.0	2.0	<i>Board minutes indicate discussion of some policy but no evidence of policy in place.</i>
4. Charter has strategic goals that align with the mission or vision of the school.	2.5	1.0	<i>The board and leadership adopted a strategic plan from Hidden Springs. While this is a good starting point, it doesn't appear to address the key challenges faced by Rolling Hills at this time. Additionally, it is identified as a 2009-2013 plan but all targets are for 2010-2011 and there is no evidence that the plan has been visited or executed. This seems to be a key time for the board to commit their ideas to paper so that they can monitor their progress on key issues.</i>
5. Governing Board of directors are well trained for their responsibilities.	2.5	1.0	<i>The board is currently made up of a group of highly skilled individuals. As a group, however, they would benefit from additional training specific to charter schools. The board should conduct inventory of their needs and plan training accordingly.</i>
6. Roles of the administrator and the Board	3.0	1.0	<i>These could be clarified and articulated in a guiding document. The board has high degree of confidence in Mr. Montgomery's ability to manage all day to day operations of the school but a clear job description is not in place.</i>

7. Board conducts self-evaluations	1.0	1.0	<i>No evidence of formal board evaluation. The board did increase the frequency of their meetings indicating that they made an assessment of their ability to complete tasks.</i>
8. Board holds administrator accountable to its mission or vision.	3.0	1.0	<i>Need to formalize evaluation process. This will also depend on clear expectations. One principal cannot do everything so job descriptions are very important.</i>
9. Board positions are systematically filled.	3.0	3.0	<i>The board has been successful in recruiting new members to the board with a variety of skill sets.</i>

d) School is financially solvent and stable in the use of its resources	<u>Self Study Score</u>	<u>Team Score</u>	<u>Comment</u>
1. School budget is comprehensive, balanced and adequate to support the mission of the school.	3.0	1.0	<i>Significant deficiency of internal control in audit report. Need to address this deficiency. Clerk of the board is very competent but off site. Serious financial challenges may cause the board to rethink this position.</i>
2. Enrollment is stable.	3.0	2.5	<i>Enrollment is stable at 275 but still under capacity. There was a great deal of fluctuation in expected enrollment from spring to fall. Hopefully as their financial health improves they won't see so much variability.</i>
3. Financial Obligations (loans)	2.0	1.0	<i>The school has done a commendable job of fund raising but continues to have a fragile budget. They have deferred mortgage payments and cannot continue in this way for an extended period.</i>
4. Facility Plan: The school leases or owns a facility that meets the needs of their student body and program and is within their means.	4.0	3.0	<i>The building is well appointed and provides adequate space for all activities including gym, playground and cafeteria. RHPCS has been creative in leasing their gym to a church on the</i>

			<i>weekends. We would encourage additional considerations for generating revenue with their building.</i>
5. Management and reporting of the budget	3.5	2.0	<i>The clerk of the board was not present at the visit and neither the board nor the administrator could adequately address budget related questions. They have established a finance committee and that is commendable. Need to address segregation of duties and have their auditor review.</i>
6. Active Fundraising Plan supports school operations and sustainability.	3.0	3.0	<i>Fundraising has been very encouraging and successful. Unclear what ongoing plan looks like.</i>
7. Staff benefits (health insurance, increasing salaries to retain teachers, less discipline problems than public schools, workman's compensation, flexible instructional design, life insurance, etc.)	2.0	2.0	<i>The school has abandoned the Harbor salary scale out of necessity, it was not sustainable. Teachers have taken cuts in pay and benefits. We encourage the board and administration to continue to be very transparent in their budget decision, include teacher representatives and consider what they will do to retain their teachers.</i>
e) School has strong administrative leadership			
	<u>Self Study Score</u>	<u>Team Score</u>	<u>Comment</u>
1. The administrator is aware of and actively engaged in implementing the mission or vision of the school	3.5	2.5	<i>Administrator is working long hours to keep up with the day to day responsibilities of the school. Commitment to the Harbor model seems weak at this time with the greatest focus on keeping the school going. The school culture at the student level is very good and a credit to the administrator. The professional learning community is suffering due to an over-extended administrator.</i>
2. Administrator adequately allocates	3.5	3.0	

resources (time, money, materials, etc.) to achieve mission and goals of school.			
3. Administrator is aware of areas that need improvement within the school and reports these needs to the Board along with strategies on how to fulfill these needs	3.5	2.0	<i>Dr. Montgomery is aware of the many areas that need to be strengthened but clearly the greatest focus is on the day to day and sustainability of the school. There doesn't seem to be a bigger vision at this time. Dr. Montgomery may help them get through this difficult time and rely on his successor to create the ongoing vision.</i>
4. Administrator is actively engaged in school-community relations that benefit the school	3.5	2.0	<i>Dr. Montgomery has a good working relationship with the board and parents. He described working with Optimist group to achieve some collaboration over parking.</i>
5. Administrator shows strong leadership skills that connect the Board to the school and its staff.	3.0	3.0	<i>Dr. Montgomery works well with the board but no formal connection between teachers and board was evident.</i>
6. Administrator effectively evaluates school personnel	3.0	3.0	<i>Administrator completed timely evaluations on all staff. The next step would be mutually created goals and support to address those goals.</i>

g) School files all required state and federal reports and completes required state tests in a timely and accurate manner	<u>Self Study Score</u>	<u>Team Score</u>	<u>Comment</u>
1. Compliance with Idaho State Department of Education reporting and testing dates	3.5	3.5	<i>IRI and iSAT testing was completed last year and evidence in student files.</i>
2. Compliance regarding grants received	3.0	2.0	<i>No current grants open. Federal program grants will need careful oversight to insure that anticipated Title 1 dollars for instance are actualized through careful compliance with all requirements.</i>
3. Accreditation	NA	NA	
Total Points	88.5	64.5 30 Items	Percent Agreement: 73 %

		Avg Score 2.15	
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The team found a 73% level of agreement between the self-study and the programmatic visit and an average score of 2.15 for the areas covered in Goal One. There are a number of recommendations by the team that may improve the performance of the school in the area of governance. Additionally, a more comprehensive self-evaluation and the development of a work plan by the entire board would be recommended.

Goal One Commendations:

- Staff files in order, stored in fire-proof lockable file
- Enrollment has improved significantly since last year with 275 students enrolled. Waiting lists in many grades.
- Physical plant is very comfortable and spacious.
- Board has a wide variety of experience and strong meeting attendance.
- Open meeting procedures followed and board minutes are well organized.
- Identifying cost savings and paying off debt is commendable.
- Students and parents have positive feelings about their principal and appreciate the continuity of his being here.
- Commendable fund raising efforts this year.

Goal One Recommendations:

- The board must prioritize the creation of a comprehensive policy and procedure manual. If you are adopting ISBA model policies, adapt and revise as needed. Date and signed off when adopted.
- Create a policy to guide the reviewing and adopting of all other policies. Generally, a board has several readings to make necessary revisions and then adopts the policy.
- Update employee handbook.
- The school has a 96% attendance policy but no way to monitor. Installing Lumen should help.
- Conduct board self evaluation this year. Identify the needs and create a plan for board training.
- Create job descriptions for administrator, secretary and clerk of the board. Complete systematic evaluations for all of them.
- Clarify with auditor how the deficiency for segregation of duties is resolved. Articulate all the personnel who order, receive and check deliveries, write checks, approve checks, etc. in a written document. Include the functions of the finance committee.
- As you anticipate creating a lunch program be sure that there is a sound business plan so that the school does not absorb any losses.
- A board retreat and opportunity for deep discussion about the ‘real’ identity of the school would be recommended.

- Update the **charter** and keep it as a lens for all decision making.
- Clarify job descriptions of administrative team and evaluate where staffing is inadequate.
- Staff files need attention to get all of them up to date.
- Articulate your middle school credit program and align staffing.
- The board needs to create a succession plan for the leadership so that in the event of Dr. Montgomery's retirement there won't be a major disruption in the school.
- Attending superintendent and other SDE meetings will increase networking and resource development.
- The board needs to continually and aggressively ask if the school is sustainable? Budget projections are bleak at this time. Need some drastic measures to make this work.
- Clerk of the board off site may not be the best arrangement for high level budget awareness day to day. Projections not well known by admin or board.

Goal Two: The charter school will demonstrate a successful academic program. Goal 2 includes the areas of school culture, curriculum & instruction, and assessment and reporting.

INFRASTRUCTURE (School Culture): The intent of this portion of Goal 2 is to ensure that the charter has proper infrastructure to enable students and staff to achieve educational goals.

- a) School is faithful to its charter, its stated mission and is making progress toward stated academic goals.
- b) School has clearly stated measurable program-related goals that reflect high expectations for students and staff; the academic program aligns with the charter document. Charter staff demonstrates reflective teaching practices

Observations: Based on teacher, parent and student interviews, and classroom observation episodes, it is apparent that the teachers and leadership of the school are working hard to implement the intentions of the charter.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Self Study Score</u>	<u>Team Score</u>	<u>Comment</u>
a) School is faithful to its charter, its stated mission and is making progress toward stated academic goals.			
1. Facility adequacy	3.5	3.5	<i>Lunch room, gym and playground are very nice amenities. Special Ed in hallways not ideal, some concern for confidentiality. Science room empty most of visit. Computer room very crowded. New language lab a great idea. Evaluate if music, for instance, needs a classroom.</i>
2. Attendance requirements	3.5	3.5	<i>96% expectation is great. Monitoring seems to happen at the end of the month.</i>

3. School-wide academic plan	3.0	2.5	<i>Interesting idea to incorporate Rosetta Stone for language. Clarity about plan for computer and computer language class should be discussed. Additions of outdoor gardens and community service commendable. Still rely on Harbor academic plan but should be revisited in view of charter.</i>
4. Educational Goals	3.0	2.0	<i>Educational goals should be revised in the charter to reflect changes in testing criteria.(DWA, DMA, etc) iSAT scores are commendable.</i>
5. Assessment of Progress	3.0	3.0	<i>Assessment at classroom and student level is integrated into curriculum. Lumen will give parents and teachers new ways to share progress. Parents feel conferences are very helpful. Teachers and admin don't seem to use data to support decision making.</i>
6. Methods of Evaluation and Communication of Progress	2.5	2.0	
7. Professional Development	3	1.0	<i>Little attention has been given to professional development of staff related to essential Harbor instructional strategies and pedagogy. This is a weakness that deserves attention. Funding is a consideration but there may be affordable ways to achieve PD and create opportunities.</i>
8. School Safety	4.0	4.0	<i>Harbor method fosters safety and low incidence of disciplinary concerns. Student focus group reinforced a low threat environment.</i>
9. School Climate/Culture	4.0	4.0	<i>School culture is strong. Commendable that with the high number of students with special needs they are welcomed and supported. Pillars character development is implemented.</i>
10. Research-based Instructional Strategies	3.0	2.0	<i>Teachers are committed to using identified curricula but have not received all the training they need to ensure that they are</i>

			<i>implementing them effectively. Little attention to the fidelity of the Harbor instructional strategies. Check on the Harbor training available on line and consider additional opportunities for teachers to visit other Harbor schools.</i>
11. School progress with Idaho State Achievement Standards	3.0	4.0	<i>School made AYP. Continue to observe data on IRI scores.</i>

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Self Study Score</u>	<u>Team Score</u>	<u>Comment</u>
b) Charter staff demonstrates reflective teaching practices			
1. Curriculum: : Reading, Writing, Math, Science, History, Geography	3.0	2.5	<i>Uncertain how science and computers are aligned to other curricula. Implementing Shurley and Saxon. No attention to writing curriculum. Charter indicates World History emphasis not evident. No alignment documents to guide staff.</i>
2. Evaluation: Teachers	3.0	3.0	<i>Teachers have formal evaluations and are comfortable with principal stopping in rooms regularly.</i>
3. Teacher Collaboration	3.0	3.0	<i>There is a real spirit of collaboration and team work among the staff but little time is dedicated to building collaboration. With one of each grade it's a little harder but teachers seem eager for more opportunity for collaboration and shared leadership. Teachers are working well with high number of PSR and IBI workers assigned to students.</i>
Total Points	44.5	40.0 14 Items Avg Score 2.85	Percent Agreement 90%

GOAL 2. The team reached an 90% agreement with the school's self study with an average score of 2.85for the items in Goal 2. This indicates that there is progressing evidence of performance in Goal 2

and that the school and the team are in fair agreement about the strengths and opportunities for RHPCS at this time. The team offers the following commendations to the school:

Goal 2 Commendations: The team would like to commend RHPCS in the following areas:

- Students describe their teachers as fun, caring and responsive.
- Students feel very safe.
- Addition of Lumen will increase progress reporting to families; however, parents report great communication with teachers.
- ISAT scores are excellent.
- Instruction in many classes observed was outstanding. Some classes were weaker. Some variation from class to class on instructional methods related to Harbor.
- Harbor essentials are observed in some classrooms but not all.
- Exciting plan to add the language lab but there doesn't appear to be a plan to evaluate it.
- Specials are providing teachers with prep time. Take a look at carry-over of culture in to specials.
- Addition of Title 1 program will provide more support to students. How will you monitor?
- Teaching to the high is evident; are you as focused on supporting the low?
- School culture based on pillars seems to be working well in general, positively viewed by parents and teachers.

Recommendations: The team respectfully recommends to RHPCS that:

- Consider creating teacher committees to work on identifying what the professional development needs are and grow the shared leadership. Professional development plan should be developed.
- Formalize teacher evaluations are complete – are teachers setting goals for their own growth?
- Teachers are eager to build support around instruction and curriculum alignment.
- Curriculum seems to have stayed static since opening. Is there adequate focus on writing? Curriculum for world history (per charter), environment, computers? Curriculum document and alignment.
- Seek opportunities to be more data informed for instruction; school net may provide that opportunity in near future.
- How will you keep the conversations going related to adapting to common core standards?
- Develop RTI plan and team going forward.
- Revisit charter to demonstrate educational outcomes as described .
- Assessment data beyond IRI and iSAT will help with progress monitoring.

Goal Three: The charter school will show and plan for strong stakeholder support, involvement and satisfaction

Purpose/Intent of this Goal: Ensure the charter has stakeholders who are supportive, well informed and involved in the charter school. Stakeholders: def. Board, administration, teachers, students, parents, PTA, community.

	<u>Self Study Score</u>	<u>Team Score</u>	<u>Comment</u>
The charter school will show and plan for strong stakeholder support, involvement, and satisfaction			
1. Stakeholders participate and contribute to school mission	4.0	3.0	<i>Stakeholders are really stepping up to sustain the school. Teachers are ready for a more active role in driving the mission. High turnover is not typical in brick and mortar charter and this should be carefully monitored and addressed.</i>
2. Communication with stakeholders	3.5	3.0	<i>Good website. Lots of informal communication and teacher sites as well keep parents informed. Need to hone your message to broader community to insure enrollment.</i>
3. Stakeholder satisfaction and engagement.	3.0	3.0	<i>Parents continue to be satisfied overall, in spite of challenges in recent years. Many new families in the school in last two years.</i>
4. Plan for Improvement	3.0	1.5	<i>School needs more action in terms of implementing improvement methods. Develop strategic plan with input from all stakeholder groups.</i>
Total Scores	13.5	10.5 4 Items Avg Score 2.6	Percent Agreement: 78%

Goal Three assesses stakeholder engagement and satisfaction. Overall we found that the stakeholders of RHPCS are satisfied and engaged but opportunities for improvement remain.

Commendations: The team would like to commend RHPCS in the following areas:

- Generally parents report on surveys that they are very satisfied. Small focus group of newer families are very connected and committed.
- Teachers are very committed to the long term success of the school. They have made significant sacrifices – how will they continue to be supported?
- Parents recognize the high quality of the rigorous instruction and how their children are advanced academically.
- Positive feedback from parents on conferences and communication.
- Really nice survey conducted last year. Use to have great discussions.
- Teachers are very committed in spite of decrease in compensation.

Recommendations: The team respectfully recommends to RHPCS that:

- Celebrate successes of the school to support the self esteem of all the students and staff.
- Increase opportunities for shared leadership and decision making by gathering input from staff.
- Increased board knowledge of school operations and shared vision.
- Repeat survey annually to get feedback from your stakeholders.
- Study the enrollment/exit patterns and create plan to increase over time and keep retention as high as possible.
- Share news of decisions at the board to all stakeholders: I.e. New policies, progress on school finances.
- Staff need a handbook so that they understand their employment conditions fully.

Goal Four: The charter school will plan for short and long term continuous improvement.

Purpose/Intent of this Goal: Ensure the charter clearly recognizes where growth is essential.

The charter school will plan for short and long term continuous school improvement	<u>Self Study Score</u>	<u>Team Score</u>	<u>Comment</u>
1. The school has a five-year Strategic Plan and actively uses it to direct its efforts and measure its progress.	3.0	1.0	<i>Strategic document needs to be developed and reviewed quarterly.</i>
2. School leadership is reflective and uses data to drive improvement.	3.0	2.0	<i>ISAT scores are very good. Greater efforts to gather and analyze data</i>

			<i>will help guide the school on a course of improvement and strategic planning.</i>
3. Continuous Improvement is planned, monitored and accomplished.	1.0	1.0	<i>The school is doing some very good things to expand the learning opportunities for students. Music, language, garden, etc. They have made considerable gains in meeting the needs of their special education students. They have been addressing their financial issues aggressively with fund raising and austerity. As the feeling of urgency resolves around the financial issues we feel the school will be better able to create a strategic plan for all areas of operation.</i>
Total Scores	7.0	4.0 3 Items Avg Score 1.3	Percent Agreement: 57%

GOAL 4 refers to the school's efforts for continuous improvement. The team reached an 57% agreement with the self study and an average score of 1.3. This score indicates that there is not sufficient evidence that they school is planning for short term and long term continuous improvement. The school is clearly focused on the short term improvement and has made some gains in enrollment and financial health. Still, the long term improvements will hinge greatly on the resolution of short term issues.

Goal 4: Commendations: The team would like to commend RHPCS on the following:

- Gather a good deal of data from all stakeholders to get feedback.
- Administration continues to seek solutions for space and facility. Nice changes this year.
- Increasingly financially solvent.
- Growing team work among all staff

Recommendations: The team respectfully recommends that RHPCS:

- Include representatives from all stakeholder groups to develop a five-year strategic plan.
- Engage in open evaluation processes at all levels – board, director and teachers.
- Board development plan will have positive impact school-wide as governance continues to be strengthened.
- Update charter so that your educational goals are in line with your data collection and reporting.

Goal	Score Level of Agreement	Commendations	Recommendations
<p>1. Governance: <i>The Charter School will fulfill all governance and administrative obligations as provided in state & federal law and in the school's charters.</i></p>	<p>73 % Agreement</p> <p>Average Score 2.15</p> <p>Progressing Evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff files in order, stored in fire-proof lockable file • Enrollment has improved significantly since last year with 275 students enrolled. Waiting lists in many grades. • Physical plant is very comfortable and spacious. • Board has a wide variety of experience and strong meeting attendance. • Open meeting procedures followed and board minutes are well organized. • Identifying cost savings and paying off debt is commendable. • Students and parents have positive feelings about their principal and appreciate the continuity of his being here. • Commendable fund raising efforts this year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board must prioritize the creation of a comprehensive policy and procedure manual. If you are adopting ISBA model policies, adapt and revise as needed. Date and signed off when adopted. • Create a policy to guide the reviewing and adopting of all other policies. Generally, a board has several readings to make necessary revisions and then adopts the policy. • Update employee handbook. • The school has a 96% attendance policy but no way to monitor. Installing Lumen should help. • Conduct board self evaluation this year. Identify the needs and create a plan for board training. • Create job descriptions for administrator, secretary and clerk of the board. Complete systematic evaluations for all of them. • Clarify with auditor how the deficiency for segregation of duties is resolved. Articulate all the personnel who order, receive and check deliveries, write checks, approve checks, etc. in a written document. Include the functions of the finance committee. • As you anticipate creating a lunch program be sure that there is a sound business plan so that the school does not absorb any losses.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A board retreat and opportunity for deep discussion about the ‘real’ identity of the school would be recommended. • Update the charter and keep it as a lens for all decision making. • Clarify job descriptions of administrative team and evaluate where staffing is inadequate. • Staff files need attention to get all of them up to date. • Articulate your middle school credit program and align staffing. • The board needs to create a succession plan for the leadership so that in the event of Dr. Montgomery's retirement there won't be a major disruption in the school. • Attending superintendent and other SDE meetings will increase networking and resource development. • The board needs to continually and aggressively ask if the school is sustainable? Budget projections are bleak at this time. Need some drastic measures to make this work. • Clerk of the board off site may not be the best arrangement for high level budget awareness day to day. Projections not well known by admin or board.
<p>2. Academic Program: <i>The charter school will demonstrate a successful academic program</i></p>	<p>90 % Agreement</p> <p>Average Score 2.85</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students describe their teachers as fun, caring and responsive. • Students feel very safe. • Addition of Lumen will increase progress reporting to families; however, parents report great communication with teachers. • ISAT scores are excellent. • Instruction in many classes observed was 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider creating teacher committees to work on identifying what the professional development needs are and grow the shared leadership. Professional development plan should be developed. • Formalize teacher evaluations are complete – are teachers setting goals for their own growth? • Teachers are eager to build support around

	Progressing Evidence	<p>outstanding. Some classes were weaker. Some variation from class to class on instructional methods related to Harbor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harbor essentials are observed in some classrooms but not all. • Exciting plan to add the language lab but there doesn't appear to be a plan to evaluate it. • Specials are providing teachers with prep time. Take a look at carry-over of culture in to specials. • Addition of Title 1 program will provide more support to students. How will you monitor? • Teaching to the high is evident; are you as focused on supporting the low? • School culture based on pillars seems to be working well in general, positively viewed by parents and teachers. 	<p>instruction and curriculum alignment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum seems to have stayed static since opening. Is there adequate focus on writing? Curriculum for world history (per charter), environment, computers? Curriculum document and alignment. • Seek opportunities to be more data informed for instruction; school net may provide that opportunity in near future. • How will you keep the conversations going related to adapting to common core standards? • Develop RTI plan and team going forward. • Revisit charter to demonstrate educational outcomes as described . • Assessment data beyond IRI and iSAT will help with progress monitoring.
<p>3. Stakeholder Support: <i>The charter school will show and plan for strong stakeholder support, involvement and satisfaction</i></p>	<p>78% Agreement</p> <p>Average Score 2.6</p> <p>Progressing Evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally parents report on surveys that they are very satisfied. Small focus group of newer families are very connected and committed. • Teachers are very committed to the long term success of the school. They have made significant sacrifices – how will they continue to be supported? • Parents recognize the high quality of the rigorous instruction and how their children are advanced academically. • Positive feedback from parents on conferences and communication. • Really nice survey conducted last year. Use to have great discussions. • Teachers are very committed in spite of decrease in compensation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Celebrate successes</u> of the school to support the self esteem of all the students and staff. • Increase opportunities for shared leadership and decision making by gathering input from staff. • Increased board knowledge of school operations and shared vision. • Repeat survey annually to get feedback from your stakeholders. • Study the enrollment/exit patterns and create plan to increase over time and keep retention as high as possible. • Share news of decisions at the board to all stakeholders: I.e. New policies, progress on school finances. • Staff need a handbook so that they understand their employment conditions fully.

<p>4. Continuous Improvement: <i>The charter school will plan for short and long term continuous improvement.</i></p>	<p>57% Agreement</p> <p>Average Score 1.3</p> <p>Not Sufficient Evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather a good deal of data from all stakeholders to get feedback. • Administration continues to seek solutions for space and facility. Nice changes this year. • Increasingly financially solvent. • Growing team work among all staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include representatives from all stakeholder groups to develop a five-year strategic plan. • Engage in open evaluation processes at all levels – board, director and teachers. • Board development plan will have positive impact school-wide as governance continues to be strengthened. • Update charter so that your educational goals are in line with your data collection and reporting.
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