

VICTORY CHARTER SCHOOL
9779 Kris Jensen Lane, Nampa, Idaho
2009-2010 Programmatic Audit Report

During Victory Charter School's 2008-2009 annual update before the Idaho Public Charter School Commission, the administrator shared and asked for support in a new approach toward the school's programmatic audit.

In Victory's charter, it states: ***Victory Charter School's mission is to develop students who are competent, confident, productive and responsible young adults who possess the habits, skills and attitudes to succeed in high school and be offered the invitation of a post-secondary education and satisfying employment.***

To that end, the 2009-2010 programmatic audit was conducted by local, successful business and community leaders who spent a day observing the school to see if Victory's educational program, school culture, and school management carried out the mission to the fullest and if the school was truly preparing its students to be the best employees and citizens – people the auditors would want to either hire, work for, live next to, or serve with in the community in the years to come.

Prior to the audit, the auditors were provided with background information about the school, website information, and the following guide to use on their day of observation. The day included first meeting with the school administrator to go over the day's agenda; the school's mission, vision & philosophy; the school's history, as well as recent accomplishments, changes, challenges, future plans; and to share those things not easily noticed in the classrooms, such as the financial aspects of the school. In all, the auditors' reports show a positive impression of the Victory Charter School. The auditors who participated were knowledgeable of charter schools in general and had strong business and community ties. One was extremely knowledgeable in the Harbor Method so as to have the background to most easily recognize theory vs. application, another had strong financial expertise and state funding expertise, while another is an educator by profession. They were:

- Dr. Christine Ivie, charter school consultant for Paragon Charter Schools and a Nampa resident. Dr. Ivie has served as a teacher, counselor, principal and special education director throughout Idaho. She has worked as a coach, advisor and volunteer with many educational and youth-serving organizations. Dr. Ivie is a licensed professional counselor, certified teacher, school counselor, special education director and superintendent in Idaho.
- Rep. Dolores Crow represented District 12 in the Idaho Legislature for 24 years, the last 8 years as Chairman of the House Revenue and Taxation Committee. After retiring in 2006 she was appointed and currently serves as a Commissioner on the Capitol Commission whose mission it was to oversee the restoration and construction of the new wings of the State Capitol Building. She is a long-time Nampa resident.
- Mr. Terry Bower, director of marketing for the Center for Wound Healing & Hyperbaric Medicine, former operations manager for the Harbor Education Institute, former director of Idaho non-profit Love INC, and former Boise business owner.

The auditors commended the school on effectively implementing and maintaining the vision of the school, and especially recognized the importance of not only the formal education being provided to the students, but also the character education, career-preparation (no matter what the career), and community education being presented. Suggestions from the audit team included continued commitment to the replication of the Harbor Method model as exemplified at Liberty, and ensuring teachers new to the school are trained fully to be able to keep to the high standards set out in the Harbor Education Model. In response to those suggestions, Victory recognizes while it has been an established Harbor school for 6 years, its high school component continues to be developed, with the first senior class graduating just last spring. The administrator and faculty work closely on building the high school community, both in terms of classroom offerings (College Knowledge was fully implemented this year and college

concurrent credit classes continue to be added) to teacher effectiveness (an outside consultant has developed a Harbor teacher-specific evaluation tool that the administrator is implementing into her annual teacher evaluations, and the Victory Title IA teacher presented a class to her peers for credit that focused on how to implement Title I requirements in a Harbor classroom).

As this was the first year for conducting the programmatic audit in this manner, it was a learning year for us in administering such an observation. For instance, in subsequent years we hope to schedule a full day observation (if auditors' schedules allow), rather than a half-day. We plan to dedicate more time to have the auditors meet with Board members to discuss fully the Board's role and work at Liberty. A full day would also allow the auditors to spend more quality time with students at several grade levels, rather than just a couple, and it would give the auditors the ability to better review certain documents, such as the fiscal audit. Additionally, in coming years we will provide a more structured document for the auditors that includes a checklist of items to observe and comment, rather than the more general topic-driven/narrative format used this year. In this manner, it's expected a large majority of the feedback could be provided before the auditors leave from the day's visit, thereby requiring less time for them later to have to devote to completing the review.

Following is the audit questionnaire. Following that, are the three auditors' reports.

2009-2010 Programmatic Audit: Victory Charter School

Conducted by:

Date:

Victory Charter School's school-to-work emphasis challenges the Board, administrator, teachers, staff, students and parents to look at every aspect of every school day so that the end result is an education where students graduate prepared to move into the next phase of their lives with the tools, skills, and behaviors necessary to ultimately be the best employees and community members. As a K-12 school, Victory is in a unique position to instill these traits and habits at the earliest grades and consistently build on them to graduation, as well as help students entering the school at any grade level become immersed in the program so they clearly benefit as well.

Victory Charter is grounded in the belief that when a low-threat environment (an environment where children and adults feel safe) is coupled with highly-challenging content (teaching to the high with multiple learning opportunities in place so that "If you don't get it today, you'll get it tomorrow...if you don't get it tomorrow, you'll get it next week, etc.), accelerated learning takes place.

The school's mission says it best (as it should!): ...to develop students who are competent, confident, productive and responsible young adults who possess the habits, skills, and attitudes necessary to succeed in high school and to be offered the invitation of a post-secondary education, satisfying employment, and life-long opportunities.

To that end, our hope is as you conduct the programmatic audit, you see various ways in which the philosophy and mission of the school is being carried in tangible, realistic and practical ways. Therefore, please provide your observations, comments and suggestions to the following:

- 1) Teacher and Staff professionalism: Do adults model the behaviors typical of top-notch, successful employees in a company? How? [Dress, class management, classroom cleanliness & organization, professional attitude towards boss, peers, students, etc.]
- 2) Is class time organized in such a way that students are developing time management skills, seeing a well-run organization in action, able to take part and/or practicing workplace organization skills, etc.? What examples did you observe?
- 3) What behaviors did you observe among the students that are indicative of successful employees as co-workers, leaders (i.e., bosses), subordinates, etc. [Respect, collaboration, clarification, preparedness, etc.]
- 4) In addition to the classroom curriculum, what out-of-class experiences did you observe, or that were shared with you, that help in developing future, successful employees & citizens? [Middle school lunchroom assignments; administrator's interns; student leadership opportunities; community service; internships and apprenticeships; high school assignments, such as after-lunch cleanup, etc.]
- 5) Academically, what education components did you observe, or that were shared with you, that are indicative of knowledge/skills that are necessary to obtain to help create life-long learners, i.e., employees that can adapt to new situations, learn new jobs, continue to be valuable to the organization? [High School college knowledge/morning concepts, K-8 concept boards, May Awards/public presentations, 1,000 words to know for the ACT/SAT, classroom discussions, etc.]
- 6) In your discussions with the high school students & teachers, what skills, habits & traits do they possess, or that they've been prevented with that make them college and/or work-force ready? What did they share with you that made them feel ready for college/post-high school training/workforce ready?
- 7) In your career, what do you see as having the most importance in terms of being the best employee for your organization? What is going on at this school that demonstrates that students will have these skills/knowledge in place when they enter the workforce?
- 8) Additional thoughts/observations:

Audit completed by: _____

2009-2010 Programmatic Audit: Victory Charter School
Conducted by: Christine Ivie Date: June 1, 2010

[Please Note: Dr. Christine Ivie has inserted her comments throughout the programmatic audit questionnaire she and the other auditors received. Therefore, she has provided information in the introductory information provided, as well as in the actual questions posed.]

Victory Charter School's school-to-work emphasis challenges the Board, administrator, teachers, staff, students and parents to look at every aspect of every school day so that the end result is an education where students graduate prepared to move into the next phase of their lives with the tools, skills, and behaviors necessary to ultimately be the best employees and community members. As a K-12 school, Victory is in a unique position to instill these traits and habits at the earliest grades and consistently build on them to graduation, as well as help students entering the school at any grade level become immersed in the program so they clearly benefit as well.

Dr. Ivie observation: *After participating in the programmatic audit at Victory Charter School, I would identify the following strengths and challenges related to each of the identified areas:*

Strengths – Victory directs resources to support the school to work emphasis and has provided a highly qualified, dynamic staff member to facilitating school to work projects for secondary students. In addition, the Victory staff model the expectations and traits that they expect students to learn. They also participate in activities designed to reinforce the idea that all work is honorable and they look for opportunities for students to participate in work environments that benefit the school.

Challenges – I didn't observe any specific challenges but Victory seems to be in the development stage of this and didn't seem to have quite as structured of a program related to this as Liberty does.

Victory Charter is grounded in the belief that when a low-threat environment (an environment where children and adults feel safe) is coupled with highly-challenging content (teaching to the high with multiple learning opportunities in place so that "If you don't get it today, you'll get it tomorrow...if you don't get it tomorrow, you'll get it next week, etc.), accelerated learning takes place.

Dr. Ivie observation: *These are really the same as those identified for Liberty – they have done a great job replicating the same culture and it is extremely successful!*

Strengths – the overall culture and environment at Victory shows that this approach is effective in creating a model school where students are valued and can participate in a safe environment with extremely high expectations. The fact that students meet and exceed expectations is evidence of how effective this approach is.

Challenges – none observed – possibly a challenge to train teachers new to the system, but I think they have this handled well.

The school's mission says it best (as it should!): ...to develop students who are competent, confident, productive and responsible young adults who possess the habits, skills, and attitudes necessary to succeed in high school and to be offered the invitation of a post-secondary education, satisfying employment, and life-long opportunities.

To that end, our hope is as you conduct the programmatic audit, you see various ways in which the philosophy and mission of the school is being carried in tangible, realistic and practical ways. Therefore, please provide your observations, comments and suggestions to the following:

1. Teacher and Staff professionalism: Do adults model the behaviors typical of top-notch, successful employees in a company? How? [Dress, class management, classroom cleanliness & organization, professional attitude towards boss, peers, students, etc.]

Dr. Ivie observation: *Also the same comments as Liberty - I observed extremely professional staff members who modeled every expectation, character trait and behavior identified as important to help students become successful future employees. Staff dress, communication with other adults and with students, and interactions with colleagues were extremely professional.*

Specific examples observed: The principal did a great job of modeling very professional behavior and interaction with students at Victory. I also thought that the hallway and common area behavior was excellent.

Challenge – None noted.

2. Is class time organized in such a way that students are developing time management skills, seeing a well-run organization in action, able to take part and/or practicing workplace organization skills, etc.? What examples did you observe?

Dr. Ivie observation: *I did not observe any challenges in this area. In fact, all classes seemed on task and students and teachers were engaged and working hard during our observations. In addition, hallway behavior was respectful and efficient – leading to little wasted time during the day.*

Specific Examples – the high school social studies and English classes were engaged in high level thinking and analysis. The teachers were respectful, communicated clear expectations and did an excellent job of facilitating discussions.

3. What behaviors did you observe among the students that are indicative of successful employees as co-workers, leaders (i.e., bosses), subordinates, etc. [Respect, collaboration, clarification, preparedness, etc.]

Dr. Ivie observation: *Strengths – the students were very respectful of adults and made an effort to interact with each other and with their teachers. Students volunteered to participate in activities. Students also seemed highly engaged and there were very few students sitting quietly and passively taking in instruction.*

Specific Examples – Again – the secondary school students were highly engaged and very respectful of each other and of their teachers. I didn't observe as many elementary students at Victory.

Challenges: None observed.

4. In addition to the classroom curriculum, what out-of-class experiences did you observe, or that were shared with you, that help in developing future, successful employees & citizens? [Middle school lunchroom assignments; administrator's interns; student leadership opportunities; community service; internships and apprenticeships; high school assignments, such as after-lunch cleanup, etc???)

Dr. Ivie observation: *I didn't observe lunch room or hall cleanup assignments on this visit, but have in previous visits and believe those contribute to the identified school to work goals.*

5. Academically, what education components did you observe, or that were shared with you, that are indicative of knowledge/skills that are necessary to obtain to help create life-long learners, i.e., employees that can adapt to new situations, learn new jobs, continue to be valuable to the organization? [High School college knowledge/morning concepts, K-8 concept boards, May Awards/public presentations, 1,000 words to know for the ACT/SAT, classroom discussions.]

Dr. Ivie observation: *This is another area that I don't know if I can identify specific examples from this visit (other than the things that Ms. Saunders pointed out in her tour) but I have observed a wealth of instructional activities that create life-long learners and that prepare students for post-secondary education and successful careers. I believe, after observing Victory for almost 10 years, that the combination of activities, instructional practices and expectations create this rather than specific examples. I think the evidence is the outstanding results that start in kindergarten and continue on after graduation. I could see behaviors in each class we visited that contribute to this overall outcome.*

6. In your discussions with the high school students & teachers, what skills, habits & traits do they possess, or that they've been prevented with that make them college and/or work-force ready? What did they share with you that made them feel ready for college/post-high school training/workforce ready?

Dr. Ivie observation: *I think students believe that possess the skills, habits and traits that make them college and work-force ready but none specifically addressed this – that might be an area to focus on so that students can communicate how Victory has helped them specifically in this area.*

7. In your career, what do you see as having the most importance in terms of being the best employee for your organization? What is going on at this school that demonstrates that students will have these skills/knowledge in place when they enter the workforce?

Dr. Ivie reply: *I believe that the most important quality of an employee is that he or she is able to use the gifts, strengths, knowledge and abilities he or she has in a way that is effective and creates collaboration with others. I think prior to being an employee, the person has to gain the skills, abilities and knowledge for a specific career or area (and ideally that person has to identify or recognize his or her gifts). Ultimately, an effective employee has to be able to use that in some type of collaboration with others in order to be effective.*

I saw tremendous opportunities for students to work together both in and out of the classroom. I also observed numerous examples of teachers and other staff members providing feedback to students to help them develop all of the things they need for future success. I think that the high standards and expectations in each classroom are critical in accomplishing this goal. I also think the behavior and character expectations in the school help to achieve this goal.

8. Additional thoughts/observations:

Dr. Ivie response: *GREAT SCHOOL. Excellent job in implementing the vision and educational program and building on success – it amazes me that even when you think Victory is at its best and can't improve, it gets better again the next year. Thanks for allowing me to participate.*

VICTORY CHARTER SCHOOL

Programmatic Audit

June 1st, 2010

Presented by:

Terry A. Bower

As I began the Victory Charter Programmatic Audit it became obvious to me on how many levels Victory mirrors Liberty Charter School. In our discussions with Victory's principal, Dr. Saunders, and office manager, Anne Martin the extent to which Victory has deliberately modeled even seemingly small details was explained. Victory is not a blind copy of Liberty, however. From small to big details, the replication is thought out and justified by solid outcomes that were first seen at Liberty and are now being demonstrated at Victory. For this reason, my contributions to the Programmatic Audit of Liberty and Victory are very similar in content because the schools are very similar in their expressions of the Harbor School philosophy. The management model of Victory that keeps Harbor founder Becky Stallcop in close communication with Principal Dr. Saunders can probably be credited with the continuity and consistency that appears now be solidly in place at Victory. *Terry Bower*

1. Teacher and Staff professionalism: Do adults model the behaviors typical of top-notch, successful employees in a company? How? [Dress, class management, classroom cleanliness & organization, professional attitude towards boss, peers, students, etc.]

OBSERVANCE

All the Victory teachers and educational assistants I observed were well organized and their students were focused on the subject. As role models their manner of dress and behavior showed their commitment to professionalism and quality. I noticed the teaching style used kept the attention of all the students even though it was obviously rigorous and geared toward the high. In each classroom the teacher had a thorough knowledge of the curriculum and it was presented in a fast pace. There was mutual respect displayed between the teachers and assistants and the students. When questions were asked by the students there was time for the teachers to answer and without interruption from other classmates. I sensed the students were well acquainted with the curriculum flow and what was next, so organization and control of the classroom was not even an issue. The one thing I most enjoyed while at Victory Charter School was the positive attitude of all those I met, whether it be the principal, Dr. Marianne Saunders, the office staff, teachers and most important, the students. Learning/teaching seemed to be fun at this school.

2. Class time organization: Is class time organized in such a way that students are developing time management skills, seeing a well-run organization in action, able to take part and/or practicing workplace organization skills, etc.? What examples did you observe?

OBSERVANCE

I observed very organized classrooms and students taking responsibility for their part in keeping the classroom organized and well managed. What impressed me the most was the teaching flow from one subject to the next without so much as a blip. No looking for the lesson plan; and a teamwork effort by all including the students. Some of the things I saw were assistance from peer partners/study buddies, checking each other's work quickly and quietly and with respect. Students retrieving items to be used in the next lesson without being asked. Handing in completed work when done without request or disruption of any kind. I could tell these students have been taught to take control of their learning experience, while the teacher oversaw their self-monitoring and on-task behavior thus helping to perfect the use of not only the students class time effectively but also helping them correct skills that would help them at home in getting their work done.

All the classrooms were organized and not cluttered with "stuff", there was a place for everything and everything was in its place. I noticed that most classrooms had a teacher's assistant, a very important asset especially for helping those students who may be struggling. The organization and therefore the order even extended into the hallway. With classes transitioning to various subjects like P.E., computer and music it was so amazing to see 100 kids at one time get to the next class with no confusion, correction or so much as a sound. They always appeared ready to learn and this seems to be the greatest benefit of ridding the school of needless noise and confusion.

3. Students as successful co-workers: What behaviors did you observe among the students that are indicative of successful employees as co-workers, leaders (i.e., bosses), subordinates, etc? [Respect, collaboration, clarification, preparedness, etc.]

OBSERVANCE

Developing positive attitudes in students concerning work and effort will allow them to have satisfying personal and professional lives. A positive can-do attitude goes a long way in the job application, interview and employment process. Three categories for successful workplace employment are human relations skills, negotiation skills, and adaptability skills. I observed all three being addressed at Victory. The promotion of teamwork attitudes among the Victory students was evident in every class I observed. This will make it easier to excel as they learn oral communications, idea clarification, negotiation, and goal setting. I was pleased to see the emphasis of these traits already displayed in the 5th grade and daily used in the high school setting. I was not surprised to learn that Five Standards taught at Victory were personal responsibility, expanding and integrating knowledge, communication skills, thinking and reasoning skills and social responsibility and skills. I have no question that Victory students are prepared for the workplace upon graduation.

4. Out of class experiences: In addition to the classroom curriculum, what out-of-class experiences did you observe, or that were shared with you, that help in developing future, successful employees & citizens? [Middle school lunchroom

assignments; administrator's interns; student leadership opportunities; community service; internships and apprenticeships; high school assignments, such as after-lunch cleanup, etc.

OBSERVANCE

- I'm very impressed with the young age at which the administrator and teachers creatively introduce the school to work model.
- For example, 1st – 3rd grade where a program called Scholar Dollars is introduced. Students in these grades receive scholar dollars for getting to school on time, for homework being finished in a timely manner, for attitude and effort in the classroom, and for kindness shown toward peers. At the end of 10 weeks, the students are able to spend their scholar dollars at a carnival put on by the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade teachers and parents. This gives students an early start in the basic understanding of what it will take to be successful in post secondary/college education and future employment.
- 4th grade students are responsible for picking up the PE equipment left on the playground each day before the end of the school day.
- 5th grade students are responsible for picking up trash on the playground.
- 6th grade students mop the floor in the café, vacuum the floor outside the café in the hallway, and wash the lunch tables.
- 7th grade students prepare fresh vegetables and fruit each morning in the cafe, 2 students at a time for a period of one hour each day for one week.
- 8th grade students are instructed by the principal in the café in a school-to-work program for a period of 2 hours per day for 10 school days for each student.
- By the end of their 8th-grade year, Harbor School students have culminated 8 years of focus on attitude and effort, and formed life-long habits and skills in these social development areas.

5. Knowledge/skills for life-long learners: Academically, what education components did you observe, or that were shared with you, that are indicative of knowledge/skills that are necessary to obtain to help create life-long learners, i.e., employees that can adapt to new situations, learn new jobs, continue to be valuable to the organization? [High School college knowledge/morning concepts, K-8 concept boards, May Awards/public presentations, 1,000 words to know for the ACT/SAT, classroom discussions.]

OBSERVANCE

- Victory's replication of Liberty's (and the Harbor Method) teaching tools impressed me. A few I'll mention here - the 1,000 words to know for the ACT/SAT. Taking the monthly group of words and developing poems using all the words helped these young ones understand the correct use of the word. Again, the replication was spot on. The most impressive was the K-8 concept boards using concepts that seemed to be a couple of grade levels higher yet the Victory kids also "got it", the repetition and the questions asked by the teacher convinced me that they understood the whole concept. It showed me you can effectively replicate a model that teaches to the high to keep interest but that the repetition helps those children who may be a little slower. Victory's teachers carry out the Harbor way of thinking on this: you (the student) may not get it today, but they will probably get it tomorrow or the next day. This is something I think all parents should use at home when working with the kids on their homework. Unfortunately it can only be used in a setting like Victory where they really are given more than a week to learn a certain concept.

6. Skills, habits & traits: In your discussions with the high school students & teachers, what skills, habits & traits do they possess, or that they've been prevented with

that make them college and/or work-force ready? What did they share with you that made them feel ready for college/post-high school training/workforce ready?

OBSERVANCE

I didn't have the opportunity to talk to any of the students due to testing.

7. Career and the real world: In your career, what do you see as having the most importance in terms of being the best employee for your organization? What is going on at this school that demonstrates that students will have this skills/knowledge in place when they enter the workforce?

OBSERVANCE

Attitude is everything in my workplace and I have found with the younger new employees there are some disturbing trends. First of all, too often younger employees seem to have an attitude of entitlement. They are use to getting what they want now without too much effort and certainly without much criticism concerning their performance. I also too often hear foul language that is unprofessional and could set us up for lawsuits. It was obvious at Victory that students are not coddled or allowed to think they are owed, rather education is presented as a privilege to be grateful for and grades and recognition for achievement is something to be earned with many opportunities for improvement along the way. Also, I did not hear a single cuss word or hint of disrespectful language by anyone at the school.

8. Additional thoughts/observations: In your career, what do you see as having the most importance in terms of being the best employee for your organization? What is going on at this school that demonstrates that students will have this skills/knowledge in place when they enter the workforce?

OBSERVANCE

I'm so impressed with the attitude of all the students I came in contact with, even though we didn't get a specific time set aside to speak with them. They were polite, not only to me but to their teachers and peers, something that is so needed in the workplace and frankly something we struggle with daily. I was impressed with the administrator, Marianne Saunders. She has replicated a successful model and put together a school that not only has a positive feel but has positive results in tangible terms - test scores. If businesses and corporations want to protect their bottom lines and create positive work environments then we as a community need to start insisting on higher standards and perhaps more Harbor Schools.