

WHITE PINE CHARTER SCHOOL

**2559 John Adams Parkway
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83406**

Programmatic Audit
Completed: May 4 – 5, 2010

White Pine Charter School
Programmatic Audit
Signature Page

Christalina Jensen
Lead Auditor

Date

Rob Black
WPCS Board of Directors, Chairman

Date

WHITE PINE CHARTER SCHOOL

Address:

2959 John Adams Parkway
Ammon, Idaho 83406

School Phone:

208-522-4432

School Website:

<http://www.whitepinecharterschool.org>

Date School Opened: September 2003

Authorized by: Idaho Charter School Commission

Principal: Terry Rothamer

rothamerte@whitepinecharterschool.org

In this position: August 2009

ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

School Year represented by this data 2009-2010

Enrollment

Range of grades offered K-8

Attrition Statistics:

During the school year covering this audit:

Students newly enrolled 106 (including K 45)

Students who exited 32

Total # students enrolled 431

Wait list data 217

Student demographics

	Number	%
Ethnicity:		
Caucasian	390	90%
Hispanic	29	7%
Black	5	1.2%
Asian	2	0.5%
Multi-racial	0	0.0%
Native American	5	1.2%
Other	0	0.0%

Free and reduced lunch	122	28%
Students with IEP	41	11%
English Language Learners	0	
Other special populations	0	

Please describe your staff: (Insert #)

	Number
Head of School/Principal	1
Asst. Head of School	0.5
Certified teachers	19
Non-certified teachers/Education Assts.	13
Office/Administrative staff	1.5

Aggregate ADA for the school year: 95.21%

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

We submit this report to White Pine Charter School (WPCS) 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 observations and inquiry on four goals:

- 1) The charter school will fulfill all governance and administrative obligations as provided in state and federal law and in the school's charter.
- 2) The charter school will demonstrate a successful academic program.
- 3) The charter school will show and plan for strong stakeholder support, involvement and satisfaction.
- 4) The charter school will plan for short and long-term continuous school improvement.

Our comments should be regarded as only one performance indicator.

We wish to express our gratitude to White Pine Charter School, Principal, Terry Rothamer and Assistant Principal, Charlotte Shearer and their staff, the board, and parents for extending hospitality and openness to us during our visit. They provided us with open dialogue during interviews, documentation of goals and their progress toward their achievement, and provided very well organized documents for our review. Because of their organization and preparation we were able to conduct our work in a productive manner.

Special thanks to the White Pine's Assistant Principal, Charlotte Shearer and business manager, Anita Ogden for their efforts leading up to the site visit. Also, we would like to thank all the members of the school community who took an active role in the site visit by providing documentation and interviews.

To validate the performance of White Pine Charter School in all of the above enumerated areas, the site team conducted interviews and observations and reviewed school documents and records.

White Pine Charter School is in its 7th year of operation and its 3rd year in their permanent facility. This was the first year in which our team performed a programmatic audit for White Pine Charter School. However, following review of previous programmatic audit reports for the school, the team observed progress made on the recommendations made by past programmatic audit teams. White Pine Charter School continues to successfully fulfill all governance and administrative obligations as provided in the state and federal law and in their execution of a Core Knowledge charter school. The team observed and documented

a strong commitment of the school's stakeholders. The commitment of the Board and staff has been particularly important as the previous principal has now assumed the role of assistant principal and provided consistency for the school. The assistant principal has also served as mentor for the new principal as he assumes his new role at White Pine Charter School

Our team is grateful for the opportunity to visit White Pine Charter School, and we submit our report in the spirit of congeniality and in the quest for educational excellence.

Programmatic Audit Site Visit Team:

Denette Buhler, previous Human Resource manager for LS Technology, LLC.

Gayle Eiman, retired educator with 23 years of experience in District 91.

Laurie Jackson, current Special Education director at Taylor's Crossing Public Charter School.

Chris Jensen, founder and former Board Chair of Compass Public Charter School in Meridian, Idaho. She currently serves as community relations director for Taylor's Crossing Public Charter School in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

Leadership Team at White Pine Public Charter School:

WPCS Administration:

Mr. Terry Rothamer, Principal

Mrs. Charlotte Shearer, Asst. Principal

Mrs. Anita Ogden, Business Manager

White Pine Board of Directors:

Rob Black, Chair

Brian Vandersloot, Vice Chair

Sandy Volmer, Secretary

Kim Whiting, Treasurer

Miles Carroll

Sharon Cutler

VISITING TEAM REPORT
WHITE PINE CHARTER SCHOOL
VISIT CONDUCTED MAY 4 – 5, 2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of White Pine Charter School is to “assist parents and educators in building a solid foundation of knowledge and skills for students to use as a basis for continual learning to meet the challenges of a global society.” This charter school sees its purpose in the community as developing an educated citizenry for the 21st century. To accomplish this goal they implement an accelerated, dynamic, sequential and interactive academic program where pacing is driven by student capabilities, not textbooks. At White Pine, students are asked to develop personal habits and attitudes that lead to accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions; academic honesty and the ability to face challenges with courage and integrity. The school is completing its 7th year of operation and its third year in its permanent facility.

The site team was impressed with the understanding of the Board, administration, staff, and parents regarding the mission and vision of the school as outlined in its charter. Each group was able to clearly articulate the mission and focus of the charter, as well as what goals had been set to ensure its implementation. This school-wide knowledge and commitment to the school’s mission is commendable.

The team observed some challenges that have continued over a period of years. For example, teacher satisfaction and retention continues to be an issue of concern for the school’s leadership, staff, and parents. White Pine Charter School has made continued effort to address this challenge. The collaboration and documentation of the school’s grade-level academic program has increased. The result of these efforts will be an improved educational environment for teachers and students. We make the following commendations in goals 1 through 4:

- A handbook for Board orientation was developed so that all new Board members are fully aware of relevant charter school law.
- The Board adopted an annual self evaluation process that includes evaluation of the relationships among the administration, Education Council and Board.
- Members of the Board recently attended Board training provided by the Idaho Charter School Network as part of their continuous improvement plan.
- The school’s financial accounts and their records appear to be in order.
- The Board, business manager, and school administration are taking the necessary steps to ensure the financial stability of the school.
- The Board is to be commended on the retention of an experienced part-time administrator.
- The full-time administrator has taken important steps to improve parent and staff communication through the use of technology. The full-time administrator brings enthusiasm and a fresh perspective on school operations.

- The part-time administrator has been an important mentor to the full-time administrator. Her presence increases the staff and parent's sense of stability.
- Students and parents appear to be satisfied and are enjoying their academic experience at White Pine Charter School.
- Student work is prominently displayed, which increases the students' sense of achievement.
- Teachers are knowledgeable in Core Knowledge Sequence and the implementation of this curriculum is evident in the classroom.
- The increased collaboration between teachers has improved curriculum quality and standardization.
- The administration and Board have responded to requests that a new reading program be purchased and implemented in the 2010-2011 school year.
- Title I is an inclusion program and pull-out only occurs when necessary and this increases the student's ability to connect with his/her class.
- The Board has been willing to take recommendations of previous programmatic audits and implement new policy and procedures to address issues identified in those reports.
- The P.F.A. organization has been strengthened by recent changes in leadership.

Based on observations and research conducted over two 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, represents one slice or snapshot of time in the life of the school.

Continuous improvement is one of the goals of a programmatic audit. With this purpose in mind, the team identified a number of opportunities and is making the following recommendations to White Pine Charter School for their consideration:

- The Board continues to seek opportunities for Board training as part of their own continuous improvement.
- The Board continues to refine the roles and responsibilities of the Education Council.
- Consistent implementation and follow-through of existing school policies by staff, administration, and Board.
- Continue to seek grant funding. Establish a grant writing committee or better utilize the Education Council and school staff in this regard.
- The team recommends the full-time administrator seek opportunities to improve communication with teachers and strictly adhere to privacy guidelines.
- The team recommends that the full-time administrator consistently follows the schedule and/or calendar developed by the administration

and staff. Any necessary changes to the schedule should be made with adequate notice to all staff members.

- We recommend that the administrator and middle school teachers examine the performance of the 7th and 8th grade students and create a plan for student academic improvement.
- The administration examine over-all moral of the teaching staff and implement strategies for more open communication and support.
- An increase in school structure in the day-to-day operations. Consistent expectations of students and parents.
- Continue to increase standardization between grade levels in the implementation of Core Knowledge Sequence.
- Continue to seek professional training for staff in Core Knowledge Curriculum.
- Additional staff in special education to meet the needs of the current student body.
- Expand collaboration between teachers of different grade-levels.

White Pine Charter School is well-positioned to continue the important work of implementing an excellent Core Knowledge school. As the school's leadership continues to implement the recommendations of previous audits and the recommendations found in this audit, the team is confident that the school will continue to be successful and the school's reputation in the local community and among the state's charter schools will be admired. The overall success of the school rests on passionate teachers who are empowered and supported to do outstanding work. Simply put, happy teachers make for happy students which in turn make for happy parents.

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.

- Exceeds Standards
- Meets Standards
- Progressing Toward Standards
- In Need of Improvement
- Not Progressing Toward Standards

1A. Documents

Observations:

The visiting team observed the school has retained all legal documents pertaining to school opening, operating, and reporting progress toward goals specified in the charter. The documents were provided to the entire team for the review process organized in clearly labeled binders. The business manager was one of the school's founders as well as a highly skilled accountant and the document organization reflected her attention to detail and high standards.

Documents Examined:

- Charter
- Bylaws
- Adopted Policy & Procedure Manual
- Standardized test results (2008-2009 AYP Report, IRI proficiency reports, ISAT scores, and partial 2009-2010 ISAT scores).
- Fiscal Audit for 2008-2009
- Most recent Parent/Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey results
- Board Minutes
- Budget Hearing Notices
- Board Handbook
- Parent/Student Handbook
- 2010 Charter School Dashboard Report
- Certified Personnel Files

Commendations:

The team would like to commend White Pine on the following:

- All documents are well organized and appear to be in compliance with all federal, state, and local requirements.
- The leadership is knowledgeable regarding compliance with federal and state law procedure.

Recommendations:

The team respectfully recommends that:

- That all Category 2 teacher contracts be signed by the governing Board chairman as required.

IB. RELEVANT FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS AND PROCEDURES**Observations:**

The team collected data from a variety of sources including interviews with the leadership team, Board members, staff, and parents. The team feels that at this time the school is in compliance with state and federal laws including the Open Meetings Law, the Public Charter School Act, Idaho Education Code, and appropriate Board of Education ruling. The leadership went through the necessary steps to adopt new policies to be in compliance with the Family Medical Leave Act, as well as other Federal programs.

Commendations:

The team would like to commend them on:

- The Board demonstrates an understanding of these issues and expresses high levels of trust in their administrative team.
- A handbook for Board orientation was developed so that all new Board members are fully aware of relevant charter school law.
- The Board adopted an annual self evaluation process that includes evaluation of the relationships among the administration, Education Council and Board
- Members of the Board recently attended board training provided by the Idaho Charter School Network as part of their continuous improvement plan.

Recommendations:

The team respectfully recommends that:

- That the Board continues to seek opportunities for Board training as part of their own continuous improvement.

1C. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE:

Observations:

The White Pine Board is currently made up of six members who are mostly parents with one non-parent professional educator. The Board is diverse with a variety of backgrounds, ages, gender, and life experience. This diversity is a strength to the Board and its role at the school. The Board members' terms are staggered and designed to insure that there is always institutional knowledge on the Board. Current Board members are listed at the beginning report. The Board embraces the mission of the school and values the culture of respect and personal responsibility, academic honesty and integrity, and high academic expectations set by the school. In an effort to implement the mission of the school, the Board identified four goals which are:

1. Improved communication with teachers and students
2. High academic excellence
3. Global awareness for students
4. Improved teacher retention

The Board focuses these four goals at each Board meeting and evaluates their progress towards achievement.

The site team interviewed three of the six Board members and was impressed with their forward thinking and proactive approach regarding the future of the school. The Board has a willingness for continued improvement and has taken a thoughtful approach to the recommendations made in the previous programmatic audit reports. One of the issues cited in the previous report was the need for improved communication between the Board and the school stakeholders. The Board made improved communication a part of their four identified goals for the school, as stated above. Under the direction of the Board, the school leadership has improved communication with teachers and parents through the increased use of technology. Principal Terry Rothamer brings with him an understanding of how to use technology to gather feedback from the stakeholders through the use of electronic surveys. In addition Principal Rothamer has developed electronic news letters to keep parents informed regarding school activities and events. Their efforts have proven effective based on information received in a recent parent survey conducted by the Education Council. Parents responded favorably regarding the increased utilization of email and the school's website to communicate information from school to home. Additionally, the parents are more aware of the school's Education Council and the Board of Directors; their role at the school, open meetings, and opportunities for public input. Some of the suggestions made by parents for continued improved communication were the posting of the Board agenda on the school's website; email reminders, more information for new families regarding the educational philosophy and procedures for school operations. The team recommends that the Board communicate clearly the expectations and policies in

place at the school to all parents. For instance, information regarding policies and expectation may be shared with parents at a Back-To-School parent meeting, within a school newsletter, and/or the Board may want to consider a requirement for parents to sign a letter of understanding regarding all school policies.

The team observed that the roles between the Board and the Education Council (a standing committee of parents who work with the principal and staff on the academic operation of the school including the calendar, lottery, test data, parent volunteers, and implementing annual parent surveys), have been more clearly defined. The team sees value in having a committee of parents involved in the process of policy development with the principal and staff. The team encourages the Board to utilize the recommendations of the Education Council during their policy review and adoption process.

The team had an opportunity to meet individually with elementary and middle school teachers. The team identified a common concern among the teachers regarding the conflict of interest regarding Board members who also have students who attend the school. For example, the teachers identified three policies that need to be strengthened to increase student achievement and improve overall academic performance (attendance, tardiness, homework). The teachers expressed some feelings of frustration regarding the reluctance of the Board to adopt, strengthen, and/or enforce the current attendance/tardy and homework policy because it may have a negative impact on the Board members personally. The team would encourage the Board to review and/or develop a conflict of interest policy that reflects their conflict of interest as parents who also serve on the Board. Additionally, the team recommends that Board members encourage and support the administration in their effort to enforce policy. It is also important for Board members to follow with exactness all school policies regarding their students so as to avoid “public perception” that Board members are not subject to school policies and the consequences that follow their violations.

Commendations:

The team would like to commend them on:

- The Board is diverse with a variety of backgrounds, ages, gender, and life experience. This is a strength to the Board and its role at the school.
- The Board is following the recommendations of the previous programmatic audit that they receive professional training.
- The Board is following the recommendations of the previous programmatic audit that they establish clear roles and responsibilities for the Board, administration and Education Council.
- The Board appears to be in compliance with all state open public meeting and public record laws.
- The Board set clear goals and objectives with the focus being on student achievement and improvement.

Recommendations:

The team respectfully recommends that:

- The Board continues to seek opportunities for professional Board development.
- The Board continues to improve communication between the Board and the school stakeholder.
- The Board continues to refine the roles and responsibilities of the Education Council.
- Consistent implementation and follow-through of existing school policies by staff, administration, and Board.

1D. FINANCIAL:**Observations:**

The team observed that in the area of financial operations the business manager and administrators are thorough and accountable. The team reviewed current and projected budgets, budgetary processes and procedures, and records of budget hearings. Interviews were conducted with current Board treasurer, the business manager, and the school principal. An independent fiscal audit was conducted on June 30, 2009 by Galusha, Higgins, & Galusha, PC. The financial audit found that the school follows generally accepted accounting practices. The budget is prepared by the business manager and the principal and is reviewed and adopted by a vote of the Board. Monthly budget expenditure reports are prepared by the business manager and reviewed by the Board.

Though these are challenging economic times, the team feels that White Pine Charter School is well positioned for financial stability as they plan for the future. All fiscal records are in order and recent decisions were made by the Board to no longer offer tuition free full-day kindergarten at the school. An alternative option was developed to offer an after school program to kindergarten students for a fee to offset the costs associated with a full-day kindergarten program. A financial emergency was declared by the White Pine Charter School Board of Directors at a public meeting held on April 29th. This action was taken as a recommendation from Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Luna. This allowed the Board to reduce teacher salary by 4% and contract days from 180 to 173. Though these decisions were difficult to make, the Board, business manager, and administration took the necessary steps to continue strong fiscal management of the school's resources. The business manager has been instrumental in creating a school that is fiscally sound. Anita Ogden, the business manager, clearly has a great investment in the success of the school as a founder, parent, and business professional. The team is confident that working together, the administration and business manager can present a clear picture of the financial health, needs and decision making with regard to budgetary issues.

The team was impressed with the efforts that the administration and Board took to involve the school's stakeholders in the financial decision to eliminate the full-day kindergarten program. This decision was made following several community cottage meetings in which Board members explained the financial reasons for the changes made in the kindergarten program. They also listened to the concerns expressed by the school's patrons and although it was a difficult decision, the overall experience was positive for both the Board and those they serve. The team was encouraged to see that the teaching staff was included in the budget meetings, however, the team received feedback regarding the budgetary process and although the teachers are grateful to be included in the meetings, there was a feeling that the meetings were more informational and less about receiving input from the teaching staff. The team recommends that the administration and business manager seek input from the teaching staff prior to budget decisions being made. Additionally, the team recommends that the Board, administration, and business manager continue to seek grant funding options to off-set the reduction in state and federal funding. The team encourages the budget team to include the teaching staff in the seeking and writing of educational grants.

Commendations:

The team would like to commend them on:

- Their financial account and their records appear to be in order.
- Taking the necessary steps to ensure the financial stability of the school:
 - Increased the classroom sizes by two students
 - Created a 2nd grade bubble class
 - Eliminated full-day kindergarten and created a half-day kindergarten class after school called "The Academy." The reached this decision by using Cottage meetings and parent surveys.
 - Created a budget team and involved staff and administration
 - Declared financial Emergency – 4% reduction of pay for staff and reduced the number of contract days by 7.

Recommendations:

The team respectfully recommends that:

- Continue to build communication between the Board and parents/teachers regarding budget decisions. (Inform parents/teacher of the restriction placed on federal and state funds)
- Continue to seek grant funding. Establish a grant writing committee or better utilize the Education Council and school staff in this regard.

1E. ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP:

Observations:

The visiting team met with individual Board members, teachers, and parents, in addition to reviewing documentation and satisfaction surveys. Additionally, the team briefly visited the classrooms and observed students generally.

Interviews with Board members, teachers and parents indicate that the administrative team (Terry and Charlotte) is working well together. The Board's decision to utilize Charlotte's past administrative experience in her new role as assistant principal has resulted in a positive mentoring experience for the new White Pine Charter School principal, Terry Rothamer. Charlotte has been invaluable in assisting Terry and the school community with this transition. Terry Rothamer brings a diverse background in education, business, and technological expertise that have been a benefit to White Pine Charter School. He has been instrumental in establishing new communication methods with the school's patrons. The results of his efforts were reflected in the positive feedback received in the school's parent survey. In addition, he has used technology to seek feedback from the parents and teachers through the use of electronic surveys. Terry is very personable and approachable. These personality traits have been an asset as he works with the school staff and patrons. His background in business brings a unique perspective to the school.

The team had an opportunity to meet with elementary and middle school teachers. A number of conflicts surfaced indicating their uncertainty about the leadership capabilities of the new principal. They cited his lack of recent education experience and also his lack of formal administrative credentials. As a result, when teachers were given a recent evaluation from the principal regarding their teaching methods and/or style the feedback was not valued or well received. The team recommends that Mr. Rothamer continue his progress toward receiving his administrative credentials and make efforts to continue building relationships with the staff by reaching out to the teachers, listen to their concerns and provide them with the support they need to be successful in their responsibilities. Additionally, the teachers expressed concern regarding the lack of notice and adherence to previously scheduled teacher in-service activities by the leadership team. The team recommends that the school's leadership make extra efforts to protect teacher instruction time and avoid last minute changes to scheduled events. If changes to previously scheduled events are necessary, the team recommends that the school's leadership provide adequate notice to all teaching staff regarding schedule changes.

Commendations:

The team would like to commend them on:

- The Board is to be commended on the retention of an experienced part-time administrator.

- The full-time administrator has taken important steps to improve parent and staff communication through the use of technology. The full-time administrator brings enthusiasm and a fresh perspective on school operations.
- The part-time administrator has been an important mentor to the full-time administrator. Her presence increases the staff and parent's sense of stability.

Recommendations:

The team respectfully recommends that:

- The current level of education and administrative experience by the current full-time administrator is a concern to staff. The result is a reduced ability to provide constructive feedback to the more experienced staff. It would be important for an evaluation policy and procedure to be strictly followed. Continued mentoring by the part-time administrator would improve his credibility.
- The team recommends the full-time administrator seek opportunities to improve communication with teachers and strictly adhere to privacy guidelines.
- The team recommends that the full-time administrator consistently follows the schedule and/or calendar developed by the administration and staff. Any necessary changes to the schedule should be made with adequate notice to all staff members.

1F. FEDERAL AND STATE REPORTS AND TESTING REQUIREMENTS:

Observations:

The visiting team believes that White Pine currently meets the requirements for federal and state reporting as well as testing requirements. The academic goals that were set in the areas of math and reading were all met with the exception of their 8th grade math ISAT score which dropped 2% from the previous year. We found no evidence to suggest that White Pine has not fully participated in protocols; they are interested in creating additional measures specific to their Core Knowledge methodology to assess student progress and to inform instruction. Student-lead conferences have been under review by the Education Council, made up of teachers, parents and administrators. The Education Council and Board has made a determination to continue this style of conference.

Commendations:

The team would like to commend them on:

- ISAT report for 2009-2010 showed improvements in all areas with the exception in grades 7 (reading, science), and 8 (math, reading, language arts).

Recommendations:

The team respectfully recommends that:

- We recommend that the administrator and middle school teachers examine the performance of the 7th and 8th grade students and create a plan for student academic improvement.

Goal Two: The charter school will demonstrate a successful academic program.

- Exceeds Standards
- Meets Standards
- Progressing Toward Standards
- In Need of Improvement
- Not Progressing Toward Standards

2A. INFRASTRUCTURE (School Culture)**Purpose/Intent of this Portion of the Goal:**

Ensure that the charter has proper infrastructure to enable this students and staff to achieve educational goals.

Observations:

Overall, the team observed some very positive examples of project-based learning and positive school culture. The classrooms and hallways are brightly decorated with student work displayed prominently. The team was impressed with the student projects in the younger grades, particularly the cereal box castles located in the kindergarten. These projects reflected team effort on the part of the students and hands-on learning. The school cafeteria was friendly and inviting. The cafeteria walls were used to display a time-line of important world events. This creative use of wall-space was not only decorative but also educational and in keeping with the Core Knowledge focus. Parent surveys indicated that they feel their students are safe, receive adequate supervision, and are welcome at the school. The surveys also indicated that the school has an environment that promotes student learning.

The audit team of 3 individuals conducted individual interviews with 12 school representatives over a two-day period of time. As a result the team did not spend extensive amounts of time in observation of the classroom or other student activities. It would be important for future programmatic audit teams to allot more time for classroom and student observation to provide adequate feedback in regard

the overall school environment. The majority of the team's observations regarding school culture came from interviews with staff. The majority of the teachers the team interviewed cited concerns regarding overall low-moral of the teaching staff. This comes as a result frequent changes in administration and high turn-over among the teaching staff.

Commendations:

The team would like to commend them on:

- Students and parents appear to be satisfied and are enjoying their academic experience at White Pine Charter School.
- Student work is prominently displayed, which increases the students' sense of achievement.

Recommendations:

The team respectfully recommends that:

- The administration examine over-all moral of the teaching staff and implement strategies for more open communication and support.
- An increase in school structure in the day-to-day operations.
- Administration and teachers should establish more consistent expectations of students and parents.

2B. CURRICULUM and INSTRUCTION (Academic goals, quality of instruction, student performance):

Purpose/Intent of this Portion of the Goal:

Ensure that the school has curriculum that is aligned with educational goals and state standards; and proven instructional strategies that meet the needs of different student populations.

Observations:

The visiting team spent a small amount of time observing classrooms in lower and upper grades. In teacher interviews, the team learned of the collaboration that is taking place among grade-level teachers. This approach has improved the over-all challenges of teaching in the Core Knowledge model where lesson plans must be developed daily. Through their collaborative efforts, teachers are dividing the curriculum into equal portions, developing lesson plans for their assigned subjects, and sharing their lesson plans with other teachers. The team recommends the continuation of these collaborative efforts and encourages the staff to expand their collaboration to include other grade levels.

The new purchased reading program was mentioned to the team during their interviews with the Board, business manager, Education Council, administration, and teachers. There is school-wide support for the new program and the audit team

looks forward to observing the impact on student academic achievement following its implementation.

The audit team was impressed with the inclusion method used for Special Education/Title I students. This approach enhances the student's opportunity to connect with his or her classmates and not miss out on classroom learning. Although the inclusion method is optimal, it doesn't completely replace the need for individual interaction with qualified Special Education staff. The school currently has 46 students identified as Special Ed./Title I students and White Pine Charter School employs only two part-time Special Education teachers. This student to teacher ratio is extremely high and may result in inadequate services being provided.

Commendations:

The team would like to commend them on:

- Teachers who are knowledgeable in Core Knowledge Sequence and the implementation of this curriculum is evident in the classroom.
- The increased collaboration between teachers has improved curriculum quality and standardization.
- The administration and Board have responded to the requests that a new reading program be purchased and implemented in the 2010-2011 school year.
- Title I is an inclusion program and pull-out only occurs when necessary and this increases the student's ability to connect with his/her class.

Recommendations:

The team respectfully recommends that:

- Continue to increase standardization between grade levels in the implementation of Core Knowledge Sequence.
- Continue to seek professional training for staff in Core Knowledge curriculum.
- Add additional staff in Special Education to meet the needs of the current student body.
- Expand collaboration between teachers of different grade levels.

2C. ASSESSMENT and REPORTING

Purpose/Intent of this Portion of the Goal:

Ensure that charter has multiple methods for assessing progress of students and staff and methods for reporting progress to stakeholders.

Observations:

White Pine Charter School participates in all the state required assessments. White Pine utilizes report cards as well as a system of portfolio review with student lead conferences to inform parents, teachers and students of student progress. Based on review of ISAT reports, most students are making adequate yearly progress though White Pine has been designated “on alert” for failing to make AYP in the area of Econ Math proficiency. The teachers are eager to implement the newly purchased reading program. Teachers have demonstrated that they use test data to analyze student learning and adjust instruction to address identified student needs.

Due to the small size of the team and the audit time constraints, the team did not spend extensive amounts of time focused on the assessment and reporting processes at the school. The school would benefit if future audit teams spent more time in this area.

Commendations:

The team would like to commend them on:

- The staff is knowledgeable about assessment and reporting process.
- The Board, administration, and staff have a strong commitment to the mission and vision of the school and its use of Core Knowledge.

Recommendations:

The team respectfully recommends that:

- Continue to implement and plan to address teacher retention, documentation of lessons and curricula developed by staff for future use.

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

- Exceeds Standards
- Meets Standards
- Progressing Toward Standards
- In Need of Improvement
- Not Progressing Toward Standards

Purpose/Intent of this Portion of the Goal:

Ensure that the charter has stakeholders who are supportive, well informed, and involved in the charter school.

Observations:

The team observed parents volunteering at the school in a variety of places and capacities. White Pine Charter School has high expectations of its parents. Families are strongly encouraged to commit at least 20 volunteer hours to the school each year. Through parent interviews and surveys, the team observed that the school has strong support and high parent satisfaction.

The school's P.F.A. has recently had a change in leadership. The visiting team was impressed with the current organization's leadership and the focus they had on the mission of the P.F.A. and how to implement it. The group is making changes as necessary and standardizing the transition process. They implemented a mentor program so that new leadership is continually being sought and groomed for future roles in the P.F.A. The group has also done several big events this year as fundraisers and activities that strengthen relationships among the school community.

Through parent interviews and surveys, the team observed that White Pine Charter School appears to be experiencing what many charter school's who have been in operation over five years experience; and that is a decrease in over-all parent volunteerism and activity. However, the school leadership is aware of this issue and are seeking solutions regarding this common occurrence. They are focused on reaching out to parents not currently involved and creating a more positive volunteer experience. Through these efforts they hope to increase and strengthen continued parent involvement at the school.

White Pine Charter School has taken great efforts to improve teacher retention. It has been the focus of the Board, Education Council, and school administration. At the time of the site visit, teacher contracts had not been issued for the following year. This was a concern for some teachers. However, the administration and Board were confident that teacher retention would be improved from previous years. The team is hopeful that through these efforts the parents and teachers will experience greater stability regarding the school's future and this will add to the school's ability to attract and retain highly-qualified teaching staff and committed parents.

Commendations:

The team would like to commend them on:

- Overall parent satisfaction is high as evidenced from surveys and interviews.
- The P.F.A. organization has been strengthened by this year's new leadership.

Recommendations:

The team respectfully recommends that:

- Continued communication with stakeholders using a variety of means.
- Continue to improve P.F.A. parental involvement.

Goal Four: The charter school will plan for short and long term continuous improvement.
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- Exceeds Standards
- Meets Standards
- Progressing Toward Standards
- In Need of Improvement
- Not Progressing Toward Standards

Purpose/Intent of this Portion of the Goal:

Ensure the charter clearly recognizes where growth is essential.

Observations:

The Board continues to address issues of maintaining enrollment and the financial stability of the school. These issues are critical and need to be addressed in a timely manner. However, the team observed that the Board has recognized the importance of long-term planning to address these issues so that the Board becomes a proactive organization rather than reactive. Recent Board training has helped them to establish long-term goals and make them a primary focus of their Board meetings. The Board should be commended on their use of their past programmatic audits as a tool to help them in areas of continuous improvement. The school leadership has taken the recommendations given in previous programmatic audits and implemented necessary changes. However, because this process is long-term the results of these efforts may not be immediately evident. The team encourages the WPCS leadership to continue in its long-term goal development and recognize the importance of short-term goals to accomplish implementation of long-term goals.

Commendations:

The team would like to commend them on:

- The Boards willingness to take recommendations of previous programmatic audits and implement new policy and procedures to address issues identified in those reports.

Recommendations:

The team respectfully recommends that:

- Continue to develop long-term goals for the school and use the process of short-term goals to accomplish this task.

White Pine Charter School is well-positioned to continue the important work of implementing an excellent Core Knowledge school. As the school's leadership continues to implement the recommendations of previous audits and the recommendations found in this audit, the team is confident that the school will continue to be successful and the school's reputation in the local community and among the state's charter schools will be admired. The overall success of the school rests on passionate teachers who are empowered and supported to do outstanding work. Simply put, happy teachers make for happy students which in turn make for happy parents.

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2010 White Pine Charter School

Programmatic Audit Summary

Goal	Rating	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>Meets Standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All documents are well organized and appear to be in compliance with all federal, state, and local requirements. • The leadership is knowledgeable regarding compliance with federal and state law procedure. • The Board demonstrates an understanding of these issues and expresses high levels of trust in their administrative team. • A handbook for board orientation was developed so that all new board members are fully aware of relevant charter school law. • The Board adopted an annual self evaluation process that includes an evaluation of the relationships among the administration, Education Council and Board. • Members of the Board recently attended board training provided by the Idaho Charter School Network as part of their continuous improvement plan. • The Board is diverse with a variety of backgrounds, ages, gender, and life experience. This is a strength to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Category 2 teacher contracts need to be signed by the governing Board chairman as required. • Continues to seek opportunities for Board training as part of their own continuous improvement • Continue to improved communication between the Board and the school stakeholders. • Refine the roles and responsibilities of the Education Council. • Consistent implementation and follow-through of existing school policies by staff, administration, and Board. • Continue to build communication between the Board and parents/teachers regarding budget decisions. (Inform parents/teacher of the restriction placed on federal and state funds.) • Continue to seek grant funding. Establish a grant writing committee or better utilize the Education Council and school staff in this regard. • Lack of education and administrative experience by the current full-time administrator is a concern to staff. The result is a reduced ability to provide constructive feedback to the more experienced staff. It would be important for an evaluation policy and procedure to be strictly followed. Continued mentoring by the part-time administrator would improve his credibility. • The team recommends the full-time administrator seek opportunities to improve communication with

		<p>the Board and its role at the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board is following the recommendations of the previous programmatic audit that they receive professional training and that they establish clear roles and responsibilities for the Board, administration and Education Council. • The Board set clear goals and objectives with the focus being on student achievement and improvement. • The Board appears to be in compliance with all state open public meeting and public record laws. • Financial accounting and records appear to be in order. • Taking the necessary steps to ensure the financial stability of the school: (increasing classroom sizes, reducing the number of contract days, creating a “bubble class.” etc.) • The Board is to be commended on the retention of an experienced part-time administrator. • The full-time administrator has taken important steps to improve parent and staff communication through the use of technology. The full-time administrator brings enthusiasm and a fresh perspective on school operations. 	<p>teachers and strictly adhere to privacy guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team recommends that the full-time administrator consistently follows the schedule and/or calendar developed by the administration and staff. Any necessary changes to the schedule should be made with adequate notice to all staff members. • We recommend that the administrator and middle school teachers examine the performance of the 7th and 8th grade students and create a plan for student academic improvement.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The part-time administrator has been an important mentor to the full-time administrator. Her presence increases the staff and parent's sense of stability. • ISAT report for 2009-2010 showed improvements in all areas with the exception in grades 7 (reading, science), and 8 (math, reading, language arts). 	
<p>2. Academic Program: <i>The charter school will demonstrate a successful academic program</i></p>	<p>Progressing Toward Standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students and parents appear to be satisfied and are enjoying their academic experience at White Pine Charter School. • Student work is prominently displayed, which increases the students' sense of achievement. • Teachers are knowledgeable in Core Knowledge Sequence and the implementation of this curriculum is evident in the classroom. • The increased collaboration between teachers has improved curriculum quality and standardization. • The administration and Board have responded to the requests that a new reading program be purchased and implemented in the 2010-2011 school year. • Title I is an inclusion program and pull-out only occurs when necessary and this increases the student's ability to connect with his/her class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administration examine over-all moral of the teaching staff and implement strategies for more open communication and support. • An increase in school structure in the day-to-day operations. Consistent expectations of students and parents. • Continue to increase standardization between grade levels in the implementation of Core Knowledge Sequence. • Continue to seek professional training for staff in Core Knowledge Curriculum. • Add additional staff in special education to meet the needs of the current student body. • Expand collaboration between teachers of different grade-levels. • Continue to implement and plan to address teacher retention, documentation of lessons and curricula developed by staff for future use.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff is knowledgeable about assessment and reporting process. • The Board, administration, and staff have a strong commitment to the mission and vision of the school and its use of Core Knowledge. 	
<p>3. Stakeholder Support: <i>The charter school will show and plan for strong stakeholder support, involvement and satisfaction.</i></p>	Progressing Toward Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall parent satisfaction is high as evidenced from surveys and interviews. • The P.F.A. organization has been strengthened by this year's new leadership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued communication with stakeholders using a variety of means. • Continue to improve P.F.A. parental involvement.
<p>4. Continuous Improvement: <i>The charter school will plan for short and long term continuous improvement.</i></p>	Meets Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Boards willingness to take recommendations of previous programmatic audits and implement new policy and procedures to address issues identified in those reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop long-term goals for the school and use the process of short-term goals to accomplish this task.

2009 White Pine Charter School

Programmatic Audit Summary

Goal	Rating	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>Meets Standard</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation is well organized and very complete • Clear understanding of the Board as governing and principal as manager. • Diverse Board with strong skill sets. • Policy development in response to needs assessment. • Strong fiscal leadership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate mission more clearly to guide all decision making. • Develop subcommittees on the Board as a way to gradually bring more individuals into leadership for the future and distribute work and investment. • Make time at least annually to evaluate itself for the purposes of growth and improvement. Create a board training plan. • Establish clear roles and responsibilities for the Board, administration and Education Council, with areas of most importance having both Board and administrative involvement. This might take the form of a three-column table with duties listed under each position. This may also create a more transparent decision making map for constituents to understand. It is also critical that those help accountable for a task have the authority to act. • Create a plan to involve additional stakeholder (parents and teachers) in the budget development and actions to conserve fiscal resources during difficult times. • Review procedures for evaluation and professional development of teachers with a goal of maximum retention.
<p>2. Academic Program: <i>The charter school will demonstrate a successful academic program</i></p>	<p>Progressing Toward Standard</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's Board and administrator are thoughtful in implementing their charter and are passionate about the Core 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Administrator, Special Education Director and teachers examine the performance of the Title 1 students in math and create a plan for remediation and tracking.

		<p>Knowledge Sequence as the foundation of their school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Pine teachers have visited other Core Knowledge schools to broaden their knowledge. • White Pine has some exceptional teachers with high levels of commitment and collaboration that has developed a wealth of lesson plans to meet Core Knowledge targets. • Innovative projects for hands-on learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan for teacher continuous professional development. • An aggressive plan to address teacher retention, documentation of lessons and curricula developed by staff for future use and effective teacher-administrative communication are essentials to keep academic program strong and students succeeding. • Revisit the budgeting process in relation to the charter and mission. This process would help Board members and administrative personnel discern if identified priorities are indeed aligned with the charter and mission of the school. • Consider a task force of teachers, students and parents to make recommendation for enhanced capture and display of student work. • Differentiated instruction and mastery learning are clearly occurring in many classrooms. We suggest a plan for teacher professional development that utilizes master teachers to support the growth and development of less seasoned teachers. Consideration of a lead-teacher for each subject area may support this activity. • In implementing the Core Knowledge model, teachers need sufficient time and support to do their best. We recommend evaluation teacher planning time and consider the possibility of incorporating aids in the classroom to assist with paper work or provide additional student support. • To insure that the vision is alive and integral across all classrooms and grade levels, we would encourage the leadership and faculty to create a document that articulates what discourse and
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			analytical thinking, progressive learning environments and compassionate teaching environments look like across all levels.
<p>3. Stakeholder Support: <i>The charter school will show and plan for strong stakeholder support, involvement and satisfaction.</i></p>	In Need of Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages in regular systematic gathering of satisfaction surveys. Engages parents in education council as well as governing board. Multiple communication channels Highly satisfied parents White Pine uses effective strategies for communicating with parents through newsletters, website and conferences. Increase media coverage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve all the stakeholders in the strategic planning process and consider engaging an outside facilitator to guide the process. Consider visible and concrete strategies to underscore the mission of the school to all parents and visitors. These stakeholders will then contribute to communicating the essential character of the school to the broader community. Revisit conflict of interest among Board and discuss strategies for effective teacher/parent-Board member communication. The Board and administrator should examine the needs of teachers and insure that they are aware of ongoing concerns and tensions.
<p>4. Continuous Improvement: <i>The charter school will plan for short and long term continuous improvement.</i></p>	In Need of Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An effort to connect the staff to the essentials of Core Knowledge by visiting exemplary schools was a positive strategy. Focus of special education staff on AYP Interventions that yielded improved reading scores should be expanded Regular parent surveys to gauge parent satisfaction are commendable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create immediate action plan for AYP The Board and administration examine how they will approach strategic planning in a way that builds community and helps focus on the long term vision and continuous improvement of the school. Tasking this to the Education Council will not insure a comprehensive approach. The Board creates a plan to insure that the administrator is supported in her role as instructional leader. The administrator identifies what she needs to bring together the staff and clarify the mission and vision among the staff. The Board creates a plan for their own evaluation and Board development. The Administration and teaching staff create a plan

			<p>for effective internal communication and professional development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a plan to address AYP in math for Title 1 students.
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2008-09 Adequate Yearly Progress Report

White Pine Charter School (2514), White Pine Charter School District #464

The goal for schools, districts, state, and nation is for all students in grades 3 through 8 and 10 to be proficient in reading and math and language by the spring of 2014. In 2008-09, students in grades 3 through 8, and 10 were tested using the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). This report shows the percentage of the school's students meeting state goals for reading proficiency and the percentage of our schools' students meeting state goals for proficiency. This report shows required comparison of our school's students in the district and state. Goals missed are highlighted in red below and listed at the right. Goals highlighted in blue had the FED Flex rule applied.

Group - All Students Required Comparisons	ISAT Reading		ISAT Math		3rd Indicator Language Usage
	% Tested	% Proficient	% Tested	% Proficient	
		or better		or better	
	Goal 95%	Goal 78%	Goal 95%	Goal 70%	
Grade(s) 3,4,5,6,7,8 3rd-8th & 10th 3rd-8th & 10th	School 99.59%	School 88.84%	School 99.59%	School 82.79%	School 82.33%
	District 99.59%	District 88.84%	District 99.59%	District 82.79%	
	State 99.35%	State 88.15%	State 99.36%	State 81.57%	
Subgroups Required Comparisons	ISAT Reading		ISAT Math		ISAT Language 78% Proficient or better or maintain 2008-09 levels or better
	% Tested	% Proficient	% Tested	% Proficient	
		or better		or better	
	Goal 95%	Goal 78%	Goal 95%	Goal 70%	
African American	School ^	School ~	School ^	School ~	School ~
	District ^	District ~	District ^	District ~	
	State 99.01%	State 76.8%	State 99.23%	State 65.55%	
Asian	School *	School ~	School *	School ~	School *
	District *	District ~	District *	District ~	

	State 99.18%	State 91.39%	State 99.28%	State 89%	
American Indian/Alaska Native	School *	School ~	School *	School ~	School *
	District *	District ~	District *	District ~	
	State 98.75%	State 75.38%	State 98.58%	State 64.07%	
Hispanic	School <u>100%</u>	School ~	School <u>100%</u>	School ~	School ~
	District 100%	District ~	District 100%	District ~	
	State 99.29%	State 75.87%	State 99.25%	State 66.56%	
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	School *	School ~	School *	School ~	School *
	District *	District ~	District *	District ~	
	State 99.52%	State 89.25%	State 99.19%	State 80.59%	
White	School 99.55%	School 88.94%	School 99.55%	School 84.42%	School n/a
	District 99.55%	District 88.94%	District 99.55%	District 84.42%	
	State 99.38%	State 90.62%	State 99.4%	State 84.6%	
Limited English Proficient Students (lep)	School *	School ~	School *	School ~	School *
	District *	District ~	District *	District ~	
	State 99.4%	State 62.53%	State 99.39%	State 54.72%	
Economically Disadvantaged (econ)	School 98.51%	School 83.33%	School 98.51%	School <u>66.67%</u>	School n/a
	District 98.51%	District 83.33%	District 98.51%	District 66.67%	

	State 99.35% State 81.47%	State 99.32% State 73.29%	
Students with Disabilities (swd)	School <u>100%</u> School ~ District 100% District ~ State 98.48% State 55.06%	School <u>100%</u> School ~ District 100% District ~ State 98.41% State 45.56%	School ~

To protect the privacy of individual students the following symbols are used.

>95% - The group with proficiency percentages greater than 95%.

<5% - The group with proficiency percentages less than 5%.

^ No participation determinations are made for groups of less than 10 students. The participation rate of students in this group is included in district and state totals.

~ No proficiency determinations are made for groups of less than 34 students. The proficiency level of students in this group is included in district and state totals.

* The school has not reported any students in this group.