



Preliminary Findings of Site Visit- Cardinal Community Academy September 28-30, 2009

As the site visit team, our role was to listen, observe, familiarize ourselves with the day-to-day operations of the school, and gauge the degree to which the school is meeting its goals. We were not meant to serve as consultants or advisors, but rather to provide feedback and to validate the findings of the school's self-study. The school and the team addressed five critical questions:

1. Is the school faithful to the terms of its contract?
2. Is the school faithful to its stated mission, goals, and objectives?
3. Is the academic program a success?
4. Is the school a viable organization?
5. Does the school recognize where growth is most essential?

The ultimate goal is to assist the school in assessing how well it is doing in achieving its mission and vision.

The team's consensus is that the Cardinal Community Academy community is dedicated to the personal and academic growth of each child. While we cannot presume to know your school in such a short time, we were impressed with the following attributes:

- an administration, staff, and parent body committed to the school's mission and to the overall success of the students and school as a whole
- a financially viable organization with a focus both on the present needs of the school and the future goals of the school
- schoolwide commitment to Core Knowledge and the supplemental educational programs the school utilizes
- positive and supportive relationship between families and staff
- schoolwide focus on character education
- improved and increasingly positive relationship with district administration
- an engaged, respectful and positive student body
- commitment to the academic growth of individual students as evidenced by the creation of both staff positions and programs to meet specific needs

As a school committed to continuous improvement, we hope that the perspective of outsiders proves helpful. We feel that we have gained some insights into CCA in the few days that we have visited, but we also recognize that these are “snapshot views” of the school. With that in mind, and based on observations, interviews and data review, we would like to offer the following recommendations for your consideration:

- clearly define and articulate the roles and responsibilities of both the Governing Board as a whole and the Accountability Committee
- establish and maintain written documentation of decisions made to ensure consistency and clear communication
- complete a “crosswalk” review of bylaws, policies and school procedures
- use multiple points of data (parent surveys, staff surveys, student surveys, academic results, financial reports, etc.) in making school decisions
- continue building relationship with the district, while documenting required reporting and exemptions from reporting
- engage in a long term strategic planning process anticipating and prioritizing future needs including: facilities upgrades, financial forecasts, middle school viability, enrollment challenges, effective governance, etc.

Our visit to Cardinal Community Academy was barely a month into the 2009-2010 school year. With a full year ahead, we hope that the school engages in the design of a school improvement plan, with input from faculty, staff, parents, accountability committee and board, and uses that plan to drive the academic and organizational success of the school. CCA is a strong and viable organization, and we look forward to following its future. We appreciate the opportunity to visit and wish the school community all the best.