

**LIMITED-TERM REVISIT  
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

**FOR**

**WELLS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL~ON NUT**

**2209 SUKHUMVIT ROAD  
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## **Wells International School ~ On Nut**

### **Introduction:**

Wells International School currently consists of three campuses: On Nut (Grades 1-12); Thong Lor (Grades 1-5); and Wells International Kindergarten School. There is also a fourth campus due to open in August 2011. The school opened in 2006 and received a two year accreditation in 2009. The owner is a Taiwanese business man who also serves as the school's Chairman of the Board. The school serves both the ex-pat community as well as the local Thai community. The ethnic breakdown of the school is 48% Thai; 15% Korean; 15% Indian; 7% Taiwanese and 2% each of Chinese, American and Japanese. Brazilian, Canadian, Filipino, Finnish, Indonesian, Malaysian, Burmese, Portuguese, Singaporean and Sri Lankan students represent 1% or less each.

The school has three administrators, two counselors, forty-six full-time teachers, six full-time aides and approximately twenty support personnel. The majority of teachers are credentialed in, or completing requirements for, the subjects they teach. One hundred percent of the teachers either hold, or are in the process of obtaining the Thailand Ministry of Education teaching license.

On Nut offers the students an American curriculum that is appropriately modified to meet the Thai Ministry of Education regulations that govern international schools. As of January 2011 there were 341 students enrolled in grades 1-12. This is approximately a 24% increase over June of 2010. The school graduated its first senior class in June 2010 with 17 seniors completing requirements to receive a high school diploma. Sixteen of the seventeen are continuing their studies at either Thai universities or those in other parts of Asia, Australia, the United Kingdom or the United States.

In addition to offering 12<sup>th</sup> grade classes and the first graduating class, the school has seen several other significant changes during the past two years. Where previously AP courses were offered only online, they are now offered on campus by College Board certified and trained instructors. The AP offerings have also expanded from the five original offerings: Calculus A/B, Statistics, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and Psychology. Biology and chemistry are now offered to the On Nut students. Three students took the AP exam last year and all three passed with a score of 3 or higher.

In response to the Critical Areas for Follow-up left by the previous visiting committee, there was a reorganization of the administration at the school. In addition to the Headmaster, there is now a Vice Headmaster who oversees curriculum and instruction as well as engaging in promotional and marketing activities and managing the website. While the Headmaster focuses on math, science and PE, in addition to his other administrative responsibilities, the Vice Headmaster oversees the language arts, social sciences and the technology departments. The Thai Director was replaced with a system-wide Thai Director in order to ensure alignment between campuses for the entire Thai language and culture program.

One more significant change has been the expansion of the school. A 3<sup>rd</sup> floor was added to the On Nut campus that provides nine additional classrooms, science labs, an 80 station computer center and a high school dining hall. An open-air covered sports complex has also been built, providing basketball, volleyball and badminton courts, and a fitness room. The Wells Performing Arts Center completed this part of the expansion. Two large studios are a part of this building: one for dance and the other for music; performing arts offices and a library adjacent to the existing 120 seat auditorium.

In the fall of 2010, construction began on a feeder school planning to offer nursery through kindergarten classes. This additional campus is expected to open in August 2011.

## **Follow-up Process:**

The implementation of the action plan items and the follow-up process was given primarily to the administrative leadership team with support from the rest of the staff. The Headmaster assumed responsibility for overseeing the math area; the Vice Headmaster the language arts and English proficiency; and the entire leadership team collaborated on ensuring that the quality of the instruction across the curriculum was strong. In addition the Thai Director played a big role in some of the Professional Development activities.

Monitoring of the action plan is accomplished through schoolwide assessments that are administered and analyzed by the leadership team. The Stanford Achievement Test (SAT 10) Online Version is the primary school wide assessment instrument. The high school students also take the TOFEL, SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Tests) and various AP exams. This year students have also been given the DORA (Diagnostic Online Reading Assessment) in grades 1-12. Attention is being focused in writing through a Write-to-Learn online program.

The new staff has all attended a site in-service to acquaint them with the WASC *Focus on Learning* Process thereby enabling them to contribute to the discussions and improvements the school is making to ensure that all students are learning.

The ESLRs have been revisited and reworded in order to ensure that both students and parents have a full understanding of the school's goals. The parents have now established an association with regular meetings and goals in which they can participate that will help the school. Everyone has played some part in the follow-up process and all continue to work toward the goals they have set.

The school has made progress in the major action plan areas. While students seem to be excelling in mathematics and are performing at higher levels than their counterparts in the United States, the students indicated that they would like more teacher delivered instruction and less online assignments. They tend to believe that the school is "overusing technology." Due to being less technology savvy, many parents have expressed concern over the effectiveness of the ALEKS program. During the coming year the school plans to expand the use of the ALEKS program to grade 3 students and those in grade 2 who are quite advanced in their math. The school reassigned teachers so that a math specialist is now teaching math courses in grades 4-12, while a generalist remains with grades 1-3. The high school students are now taking the TOFEL to assess their English proficiency

The second action plan area is reading. The school continues to work diligently on improving the performance of all students in this area. However, the students still lag behind their counterparts in the United States. This is partly due to English not being the primary language in the home. The school has increased the number of reading periods each week from five to eight 45 minute periods. In addition, they have instituted a Sustained Silent Reading period. While they piloted the Fast ForWord Reading Program in the past, it was felt there was not enough progress to continue using this, so, due to the expense, it has not been continued. They have implemented the use of Reading Assistant by Scientific Learning and feel it is helping the students. The administration of the DORA program has helped the teachers assess exactly where students need the most help in reading. In addition, there is greater focus on providing more help in writing through a web-based writing program called Write to Learn that is currently being piloted in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade and in grades 6-8. The older students (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders) seem to be performing better than those at the lower grades. This may be due to the length of time they have been exposed to English. The gap between the On Nut students and those in the United States continues to shrink, but there is still much work to be done. Spelling seems to be the one language arts area where the On Nut students excel and even surpass those in the United States.

The third action plan area is the quality of instruction. With the revisiting of the teacher hiring qualifications, the school has taken measures to ensure the effective delivery of course content. They have also introduced the Rubicon Atlas curriculum mapping program in order to assist teachers in planning their curriculum and instruction, adhering to the essential questions, ensuring that appropriate assessments are in place and what resources will be needed as they progress through their lessons. Professional development has become more focused and less scattershot. With the revisiting of the hiring policies, the staff appears to be better qualified in the areas in which they teach. Nearly all are either fully licensed or completing the Thai Ministry of Education Licensing Certificate requirements. A great many have completed, or are pursuing, Masters degrees. Involuntary terminations and turnover of staff has decreased significantly during the past two years

### **School's Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up:**

- ◆ ***1-The school needs to revisit the previous recommendations from the initial visit and ensure that they have been fully addressed and implemented.***

*The board, school leadership, and faculty develop a written strategic plan that will provide the means and the steps to fulfill the school's vision and provide future direction for Wells International School-On Nut. The action plan must be developed with input from all stakeholders and focus on student learning.* While the school has revisited their action plan during the last two years, revised their ESLRs, and continued to expand their offerings, they need to continue to establish a vision that will provide for future direction the school will take. A three year plan that encompasses not only the action plan, which is often fluid, but also expansion plans, financial stability, where the school is going over the next 3-5 years and how they will know if they have achieved these goals. The focus must be on the entire organization, not just the leadership. While there are certainly some areas that remain proprietary (personnel, salaries, evaluations), there are areas such as curriculum, instruction and professional development that should be open and transparent to all stakeholders. This will be a positive direction for the school in terms of growth and reputation and will enable the school to achieve its goals.

*The board and leadership should implement a shared decision-making model that includes teachers in curriculum, instructional and professional decisions.* The roles and responsibilities of the Department Heads have been clarified and redefined. In order to supplement opportunities for sharing and the exchange of ideas some recently developed resources include the use of Google Docs and a new "collaboration board" which will augment the documentation and flow of information schoolwide. Though organizational structure in defining areas of responsibility has improved a continued area of need is greater and more consistent opportunities for the various departments and administration to connect with one another to inform, and be informed, of the workings within each area of the school. The use of this format has already streamlined discussions and allows teachers and administrators to maximize their meeting times and address those issues that are of concern. In addition, it allows the staff to bring new ideas and issues to the meetings so that everyone has input. Topics have included the adoption of the Common Core Standards and professional development opportunities offered by the Bangkok Teachers' Network (BTN).

*The leadership needs to establish a master resource plan that is collaboratively built and a budgeting process that is transparent to ensure the long-range viability of the school.* The school has focused on the long-term viability of the On Nut campus by ensuring consistent streams of new students to replace both graduating students and those who leave the school prior to graduation. Funding has been secured for the completed expansion project at the school plus funding to build a nearby nursery and kindergarten school that will feed into On Nut. The new Vice Headmaster has assumed responsibility for PR and marketing. He has modified the school

website, has established a Facebook account, has written the school up for Wikipedia, and continues to make contacts through the various embassies and the local media.

*The leadership and faculty should work together to refine the supervision and evaluation process for administration, faculty, and staff. Roles and responsibilities and lines of authority should be further defined and delineated so they are clear to all members of the school.* The school has added a Vice Headmaster to the administration in order to facilitate the supervision and evaluation of teachers. The roles of Department Heads and other management positions have been redefined and all information is currently available in the Faculty & Staff Manual. There is now a formal evaluation instrument in place for teacher evaluation. Within this model teachers are given a written copy of their evaluations and visited for formal observations/evaluations at least once by an administrator and once by their department head as well as several walk-throughs during the year. A helpful addition to the model may be a beginning and end of year meeting with faculty to discuss professional goals and growth as well as the evaluative process. The clarification of department head roles, the recent appointment of the Vice Headmaster, and the addition of leadership team members will help ensure this model is fully and consistently implemented.

*The On Nut stakeholders are encouraged to review their ESLRs to ensure that all are measurable, relevant and aligned to the curriculum. The ESLRs should also be translated into the appropriate languages so they can be effectively communicated with parents.* The ESLRs are reviewed annually at the staff orientation prior to the start of each school year. During the past two years the ESLRs have been re-worded in order to provide greater understanding for those with less English proficiency. They have also been translated into Thai, Mandarin, Korean and other languages that are represented by the parent community. While the ESLRs remain the same as they were two years ago, the benchmarks and measurability specifications have changed and are easier to understand. The dissemination to the students still needs to be improved.

*The administration and faculty complete the curriculum guides for all subjects based on standards and benchmarks to strengthen classroom instruction and student learning. Common assessment instruments that measure students' progress toward the accomplishment of the standards should also be developed.* The Department Heads have spent time during the last two years “unpacking” the standards and vertically aligning them within their own departments. While many of the departments have been quite successful in this endeavor there are others that are still at the beginning stages. While the use of Rubicon Atlas has helped teachers with their curriculum mapping, some of them are still working on reconciling the standards with the curriculum map and planning their lessons. Some viable options for facilitating this further would be to appoint curriculum coordinator(s) to oversee alignment and refinement. Another possibility may be a Curriculum Development Oversight Committee. Moreover, the establishment of a formal mentoring or team teaching program pairing teachers with more curriculum development experience with those with less will help ameliorate this area of need.

*A formal professional development plan based on the needs of the students and teachers should be designed and should include instructional strategies that address the needs of English language learners. The leadership team should also have opportunities for professional growth to support effective and efficient operation of the school.* A new professional development plan has been developed for all staff, teachers and the administration. There are once a semester system-wide workshops held and teachers may request funds to attend pertinent workshops/conferences outside the school. There has been expansion and refinement during the past two years of the PD process, but more specificity will continue to improve the effectiveness. For example, joining (additional) inter-city or regional associations such as EARCOS would benefit the Wells community by opening up a greater wealth of PD opportunities for both

teachers and administrators as well as provide a forum to compare and exchange ideas, current trends, and best practices.

*The leadership and school develop processes to actively involve parents in the teaching/learning process.* The WIS-On Nut Parent Association was established in the fall of 2009. The group meets monthly and has become more involved in school activities and other events. Their current focus is to expand the membership and define their role in the school community. Because this development is in its infancy, there have been numerous challenges. However, the PTO has a strong and positive leader who is willing to do whatever is necessary in order to continue to grow and expand, and to involve more parents

***2-The school should gather and analyze data related to student progress and achievement and use that data to develop appropriate curricular programs to address the needs of the students. At present, there is an indication that reading and writing proficiency should be a priority.*** The school administers the Stanford Achievement Test, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition (SAT 10) to all students in grades 3-12. In 2010, they added the DORA (Diagnostic Online Reading Assessment), a web-based assessment plan that is administered to all students, grades 1-12. Students in grades 3-13 participate in the ALEKS (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces) test. It is a math test that ranges from primary level mathematics through pre-calculus. The school has also focused in an online writing program in order to help students improve their writing. In analyzing the data gathered from all of these tests, it is apparent that the students are doing quite well in math, as compared to their counterparts in the United States. In fact, they often exceed the scores of the students in the United States. However, in reading, the students tend to lag behind those in the United States, quite possibly because English is not the primary language for the majority of the On Nut students

### **Recommendations:**

- ◆ The Chairman and Board of Directors, in cooperation with the current school administration develop an organizational plan that will allow for the addition of a Primary Assistant Vice Headmaster or Head of School; a Curriculum Coordinator to oversee curriculum development, the adoption of Standards, the securing of appropriate resources and the implementation of appropriate professional development; and an additional counselor whose focus will be on the secondary students to prepare them for career and/or college/university.
- ◆ The Administration and Counselors develop and implement a program for high school students at the 10<sup>th</sup> grade level to provide a one-on-one counseling appointment with each student and his/her parents (one time appointment) to review student options. Included in this meeting should be a review of such things as student grades, test scores, progress and discipline. In addition, planning for college and the requirements for college/university in Thailand; other parts of Asia; and America.
- ◆ The Chairman and the Administration work together to simplify the process for teachers to obtain necessary supplies so that when the need arises, the supplies are readily available at each campus, and teachers do not have to either wait or spend their own money in order to provide for their students.
- ◆ The Chairman and the Administration are encouraged to hire an assistant to the GA Manager and that the “ticket” process used for repairing and maintaining their classrooms be revisited. This would include such things as a/c repair, broken windows, leaky roofs, and squeaky doors that need repair in an immediate and timely manner.

- ◆ The Chairman and the Board of Directors review the proposed salary package being offered for 2011-2012 in order to ensure retention of current staff and successful recruitment of new staff and that the school will remain competitive with other local schools.
- ◆ The Chairman and the current administration are urged to add two office staff to the current four member staff: one who will be responsible specifically for warehouse, supplies, lunch duty and the issuing of coupons; the other who will be responsible for translation requirements as well as other office duties. This will help to alleviate the overload on the current staff.
- ◆ The entire staff (primary, middle school and high school) and administration continue working on the shared decision-making model to accommodate the many areas of growth at Wells. This will enhance: dissemination of information; promote the exchange of ideas; and maintain open lines of communication. Develop processes in a timely manner and establish regular meeting dates to further discuss such things as curriculum, instruction and professional development.

**Commendations:**

- ◆ The addition of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- ◆ The 100% acceptance of the Class of 2010 to a college or university
- ◆ Bright, talented and articulate students
- ◆ Dedicated and caring teachers
- ◆ Extremely supportive office staff
- ◆ Strong, positive administration
- ◆ Multiple sports teams
- ◆ Award winning performing arts program
- ◆ Academic superstars in spelling, math, world scholarship competition
- ◆ Positive parent support group
- ◆ Strong relationships within the community
- ◆ The commitment to growing the school, expanding the space and resources for learning and teaching
- ◆ Great school spirit from all stakeholders!
- ◆ The strong commitment to excellence by all Wells stakeholders