

**LIMITED-TERM REVISIT  
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

**FOR**

**Wells International School~On Nut**

**2209 Sukhumvit Road**

**Prakanong, Bangkok, Thailand 10260**

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**Visiting Committee Members**

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## **I. Introduction**

Wells International School is a branch of the EverClever Education Group. Begun in 1998 as a Kindergarten, the group has expanded to three sites and embraces Pre-K through adult and teacher training programs. The Wells International School-On Nut campus opened with grades 1-9 in the fall of 2006. Since that time they have added both numbers (current enrollment 477) and they have graduated three senior classes. In 2010 the school facility added a third floor to accommodate the increasing enrollment. There are presently 42 teaching staff, a Headmaster, Vice-Headmaster, Thai Director, Director of Academics, and Head of Primary that serve the On-Nut campus.

The facility has 30 classrooms large enough to accommodate up to 25 students each. Class sizes average from 16 to 18 students. All classes are equipped with computers connected to wide screen monitors. There are 8 Smart Boards. There are 3 science labs, 2 specifically for AP science classes and 5 computer labs containing over 150 total computers. Presently, many of the AP students learn in a paperless environment through the use of laptop computers and iPads. There is a school library that houses in excess of 10,000 volumes (both fiction and non-fiction) and the EBSCOHost system provides access for online research. There is also an innovative sports complex that includes a gymnasium, a fitness center and the Wells Coliseum; a large basketball/volleyball court where they host their athletic competitions. Below one wing of the school, on the ground floor, they built a 25 meter pool to teach students how to swim. The school offers an athletic program that includes competition against other Thai and International schools. An area designated for primary students enables them to engage in physical activities appropriate for their age and maturity. Both Asian and American food is served in a cafeteria that accommodates up to 200 students at one time.

The large majority of students are Thai (39.4%). Other nationalities are; Indian (21.1%), Korean (13.4%) and Taiwanese (5.6%). As of March 2013, 156 students are enrolled in the Primary School, 170 students in the Middle School and 151 students in the High School. Students from 25 nations are enrolled.

A significant development, since the 2012 WASC Visit has been the purchase of a piece property, adjacent to the school, planned for future building. This area is being used as a parking lot which greatly relieves the traffic congestion at the start and close of the school day. At present, the school determines it can adequately accommodate approximately 500 students. With future projections at over 600 students, the school has determined it needs added facilities to meet the needs of incoming students.

Wells has essentially depended upon the SAT10 assessment tool for any significant analysis of student achievement.

## **II. Follow-up Process**

The Leadership Team, basically the school's Administration Team with the Headmaster taking the lead, prepared the annual report on the school's progress and developed the Schoolwide Action Plan. They also oversee the implementation and followup of the Action Plan.

### III. School's Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up

#### A.

There appears a dichotomy in the determination of 'critical areas for follow-up' in the Action Plan and previous recommendations. Previous visiting teams have cited about 7 areas of concern: Salary/Benefits/Student Fees/Wells Funding/Human Resources; Shared Decision-Making; Professional Development; Re-invigorate Parental involvement; Job Descriptions; Schoolwide Operating Budgets; Attention to Staff Morale. These recommendations were not actually incorporated into the school's action plan, but were addressed. In fact, they have been addressed in each of the past three years. Each year Wells has been visited by a WASC Team and each year more attention has been directed to the resolution of these recommendations. A tweak each year.

On the other hand, in their Action Plan, the school has focused on three previously determined areas: Literacy, Mathematics, and Quality of Instruction. These critical areas of need actually were identified as Recommendations in the Visiting Committee's Report of 2009. The fourth area of need, Student "Marketability" for University Admissions, was identified in 2011. Responsibility for the implementation of this aspect of the Action Plan has been assigned to a member of the Counseling Department.

#### School's response to progress on the School's Action Plan:

##### **ACTION AREA 1 - Literacy**

Since the spring 2012 WASC visit, the most significant development in the area of literacy improvement came with the official assigning of a new primary level co-head in charge of academics. As such, his focus for the 2012-2013 school year was to implement a research-based literacy program, *Literacy by Design* (LBD) for primary students (grades 1 to 4), as well as for third year kindergarten (K3) students at their sister campuses.

For the secondary levels, a move has been made to the alignment of Wells standards to the *Common Core State Standards* in the English Language Arts, an initiative headed by the Vice Headmaster as well as the newly appointed secondary level Academic Director.

##### **ACTION AREA 2 – Mathematics**

pressure to meeThe school continues to monitor student progress in maintaining its significant lead over U.S. averages in mathematics. The math department continues to offer support, particularly to less experienced math teachers that might be struggling with the t high performance standards that the school community has grown to expect.

However, for the 2012-2013 school year, a significant change in math instruction did occur in the lower primary levels, where grade 3 mathematics instruction reverted back to a generalist teacher in order to accommodate the new literacy program (LBD). Teachers have been closely monitored by the primary academic head and end-of-year SAT10 scores will be evaluated for any significant changes in grade 3 math achievement levels.

At the secondary school level, enrollment in high level math courses (pre-calculus/trigonometry through AP Calculus) continues to grow. It is now the norm for the highest level grade 10 students (presently 3) to already be enrolled in AP Calculus with high achievement confirmed via the externally administered AP exams.

### **ACTION AREA 3 - Quality of Instruction**

Measures have been taken to ensure the effective delivery of course content by highly-motivated teachers, qualified in their respective fields and trained to address the various needs unique to Wells International School's setting. Such measures include:

- Appointment of both Secondary School and Primary School Academic Directors to be immediately responsible for teacher observations and support in their respective grade levels;
  
- Membership in the East Asia Regional Council of Schools (EARCOS)
  - Annual EARCOS Leadership Conference – Fall Semester
  - Annual EARCOS Teachers Conference – Spring Semester
  
- Ongoing onsite, overseas, and online IB training for all Diploma Program (DP) teachers and counselors;
  
- Formalizing an onsite M.Ed. program offered by Framingham State University with the first full cohort of Wells teachers having their degrees conferred in January 2013;
  
- Implementation of Stricter Hiring Policies
  
- Improved Compensation Package
  
- Clarification of Roles & Responsibilities of Administration & All Teaching Staff

Progress in this area of improvement is evident in the fact that, other than a few emergency hires, the number of non-certified, un-licensable instructors has dropped to 0%. Furthermore, the number of instructors that have obtained or are currently pursuing advanced degrees (M.Ed. or M.Sci in subject area) has risen dramatically.

Involuntary termination and teacher turnover (voluntary termination) have also dropped significantly over the past two years. Following the 2011-2012 school year, WIS On Nut once again experienced a high teacher retention rate, with just two involuntary terminations and two other teachers moving on to other schools outside of Thailand.

### **ACTION AREA 4 – Student “Marketability” for University Admissions**

The school continues to offer numerous resume-building opportunities with Wells students strongly encouraged to participate in programs and competitions at the interscholastic, national,

and international levels. Wells students have garnered numerous awards and championships in sports, performing arts, debate, and academic competitions.

Preparation for Wells offering the IB Diploma Program in grades 11 and 12 is also underway with the IB Authorization visit scheduled for late spring 2013 and its charter class expecting to begin the rigorous IB coursework in the fall of 2013.

**VT's comments on the school's response derived from conferences, interviews, and observations(note: this response may also be made part of the Commendations section that follows):**

From discussions with the Visiting Team, the Leadership Team is revising the Action Plans, setting goals for student achievement and establishing ways to measure that achievement in the areas of Language Arts/English and Mathematics. The school will be analysing the SAT10 scores in these areas as well as AP scores and internal assessments to measure student and grade level growth.

The school has embarked on a professional development program to improve classroom instruction that will improve student achievement in all subject areas. The school is now hosting an American University Masters Degree program on campus and has a number of faculty members and administrators enrolled. There is additional personnel available to evaluate and monitor teacher performance. The school also has been accepted as a member of the regional educational association (EARCOS) which opens their conferences and workshops to Wells faculty. Administrators attended the EARCOS conference in Kuala Lumpur in November 2012 and several teachers will attend the EARCOS teacher conference in Shanghai in March 2013.

The school has added an additional counselor who is responsible for the university admissions programs. His job is basically to work with high school students with the goal to have them admitted to four-year universities and increase those students' "marketability" to top-tier universities.

**Critical Areas for Follow-up:**

- Formalize a Professional Development program that provides all faculty and staff the opportunities to increase their educational expertise in all aspects of the various school programs, i.e. subject appropriate workshops, AP training, IB training, and the WASC Focus on Learning protocol to better meet the needs of all Wells' students.
- Revise the school's ESLRs to make appropriate age level and measurable indicators of what each student should know, understand and be able to do upon exit from the school; as Wells is a Grade 1-12 school.
- Align curricular programs at the two sister-schools with the On Nut program with an emphasis on literacy

- Develop a formal procedure to gather, record and analyze student assessment data to assist in the development of the school's Action Plan.
- Establish a school leadership team comprised of the the Chair of each Focus Group, the Principal, Self Study Coordinator and other Stakeholders, to take ownership of the formal procedure instituted to organize student achievement data to drive the action plan.
- Finalize the revision and clarification sections in the Staff and Teacher Handbooks concerning the specific duties, qualification and hours of service for each position, including additional stipends for added responsibilities and any other requirements of the various jobs.

#### **A Commendations Related to Progress:**

- Knowledgeable, dedicated, passionate, supportive, and caring teachers, counselors, and support staff members
- Bright, talented, articulate, and welcoming students, Grade 1-12
- A strong commitment to excellence from all Wells stakeholders
- The wide variety of extracurricular activities: award winning performances in the Performing Arts; the Academic Superstars in Spelling, Math, Geography, and World Scholarship Competitions, multiple, successful sport teams
- The Administration, Department Heads, and Staff for their renewed commitment to pursuing the WASC protocol, *Focus on Learning*, to increase student achievement