

**SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

**WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

**FOR**

**Raskob Day School**

**3520 Mountain Road**

**Oakland, CA 94619**

**March 9-12, 2014**

**Visiting Committee Members**

**Deborah Crim, Chairperson**

**Learning Specialist, Mid-Peninsula High School**

**Tiffany Ng**

**Academic Program Coordinator, Orion Academy**

**Anne Marie Schar**

**Director of Technology, Mid-Peninsula High School**

**Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Raskob Self-Study Report
- Observation in classroom
- Interviews with faculty and administration
- BASI data
- Policy documentation

**Part B: Schoolwide Strengths and Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-up**

**General Comments:**

Raskob Day School exemplifies best practices in educating students with learning disabilities. Their commitment to researching, building, and maintaining specialized instruction is shown in all aspects of the school program. Curriculum is designed to meet the educational needs of students who may have uneven academic skills, so teachers can group their classes by ability rather than by grade. The staff demonstrate an understanding of their students, and a patient and kind teaching style. Students and parents, as well as referring specialists, note that students “turn around when they come here.”

The policies and procedures at RDS support their educational mission. Considerable administrative, personnel, and technical assistance from Holy Names University demonstrates the close working relationship between the sponsoring university and the school.

**Schoolwide Areas of Strength**

1. Clear mission of the school determines policies and program.
2. The safe and nurturing school environment encourages student growth.
3. Strong school leadership guides RDS operation.
4. Supportive supervision for teachers and other staff promote professional performance.
5. Raskob staff are highly trained in their subject areas and in the area of special education, and their training clearly informs curriculum design and instruction
6. Raskob staff utilize a wide variety of research-based tools and strategies that are specific to the learning needs of their student population, and students are well supported in their learning
7. There is frequent and extensive collaboration amongst administration, staff, and specialists to maintain both the high level of rigor and the level of accessibility to the students
8. Curriculum is clearly and successfully differentiated as needed to meet all varying levels of student ability and different learning styles
9. Instruction is engaging, challenging, and clearly building toward the school's ESLRs
10. Raskob students are highly supported academically, socially, and mentally by highly trained staff in various areas of expertise (as related to student learning differences)
11. Curriculum includes effective explicit instruction in student personal and academic growth
12. Student and parent perspectives of the Raskob program are highly positive, and everyone agrees that Raskob has a climate of openness and acceptance amongst its community

13. RPA is deeply invested in supporting RDS and has a history of providing equipment and materials to enhance classroom teaching and the students' education.
14. The ED, VP AA, and VP of Finance have a process in place to determine an appropriate yearly operating budget and to review and update the budget as needed throughout the year
15. ED has established a good working relationship with HNU to support marketing, development, and support services to RDS
16. RDS has upgraded facilities so that they are safe with regard to disaster preparedness and provide an environment conducive to learning

#### **Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up**

The Visiting Committee concurs with the school's identified areas that are outlined in the schoolwide action plan. These are summarized below:

1. Improvement and development of a scope and sequence for the Advisory and morning meeting curriculum
2. Improving and strengthening the integration of assistive technology for teaching and for student use, although the Visiting Committee believes that this is already being done, and the school would benefit from working on funding future technological innovation
3. Subsidizing professional development to attract and maintain qualified staff

In addition, the Visiting Committee has identified areas that need to be strengthened:

1. Stronger integration of schoolwide action plan into all aspects of RDS program
2. Better knowledge of RDS within the HNU community
3. No comprehensive formal documentation of alumni progress (outside of anecdotal

- evidence) to inform about the strengths and weaknesses of the Raskob program
4. Raskob does not appear to conduct follow up on staff perspective of the effectiveness of the professional development they are receiving
  5. Administration has noted a desire for furthering their brand, which could benefit from increased reporting of Raskob's successes (school-wide and individual) out to the community
  6. Offer competitive salaries to attract and retain qualified staff
  7. Establish stronger relationships with potential donors and community-based funding resources
  8. Upgrade older facilities and update playground
  9. Consistent collaboration with HNU for RDS master planning and long-term strategic plan