

**MID-CYCLE VISIT
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

FOR

**Christian Academy in Japan
1-2-14 Shinkawa-cho
Higashi Kurume-shi
Tokyo 203-0013
Japan**

**Original Self-Study Visit: February 26 – March 1, 2012
Dates of Visit: March 1 – 3, 2015**

Visiting Committee Members

**Mr. Henry Morita, Chairperson
Global Educational Consultant
Santa Rosa, California**

**Ms. Shannon Koga, Member
Administrator, Hokkaido International School Niseko
Sapporo, Japan**

Introduction

The Christian Academy in Japan (CAJ) was established in 1950 and provides a Christ-centered educational program for children of evangelical missionaries. While continuing in this purpose, CAJ also serves other families who desire this type of education for their children. The Academy is a private, coeducational, international, Christian day school, established primarily to serve the needs of missionary families.

CAJ serves more than 444 students in the day school program and more than 220 additional students in the School Support Services Program. The enrollment consists of 132 elementary students; 129 middle school students; and 183 high school students. Dependents of missionaries comprise 38% of the student population and 62% are dependents of business and professional people. There are 35 nationalities; 34% Dual Passports; 21% Japanese; 21% Korean; 14% North Americans; and 10% Other Nationalities. The attendance rate is 97% whilst the mobility rate is 31%. The average K-12 class sizes range is 16.1.

Relevant performance information and data follow:

Juniors and seniors	High school students
60% Math: Algebra II, Pre- calculus, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, AP Stats	59% Fine arts: music, art
65% Science: Chemistry, Physics, AP Chemistry, AP Physics 1, AP Biology	49% Music
86% Advanced Placement	51% Advanced Placement

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP), 2011-2014

CAJ is committed to AP and is offering 16 AP classes this school year.

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011
Exams	186	145	132	121
Pass rate	70%	73%	80%	72%
Students	97	85	71	68

SPECIFIC AP TEST RESULTS, 2014

Test	Pass Rate	Exams
English	66%	38
World Languages	98%	41
Mathematics	62%	26
Natural Sciences	83%	35
Social Sciences and History	47%	34

PSAT SCORES, 2011-2014

Mid 50th percentile of percentile scores for the past 4 years. Scores include native and non-native English speakers.

Year	2014	2013	2012	2011
Critical Reading	36-77	20-65	26-65	39-88
Math	64-91	51-90	54-90	65-95
Writing	33-81	29-80	33-80	48-83

CLASS OF 2014 ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

- 2 Advanced Placement International Diploma (grades of 3 or higher on 5 or more exams in 3 or more subject areas)
- 8 Advanced Placement Scholar with Distinction (grades of 3 or higher on 5 or more exams, average grade of at least 3.5)
- 6 Advanced Placement Scholar (grades of 3 or higher on 3 or more exams)
- 1 National Merit Commended Students (US students eligible for award)

Significant Changes

There have been significant changes since the last visit, mostly related to staffing changes. Mr. Michael Essenburg, who was the School Improvement Coordinator, has taken a headship at another school. Mr. Brian Vander Haak has served as the Head of School for the past seven years. He is also serving as the Interim School Improvement Coordinator and also assumed responsibility for handling the details related to this Mid-cycle Review. Mr. Vander Haak will voluntarily be assuming other responsibilities including the founding directorship of a new historical archive project (Megumi Mission Archive). Dr. Tom Norton will become the new Head of School beginning July 2015 and met with the Mid-cycle Review Committee. Winnie Langelaar was appointed as middle school principal, to begin serving in SY 2013-2014. Jean Hino was appointed to serve as interim elementary school principal for SY 2014-2015 with Jacquie Willson planning to

return to the assignment in 2015-2016. Hiroaki Tada was appointed as government liaison.

The school has integrated the extensive use of technology to account for cyclical monitoring of professional development, staff inservice, maintenance, inventory control, school activities, and the like.

CAJ completed the change of its legal status from zaidan houjin to gakkou houjin. At a ceremony with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government on April 1, 2013, CAJ completed the change of its legal status from zaidan houjin to gakkou houjin. This change involved establishing a cash reserve that is equal to 25% of the operating budget by November 2012, successful submission of the application in November 2012 (which involved completing the revision of core legal documents and getting them approved by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, finalizing accounting changes required by the transition to gakkou houjin status, and submitting required personnel and financial documents), and a January 2013 site visit from government officials who toured the school and asked questions about CAJ's revenue, admissions, program, and accreditation.

The Schoolwide Action Plan was reviewed and updated annually, as appropriate. While minor changes have been made to the plan, the school continued to have the same four action plans that it did in 2012 (curriculum, data usage, English language proficiency, master resource plan). The Leadership Team, supported by focus group leaders and academic department chairs, was responsible for implementing and monitoring the schoolwide action plan. The Action Plan was shared with all appropriate stakeholders, including the Governing Board.

School's Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up within the Action Plan

In March of 2012, CAJ was entrusted with four School Wide Critical Areas of Follow-up. CAJ has, annually, addressed these areas and published their progress in Action Plan Progress Reports to both WASC and the public.

Critical Area of Follow-up #1: The Professional Development of teachers and staff at CAJ is two fold, with financial support for individual teacher's self improvement, provided by the Leadership Team, and in-service group PD. Financial support for staff in the budget is stated as 50,000¥ for basic pd, 150,000¥ for multiple course learners, and 2.8 million¥ for staff enrolled in special programs, the first two of which are accruable for three years. School promotes the view that simply a holding a teaching certificate is not enough and that an attitude as a lifelong learner is an important model for teachers to employ. Cascading of information is also expected by staff who engage in external PD. In-house PD is visible via the review of curricular documents, on-staff knowledgeable staff presentations (EBSCO training by the librarian, CPR training prior to overnights), and the requirement of all staff to, annually, read and abide by the school's decisions as stated in SOPHIE, Standard Operating Procedures and Helpful Information Encyclopedia, school's online organizational tool.

All educational staff are required to maintain a personal professional development plan, put into a database, to be used in the professional observation process. Via the

Professional Development Application form, teachers apply for funds stating their needs, how this opportunity improves student learning, and to which of the the professional development action steps this application applies.

Critical Area of Follow-up #2: Curriculum needs have been addressed through continued alignment of the student objectives, standards, assessments/rubrics, instructional strategies, and technology resources. This is visible in the continued work to have all relevant courses at baseline, using Understanding by Design framework, and uploaded to Atlas Rubicon. Some teachers have been granted leniency due to changeover, multiple disciplines, incomplete handovers, etc. However, CAJ has spent two summers, with an additional one planned, additional release time, and PLCs to create opportunities for this work to be accomplished. Psychology, World History, American History are examples of some disciplines which have not completed their baseline work. The completion date of June 2015 seems to be a reality. Days are given as work days throughout the year as need be per discipline and school level.

Cross-disciplinary study is most visible in Grade 5 (based in LA) and Grade 8 (based in Science) through culminating research projects. In Grade 12, the senior comprehensives is writing, presenting, researching, action related, multi-disciplinary, support by all teachers, observed by all grades, as a pinnacle event. A common writing rubric is used in Language Arts, transferring writing assessment traits to other disciplines.

Departments assess the needs of curriculum on an annual basis with regards to student needs and numbers. This is currently visible in the kindergarten and grade 5 numbers as enrollment is ballooning at these years, and in the secondary science program where student needs are being addressed.

Parents representing the PTA, and the students themselves, feel that differentiation of students is a reality, and that use of Professional Development contributes to the betterment of the school.

Critical Area of Follow-up #3: In order to meet the directive of being a data informed school, staff received initial data training which emphasized the importance of using data to support statements. Within PLCs, Leaders were encouraged to model data usage and have meeting participants use data. Discussions regarding the utilization and adoption of PHOENIX were held.

The use of data to drive instruction is visible at CAJ in various areas. In particular, within the realm of instruction, in elementary, previously low scores in vocabulary were low so that encouraged increased vocabulary developments. Additionally, PSAT scores showed lack of critical reading skills; this was reiterated by internal assessments, particularly for EAL students. These concerns resulted in the teachers using “Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?” for a book club. The results of that focused instruction are that teachers are being more intentional in their teaching and their instruction is focused on reading strategies. This has resulted in common language and focused instruction.

Language concerns and second language acquisition concerns have resulted in the adoption of team teaching, and this is extended to inform the guidance program and the learning support teams.

The PE department has used the data from six minute timed runs to extend the running program within the PE department. It also has resulted in the investment of resources of a

self-monitoring program for older students in long distance running, allowing for students to self-analyze progress and timing. A Strength and Conditioning class was added due to student interest, resulting in an anecdotal increase in the strength of girls during their service trip.

Observations from parents regarding the data presented to them, showed that they are more aware of specific needs due to online grade reporting and standards based report cards. They are also aware of both internal and external assessment and the reasons why those assessments are being delivered.

School recognizes the need for alumni surveys and success data in order to inform instruction and needs to support students prior to graduation, and has created a school survey for alumni.

Critical Area of Follow-up #4: The New Resource Master Plan timeline was redefined. Initial work on this task was to involve all stakeholders, creating “needs” and “wants” lists, looking at enrollment projections and building issues over the next ten years, and a look at the building and maintenance history of CAJ. While the school states that the work of this task has been hampered by the personnel needs with regards to the developments in the legal standing of CAJ (completed April 2013), teachers and administrators have the foundation for a highly structured master plan already in place. The issues of building age (older bldgs, including cafeteria, come up other than those scheduled), power usage (electricity meter used to measure usage. LED lighting), student safety (paramount in the morning via patrol and multiple eyes on students, both outside the campus and inside throughout the day, child safety study to be implemented next year), property (locking classrooms), and disaster awareness (fire, earthquake, lockdown, shelter in place drills on cycle) show that the school already has proactive, rather than reactive, maintenance and facilities cycles in place. The school’s Facility Coordinator on campus maintains a maintenance wiki as a scheduled, predictable, visible plan including HVAC replacement, light-bulb cycles, filter replacement cycles and other physical resource replacement cycles. He also ensures furniture and educational resource cycles. With the duties shared by multiple people, the continuation of the cycles is ensured and predicts itself.

The members of staff involved in the maintaining of school resources attend the capital budget meeting in spring to discuss upcoming changes and inform spending.

School maintains close communication with the Japanese Police.

Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations:

1. The professional development plan for teachers, via both in-service and externally generated learning, is deemed important and measures are set up to support all staff in continuing their learning. Previously garnered knowledge is reflected upon, and new information is shared by knowledgeable members. How PD affects students learning is addressed in each request for PD funding.
2. CAJ has a formal teacher observation system set in place for the first three years of employment and every third year following. This formal process involved pre-observation meeting, observation, and post-observation meeting. Current observation processes do not allow for differentiation of teaching styles nor

disciplines; alternative methods are being discussed by members of a volunteer team of leaders and through the findings of this team, CAJ should be able to create a teacher observation system which shows the most confident and successful attributes of all of its staff.

3. The fact that CAJ has multiple facets of school on cyclical organization systems is to be commended. Its recognition of curricular revision, facilities assessment, and resource inventory and refurbishment, is an important, proactive engagement in the ever-changing world of education. The fact that this is integrated with all curricular aspects and on the same SOPHIE is advantageous and commodious and will assist the school in future discussions regarding school improvement and building renovations.

Recommendations:

1. Continued alignment of curriculum, in particular the Bible curriculum revision, reorganization of the health curriculum and scope and sequence, reorganization of the science classes next year and how to address that long term, and the completion of currently non-baselined courses are areas in which the school will need to focus their attention.
2. Much of the school functions, including PD, maintenance and process, is online and readily available. Prioritizing this information, bearing financial considerations to bring it to fruition, to create a long term (10 year as defined by CAJ) cycle should be the next step for the school.
3. Observation and evaluation of support staff, in the same vein as is currently being promoted in instructional staff, is an area of need for review both in format and in implementation.