Mid-cycle Visiting Committee Summary Report

**ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

FOR

OSAKA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

4-4-16 Onohara-nishi, Minoh-Shi, Osaka-fu, 562-0032, Japan

Date of Last Self-Study Visit: February 2018

Date of Mid-cycle Visit: April 22-23, 2021

<u>**Visiting Committee Members**</u>

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Former Superintendent (retired) Oxnard Union High School District, Oxnard CA USA
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SUMMARY

A.   General comments about the school, including summary of achievement data

Since 1991, Osaka International School has served the international and internationally- oriented community in northern Osaka, Japan. The school is distinct from other international schools because of the *Two Schools Together* ethos, in which OIS shares a mission, vision, campus, and some educational programs with Senri International School of Kwansei Gakuin (SIS). Both schools strive to achieve the Mission, which is *to develop informed, caring, creative individuals, contributing to the global community.* The school is owned and operated by Kwansei Gakuin through a Foundation (KG) that includes Kwansei Gakuin University and a group of eight (8) additional schools.

The guiding documents for Osaka international School include the school's Mission Statement, the IB Learner Profile, the motto of the Foundation, and what is called the Five Respects:

- The school's Mission Statement -- *to develop informed, caring, creative individuals, contributing to the global community.*

- The 10 attributes of the IB Learner Profile are used K-12: *Knowledgeable, Inquirers, Communicators, Caring, Balanced, Thinkers, Principled, Open-minded, Risk Takers, Reflective.*

- The "Five Respects" – Self, Others, Environment, Learning, Leadership -- are widely used in the SIS sister-school and to some extent in OIS to help learners develop appropriate learning behaviors.

- The Foundation's motto "Mastery for Service" is included but not featured prominently throughout the school. As part of the staff's development plans for 2021 and beyond, it is their intention to continue raising awareness of the KG Foundation within their community.

The Japan Council of International Schools reported that the majority of member schools experienced lower enrolment in the 2020-21 academic year due in large part to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. In this context, OIS has fared quite well, possibly because the school has been attractive to a number of Japanese families who have returned to Japan for safety and security.

In March 2020, the school switched to distance learning for the remainder of the spring trimester. Elementary School students returned to the campus in June, and from August 2020 on all students have been back on campus for in-person instruction. Safety measures and social distancing have been a continual focus for the school, and the *Coronavirus Safety Guidelines* are published to the community and updated regularly, as needed. With regard to after-school activities and events, there have been significant changes in the types of activities offered and a general reduction of the duration of after-school programs.

As of February 2021, the student enrollment totaled 269 according to the grade distribution shown in the table below. Eighty-one (81) of these students are of dual nationality. After Japanese, the largest student groups are Korean, American, and Chinese. 34% of the students speak English as their first language, and 42% have Japanese as their first language. Students are taught by 38 full-time faculty members, an internationally diverse and highly dedicated group which has an average length of service of 8.7 years at the school – a low faculty turnover for an international school.

Student enrollments as of February 2021 are shown in the table below:

Grade	Max	Current Enrollment
KA (Kindergarten)	14	5
KB (Kindergarten)	16	14
Grade 1	18	18
Grade 2	20	19
Grade 3	20	16
Grade 4	22	19
Grade 5	24	20
Grade 6	21	25
Grade 7	25	25
Grade 8	25	25
Grade 9	25	23
Grade 10	25	20
Grade 11	25	25
Grade 12	25	19
Total	280	269

The school's assessment model, the multiple measures by which student achievement is measured, includes the following:

❖ Diploma completion: All students in the class of 2020 graduated and received an OIS High School Diploma; 21 of the 24 students enrolled in the Class of 2020 registered for and passed the full IB Diploma. Nine (9) students received a bilingual Diploma, and the average score for the cohort was 36 points, which is well above the global average of 29 points.

❖ IB MYP Personal Project results: At OIS, MYP candidates receive certificates for the Personal Project and do not participate in eAssessments. Since the launch of MYP, the size of the cohorts has ranged from 19 to 24 students, while the completion rate for the Personal Project has ranged from 90% to 100%. From 2018 to 2020, OIS MYP candidates consistently performed above world average, with some students being awarded the highest possible results.

❖ Measures of Academic Progress (MAP Growth): OIS has used MAP Growth as the school's standardized assessment tool for the past five years. Students from Grades 1-10 usually complete MAP Growth assessments two times per year in Mathematics and Reading. Grades 6-10 are also administered the Language Use assessment. Generally, OIS average scores are high and similar to those of other EARCOS schools.

❖ WIDA Assessments: The WIDA ACCESS Placement Test is most often used as a screening test to determine the language level of students entering a school system. These results are used most frequently to determine if a student is eligible for ESL or ESOL services. The name WIDA originally stood for the three states in the initial grant proposal to develop this assessment -- Wisconsin, Delaware and Arkansas. Today, the name WIDA has come to represent a community of member states, territories, federal agencies and international schools. For OIS, Implementation of the WIDA assessment program began in the 2019-20 academic year This assessment is currently used to help identify which students should enter and exit the PYP EAL program in Grades 1-5, as well as to show how EAL students are progressing through the EAL levels. Benchmarks in WIDA terms are now used to assess support levels for individual elementary students. For example, Levels 1 and 2 can receive "pull-out" and "push-in" support; Levels-3-4 receive "push-in" support; EAL students above Level 4 are monitored until they are able to access the PYP program with the support of the homeroom teacher, and then they are exited from EAL support.

WASC Accreditation History: The school's history of accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges is shown in the table below:

Year	Visit Type	Status	Notes
1993	Initial Visit	Candidacy	
1994	Self-Study	6 years	
1997	Int'l Mid-cycle Visit	Confirmed	
2000	Self-Study	6 years	
2003	Int'l Mid-cycle Visit	Confirmed	
2006	Self-Study	6 years	
2009	Int'l Mid-cycle Visit	Confirmed	
2011	Term Extension	Granted	1 year extension
2012	Substantive Change	Confirmed	New school governance
2013	Self-Study	5 years	
2017	Substantive Change	Confirmed	Admitting int'l boarding students
2018	Self-Study	5 years	Term to expire June 30, 2023
2021	WASC Mid-cycle Visit		

B. **Significant changes and/or developments and their impact on the school**

School programs and systems continue to run much as before. There have been few changes in staffing and a significant change with regards to the boarding program.

● First, there have been several changes to roles and responsibilities since 2018. In the past, the role of PYP coordinator was combined with that of elementary principal. In August 2018, a new PYP coordinator was appointed to ensure effectiveness and promote distributive leadership. This has helped to foster a strong community in the elementary school.

● Next, the school counselor role from 2018 to 2020 was held by one teacher who divided her time between college counseling and social and emotional counseling. This was very challenging to balance for one person, and there was considered a need for more support for social emotional counseling. Eventually, the role was divided into one full-time Counselor (Social and Emotional Learning) and one 50% role of University

and Career Guidance. In total, this represents a 50% increase in counseling support in the school. The full-time SEL counselor position also includes some class teaching of Personal Social and Health Education in the MYP program and in-class engagement/ co-teaching of wellness and PSHE topics in the PYP.

- Then, the MS/HS principal and MYP coordinator roles were separated, and the MYP coordinator has now been passed to another teacher as a 50% responsibility, particularly due to the large number of students, parents, and teachers that the principal needed to work with on pastoral care issues.

- In addition, the tech coach role was discontinued in the summer of 2020 because the school was not able to hire any additional teachers to accommodate the changes with regards to the counselling and MYP coordinator roles. Between August 2018 and June 2020, the tech coach role was carried out by a technology teacher who provided a mix of IT services and pedagogical support. Then, as of August 2020, the role of the librarian was changed to include pedagogical coaching and technology integration in learning.

- The school's boarding program has always been very small in scale. In the 2019-20 academic year, there were six students, all of whom were High School students. Three came from within Japan and three were international students with the Global Futures Programme (GFP). In addition, there were approximately twenty SIS boarding students who shared the dormitory. However, given the circumstances of the pandemic, since the start of 2020, the admission of new boarding students has been suspended pending implementation of measures to address the nine areas of concern listed in the 2018 accreditation report, particularly the safeguarding measures. This situation is temporary, and the KG foundation has already approved plans to hire a female live-in house parent to begin in April 2022, in addition to the current house parent, to address one of the key issues raised. The school will aim to admit a new intake of boarders and Global Futures Programme students for the 2022-23 academic year, also focusing on issues such as those regarding the cultural life of the boarders and the overall nature of the boarding experience.

C.   **School's follow-up process and process used to prepare the mid-cycle report.**

Following the 2018 WASC visit, the OIS administration, with the support of the staff and in collaboration with the community and cooperation with KG, revisited the school Action Plan. Since its creation, a number of the original 'Year 1' actions have been carried out. In years 2 and 3, some additional actions have been added to either go further in relation to a particular strand of action, or to respond in another way to the original goal, thus deepening the school's range of responses to the goal.

It can be seen from the updates to the action plan that many of the additional actions intended for Years 2 and 3 have been discontinued due to the impact of the coronavirus. During the months of distance learning in the spring trimester of 2020 and throughout the 2020-21 academic year, the school leadership team has sought to minimize pressure on teachers as they cope with working through the pandemic. This meant that quite a few initiatives had to be paused and reconsidered in the future when the health and safety situation allows.

Consequently, there have been these significant changes:

- change to the enrollment goal as a result of the reduction of the school enrollment target, and

- new OIS boarding program development goal/s, as well as new issues that have been identified for the school to address in relation to health, safety and wellbeing, and

- ways for the school to become more visibly aligned with the KG identity in terms of providing education based on the principles of Christianity, promoting Mastery for Service, and the foundation's Global Competencies.

D. **PROGRESS REPORT: Evaluation of progress on implementation of the schoolwide action plan that addresses student learner needs, school needs and critical areas for follow-up (growth areas for continuous improvement) and impact on student learning. Include relevant evidence to support findings.**

1. **Improve the School's Facilities.**

Citations from the 2018 Visiting Committee Report:

In several areas of the school's 2018 Self-Study, the need for improvement in facilities was expressed, and this was confirmed during the numerous meetings the Visiting Committee held with stakeholders during the accreditation visit. Observations by the Visiting Committee also confirmed these findings. To elaborate, an effort to improve the school's facilities should address at least the following:

- ✔ The original architectural design of the school intended to allow for numerous learning spaces. However, most of the space available is not currently used for this purpose. Some spaces are simply not used; others are used for other purposes, such as for the storage of unused materials and supplies.

- ✔ The original architectural design also resulted in a grey, concrete structure to which students' artworks, banners, coloring and various displays would be added. Generally, this has not occurred. Schools of like size use color schemes, displays of student work, banners, and artifacts to create an inviting facility for students and their families alike and to remind all stakeholders of the guiding principles of the school and students' many accomplishments.

- ✔ Students and teachers alike pointed to the need for access to student study areas, quiet spaces, and areas intended for student socialization. With the elimination of unused instructional materials and supplies, as well as the general clutter now present in many common areas, the school's original design could be better used to create a more functional learning environment and address student and teacher needs.

- ✔ It is noted that the expanded and improved use of certain common areas would only be practical if properly heated. During the time of the accreditation visit, the WASC/IB Vising Committee members noted how cold the common areas remained throughout most of the school day. Appropriate HVAC improvements will also need to be made in order to use available spaces in the common areas for teacher and student benefit, even when the general clutter is removed.

- ✔ In order to address this critical growth need, the Visiting Committee strongly recommends that the leadership team conducts a *facilities needs assessment* in order

to identify what is now in place and what specifically needs to be addressed within the scope of facilities improvements. A *facilities needs assessment* would also clarify the timeline intended to be followed in addressing the many facilities needs throughout the school, as well as the resources needed to address those needs. The needs assessment should also enable the KG Foundation to better understand the resources needed to address this critical growth need. It is recommended that the *facilities needs assessment* attempt to forecast over the next 3-5 years which improvements will be made and when facilities improvements will be accomplished.

✔ Plans for the library renovation project have been developed and studied for too long without a tangible plan for addressing this need. With the support of the KG Foundation and, perhaps, other financial support, this project needs to reach fruition.

Comments and Recommendations from the 2021 Mid-cycle Visiting Committee:

Effective use of available space: Throughout 2018-19, staff were encouraged to submit requests for the removal of unused resources that were cluttering the classrooms and storage areas. A substantial quantity of old furniture, AV and computer equipment, outdated books, and material that had been in storage for many years was disposed of. As the disposal of electronic items requires payments of recycling or collection fees, this required an allocation of funds. Most areas remain relatively clutter-free, and the purchase of charging carts for classrooms throughout many classrooms in the school has helped to manage some computer wiring concerns. However, there are still some resources in storage areas that need to be disposed of in a second round of cleaning during 2020-21 with ongoing efforts to clean and de-clutter. The Mid-cycle Visiting Committee agreed with the school's Leadership Team that this aspect of the 2018 critical growth needs should continue.

Displays of student work, banners, and artifacts to create an inviting facility: The 2018-19 OIS Action Plan was tasked with adding more visible indicators of the school's learning outcomes and pedagogy to welcome and inform the school community and visitors to the campus. Specific measures identified to achieve this objective included hanging posters, banners, and photos around the school. The intention is to establish a clearer identity to visitors and the school community, linked to the Mission Statement, Learning Outcomes, and the IB Learner Profile. A new Mission and Values poster was developed by the Leadership Team and placed in classrooms and other key locations around the school. The virtual campus tour provided to the Visiting Committee by the Leadership Team showed many displays of student artwork throughout the corridors and many banners and flags in the gym. Discussions continue for funding banners and photos to add color to the campus and celebrate student achievements.

Improving access to student study areas, quiet spaces, and areas intended by architectural design for student socialization: While progress has been made in this 2018 objective, this remains a work in progress.

Improve HVAC in order to use available spaces in the common areas for teacher and student benefit: The effectiveness of HVAC throughout the school was not discussed with the school's stakeholders during the 2021 visit.

Conduct a Facilities Needs Assessment: Objectives related to facilities improvements have been integrated into the foundation's *2039 Campus Grand Challenge Plan*, a US$360 million investment in KG's various campuses that will be rolled out in stages. Work completed so far includes the installation of air conditioning in the school gym, refurbishing the computer labs, refurbishment of the cafeteria's kitchen equipment,

replacement of the elevators, and installation of LED lighting throughout the school. After a lengthy consultation process involving all stakeholders, including several joint faculty meetings with the sister school, Phase One of the campus reform plan began in 2020 with the replacement of the sports field. Phases 2 and 3, a plan to refurbish the library and classrooms, will commence in the summer of 2021.

Still, a stand-alone document referring to a facilities needs assessment and timeline needs to be developed. It may be that such a document can be extracted in part from the KG *2039 Campus Grand Challenge Plan*.

Library Renovation: As noted above, future phases of the Foundation's *2039 Campus Grand Challenge Plan* will address the refurbishment of the library. This project is to commence in the summer of 2021.

2. **Implement a More Transparent Resource Allocations and Budget Management Process.**

The 2018 Visiting Committee Report cited these needs:

That the school is funded and supported by the KG Foundation as a non-profit organization is a given and is to be respected and appreciated. However, a continuing source of frustration on the part of the faculty is the lack of transparency by which the school's budget is managed. Even more important, the current resource allocation and budget management procedures hinder the school's enrollment growth, reduce the school's stature in the local community of other international schools, and reduce teacher and administrative effectiveness in carrying out their roles and responsibilities.

✔ Teachers believe that they follow the procurement process according to direction, only to find that their requests for instructional materials and supplies were not acted upon with no reason given other than the unavailability of funds.

✔ Requests for instructional materials and supplies are often denied with the explanation that the request was not prioritized high enough to be acted upon. Staff members wish to know the rationale for such prioritization and how close to the top of their priority their request was considered.

✔ Faculty members often do not know what their annual budget is but, instead, are told to order what they need and that the request will be acted upon if funds are available. Teachers and administrators need to be allocated a discretionary amount of funds to meet the instructional needs of the school.

✔ Some faculty members have asked for classroom shelving and storage areas in order to remove the clutter and outdated items from the classroom proper but have had to provide for their own classroom shelving.

✔ The Visiting Committee was told within several discussions that the numerous outdated and unused materials now stored in classrooms and in common areas cannot be eliminated because of the costs attached to that procedure. The KG Foundation will need to address this matter with an annual allocation of funds to rid the campus of these unused and outdated items on a regular and ongoing basis, no matter what the recycling charges might be.

Comments and Recommendations from the 2021 Mid-cycle Visiting Committee:

The school has taken some steps to implement a more transparent resource allocations and budget management process. However, this process is still a work in progress, as was made evident during discussions with OIS teacher representatives. When it comes to clear

communication of annual budget allocations, initial steps taken to address this were to review previous spending and share financial data from the Business Office with the faculty using Google Sheets. However, not all faculty know how to access and understand these sheets, and it seems that there is a lack of consistency across departments regarding how these sheets are used. Moreover, faculty members still struggle to find the appropriate budget documents, and it is still unclear in many instances how the rationale behind decisions made is communicated with processes still not publicly available. Overall, even though transparency regarding budget allocations and expenditures has improved somewhat, further steps are required regarding processes and decision-making to include timeframes, accountability, and accessibility. As such, the Visiting Committee feels that OIS still needs to increase focus on addressing this critical growth need in its Action Plan.

3. **Formalise and refine the school's assessment model.**

   From the 2018 Visiting Committee Report:

   The Visiting Committee cites as a major need for the school the refining and formalizing of the assessment model – what are the multiple measures used to assess student achievement, and how is assessment data effectively used.

   ✔ The MAP tests have been adopted as a major external assessment since 2015-16 for Grades 1-10, replacing the ISA. Teachers need a fuller understanding of the significance of MAP data, how to analyze and disaggregate assessment results, and how these assessment results should inform instruction and direct the allocation of resources.

   ✔ Parents also indicate that they do not adequately understand the significance of the MAP scores or other achievement test data for their own children. While parents are trusting individuals, they do wish to understand better the significance of the assessments given to their children over time.

   ✔ The school also administers the PSAT. Except for identifying potential National Merit Scholars (USA), for what other purposes might the PSAT results be used?

   ✔ With a small enrollment, the school's leadership should be able to conduct a matched-pair analysis of student performance over time. This analysis of student achievement results could result in even more significant information than just comparing grade level performance year to year, which usually shows performance levels above worldwide comparisons. More importantly, is OIS improving student achievement annually – incremental growth over time – regardless of worldwide comparisons?

   ✔ To what extent are all students sharing in the norms of achievement of the school? Are assessment results disaggregated in order to determine any achievement gaps, for example, between the norm of the school and English language learners (EAL students)? Learning support students? Students in the three schools (ES, MS, and HS)? An increased focus on the achievement levels of the school's subpopulations will identify achievement gaps and lead to staff discussions regarding the support and interventions needed to narrow those achievement gaps over time.

✔ Separate from the administration of the MAP and other external assessments, the school needs to adopt some type of assessment which will measure EAL students' acquisition of English language skills over time.

✔ To what extent is the information from teacher, parent, and student satisfaction surveys analyzed to help the school's leadership reevaluate school operations and procedures? Such surveys should be administered regularly and analyzed by the leadership and faculty.

✔ The school's leadership should also administer the dorm satisfaction survey regularly to dorm students and their parents with the same follow up analysis and discussion.

✔ ManageBac has also been recently adopted to assist in curriculum development and with communicating to parents regarding their students' progress. Throughout discussions during the accreditation visit, many teachers and parents indicated their desire to learn more about ManageBac and how to access it and use it to fuller advantage. Also, faculty across the school need to be consistent in the way feedback and reports are provided to students and parents.

✔ The result of reevaluating and formalizing of the school's assessment model, then, will be to demonstrate to the school's key stakeholders incremental improvement in student achievement over time.

Comments and Recommendations from the 2021 Mid-cycle Visiting Committee:

Help teachers improve their understanding of MAP data: In April 2018, key representatives of PYP, MYP, and DP attended a "MAP Bootcamp" to learn more about how to utilize the assessment data. Elementary School teachers devoted a faculty meeting in October to compare how classes perform to inform modification of teaching strategies and resources. In the Middle and High School, reporting of MAP data has been done in the following ways: (1) Analysis of MAP data by MS/HS Principal has been used to examine trends within grade levels, performance relative to US norms and international school (EARCOS) norms; (2) in September 2019 MAP data showing OIS performance from G1-G10 was presented to the KG Council.

Assist parents in their understanding of MAP data: In the Elementary School, MAP results from September/October and June are shared with parents through *Managebac* and are discussed at PYP parent/teacher conferences. Within discussion with parent representatives during the 2021 mid-cycle visit, parents indicated that there is generally an adequate understanding of the MAP assessment data. However, some parents questioned the overall value of the MAP assessments; this is an area for the school's Leadership Team to discuss with parents.

Re-evaluate the benefits of administering the PSAT:

This was not a topic discussed with the Leadership Team or faculty representatives during the 2021 mid-cycle visit.

Conduct a matched-pair analysis of student performance over time: From the information provided in the school's Mid-cycle Progress Report, it would appear that this objective remains a work in progress. MAP data continues to show grade-level group results and comparisons to US norms. Student profiles, records of concerns, and report cards are monitored over time and are also used by the learning support department. However, with such a small maximum enrollment of 280 students Grades K-12, and with the MAP

assessment including only Grade 1-10 students, a longitudinal tracking of individual student's progress on MAP assessments is very doable and desirable; such a study of individual student progress over time would provide useful data.

Implement procedures to measure and report how well students are achieving the attributes of the IB Learner Profile: Prior to the 2018 WASC accreditation visit, OIS adopted the IB learner Profile as its statement of schoolwide learner outcomes (SLOs). "International Mindedness" has also been identified as an important SLO, and during a January 2020, workshop students and faculty worked together to create a school definition of international mindedness, which is intended to be used to guide teaching, learning, and assessment of international mindedness K-12. The library has also purchased resources to support International Mindedness, and relevant books on diversity, equity, and inclusion have been integrated into units of inquiry.

The staff is to be commended for the inclusion of "International Mindedness" among the schoolwide learning outcomes. As clarified by teachers and the school's Leadership Team, although student progress on acquiring the attributes of the IB Learner Profile may not be discreetly evaluated, it is understood that these traits are embedded within the teaching units and lessons; therefore, student progress on the units of study provide an indication of their progress on demonstrating the attributes of the IB Learner Profile.

Increase focus on the achievement levels of the school's subpopulations to identify achievement gaps and which lead to staff discussions regarding the support and interventions needed to narrow those achievement gaps over time: The school's Mid-cycle Report and discussions with the Leadership Team and teacher representatives did not reveal that the staff is regularly disaggregating student achievement data to identify learning gaps between the norm of the school and such special populations as EAL and Learning Support students. This, then, remains as a critical growth need for the school.

Measure EAL students' acquisition of English language skills over time: Implementation of the WIDA assessment began in the 2019-20 academic year. This assessment is currently being used to help identify which students should enter and exit the PYP EAL program in Grades 1-5, as well as to show how EAL students are progressing through the EAL levels. Benchmarks in WIDA terms are now used to assess support levels for individual elementary students. For example, Levels 1 and 2 can receive pull-out and push-in support; Levels-3-4 receive push-in support; EAL students above Level 4 are monitored until they are able to access the PYP program with the support of the homeroom teacher, and then they are exited from EAL support. The PYP EAL teacher meets weekly and plans with each class teacher to check on the growth of each student and plan for individual support along with co-taught lessons.

In the Middle School and High School, EAL support is provided as part of the role of the Learning Support teacher. An OIS EAL Policy is being drafted to replace the EAL handbook, which will describe when and how EAL support is provided across the school. Consideration is being given to the use of the WIDA or some like assessment to measure the progress of MS and HS students' English language acquisition, and the 2021 Visiting Committee encourages this endeavor.

Regularly administer and analyze responses from teacher, parent, and student satisfaction surveys: The staff is encouraged to expand its use of annual school satisfaction surveys with students, their parents, and faculty members at large. It is also recommended that these surveys include questions related to social-emotional learning,

student well-being, and students' mental health, and that the survey responses be included as a part of the school's assessment model.

Regularly administer a dorm satisfaction survey to dorm students and their parents:
The OIS boarding program has always been small in scale, and for the 2019-20 school year there were only six (6) boarding students. Since the start of 2020, the admission of new boarding students has been suspended. OIS intends to admit a new intake of boarders for the 2022-23 academic year and, at that time, dorm satisfaction surveys will again be administered.

Implement procedures to assist teachers and parents in learning more about how to access and use information from *ManageBac* and to be more consistent in the way feedback and reports are provided to students and parents: *Managebac* continues to be used consistently by faculty, parents, and students as the school's central learning management system. All PYP curriculum planning is on *Managebac*; MYP and DP use *Managebac* to some extent. Parents access *Managebac* reports to view student progress. Interviews with students, parent representatives, and teacher representatives seemed to indicate a general satisfaction with the use of *Managebac.*

The school's Mid-cycle Progress Report also clarified that the OIS assessment model is founded on the assessment policy, which was in draft form at the time of the 2018 accreditation visit and is still under review. It was noted that the new MYP Coordinator is now leading this review, and it will be subsequently continued by PYP and DP. The 2021 Visiting Committee encourages the school's staff to proceed with this review and finalize the school's assessment policy before expiration of WASC accreditation, which will occur June 30, 2023.

4. **Develop an Organized and Effective School Learning Support Program.**

The 2018 Visiting Committee noted the following:

In response to past recommendations provided during accreditation visits, the school created certain positions to address the Learning Support needs of students. However, in the view of the Visiting Committee, Learning Support is not yet a "program" within the school, but at this stage of development more of position assignments of a LS teacher, an EAL teacher, and the school counselor.

✔ The position assignments of those serving in the role of "learning support," namely, the LS teacher, the EAL teacher, and the school counselor, need to be reviewed with an improved differentiation of duties and balance workloads. Then, these discreet duties and responsibilities need to be clarified for the faculty and parents alike.

✔ When students are identified as needing learning support services, parents need to be involved in this decision and kept informed about the services rendered and the progress being made.

✔ If the inclusion model is to continue as the adopted learning support model for the school, then this effort needs to be advanced with appropriate inservice.

✔ The delivery and adequacy of counseling and guidance services needs to be reevaluated in terms of the many student needs, such as their social-emotional needs, dealing with adolescent issues, and college and career preparation.

✔ The school's leadership and faculty need to work toward the elimination of the stigma associated with students and their parents seeking learning support services. Given the cultural influences, learning support needs to be presented as a valued service of the school, no matter if the need is in English language development, working

through youthful or adolescent issues, helping the student who is just struggling in certain academic areas, or assisting the student and family with the decisions related to post high school education and career preparation.

✔ The school's Self-Study and the conversations with stakeholders during the accreditation visit confirmed the need for increased pastoral care. The Visiting Committee concurs with this need. First, however, what pastoral care is or will be for the school needs to be defined. Then, the delineation of responsibilities will need to be assigned – who will do what to address this need. Within the broader scope of "student learning support services," then, increased attention to pastoral care needs to be included.

✔ The leadership team needs to define better for faculty and parents what the "Learning Support Program" is for OIS. It should not be just two or three people focusing on these student needs, but a well-organized and systemic effort of intervention and support for all students.

Comments and Recommendations from the 2021 Mid-cycle Visiting Committee:

The school's Mid-cycle Progress Report stated that this is an area in which progress has been hampered somewhat by staffing changes in the Learning Support team and counseling services since the last visit as well as the pandemic, but that it will be a continued area of focus moving forward.

Position Assignment Job Descriptions for Learning Support Staff: By splitting some roles, the school has clarified that the counselor is primarily responsible for the social-emotional needs of students and the pastoral program, while the Learning Support teacher focuses on reducing barriers so that all students have equal access to the curriculum. There is considerable overlap between these two areas, and the principals continue to work with both to evaluate students identified with potential learning needs and determine a plan for following up. The administration has also separated college-career counseling from the social-emotional counseling role and created a separate half-time position. This latter position is currently assigned to a teacher who is splitting time between these duties and learning support. More work on defining roles and responsibilities will provide continued improvement.

Parental Involvement in the Placement of Students in the LS Program: The Learning Support team will continue their efforts to involve parents in the placement of their students in the Learning Support program.

Provision of Appropriate Inservice for Improved Implementation of the Inclusion Model: The provision of appropriate inservice opportunities will remain a continued objective as the school's faculty implements an effective Inclusion Model.

Re-assess the Adequacy of Counseling and Guidance Services: Personnel changes in counseling services have changed twice since the last accreditation visit. With the departure of the previous counselor, the counselor's roles were split between a full-time social-emotional counselor and a half-time college-career counselor. However, the school notes that there is still room for improvement in defining the roles and responsibilities of the teachers and counselors. The adequacy and effectiveness of the current structure of

counseling and guidance services is an area for the Leadership Team to evaluate, with appropriate input from students, their parents, and the faculty at large.

Improve the Image of Learning Support Services to the School's Key Stakeholders: The school's Leadership Team and the newly-formed Learning Support team will continue their efforts related to this objective.

Increase Attention to the Pastoral Care Needs of Students: As noted above, with the departure of the previous counselor, the counselors' roles were split between a full-time social-emotional counselor and a half-time college-career counselor. The new ideas and insights the two new counselors have brought to the school have allowed the school to make some positive steps in the pastoral program. The social-emotional counselor, especially, has expertise in this area but was working remotely and virtually because of the pandemic. The school anticipates much progress in this area now that this counselor is situated on-campus.

Clarify and Define the Learning Support Program for the School's Key Stakeholders: The staff continues to review the policy and publish guidelines for learning support and the roles of the various faculty members involved. For the 2020-21 school year, a working group consisting of the Head of School, both principals, the current Learning Support teacher, the counselor and the PYP EAL teacher are meeting to review and update procedures further with a goal of revising the Inclusion Policy by the end of the year. Soon, other stakeholders will be invited to participate in this review. Once that review is completed, the Inclusion Policy will be publicized in the school community to help raise awareness and the positive aspects of the program.

Additional areas selected by the school to include in the 2018-23 schoolwide action plan:

5. **Collaboration**

"Collaboration" was a critical growth need added by the school's staff to the four identified by the 2018 Visiting Committee.

Elaboration and clarification from the school's 2021 Mid-cycle Progress Report:

Guiding questions:
- *What does collaboration look like in a small school when most teachers do not have a colleague teaching the same subject or grade level?*
- *How can teacher collaboration improve student learning and student wellbeing?*

Action Plan Goals:

5.1 PYP: Align units of inquiry between grade levels. This would include KA with KB, grade 1 with grade 2, grade 3 with grade 4. Develop close ties between grade 5 and grade 6.

5.2 MYP Every teacher is involved in at least one official documented Interdisciplinary Unit (IDU).

5.3 DP: All DP faculty agree upon a scope and sequence for learning Approaches To Learning (ATLs) within the curriculum. Integrate TOK into all subject areas.

5.4 OIS K-12 Shared vision of teaching and learning by incorporating and celebrating IB philosophy and practice.

Comments and Recommendations from the 2021 Mid-cycle Visiting Committee:

Significant progress has been made by restructuring leadership in both the elementary and secondary sections with regards to supporting and promoting collaboration across the school. The roles of PYP and MYP coordinator have been separated from those of the principals. In August 2018, a highly qualified PYP coordinator was recruited to OIS. She shares the teaching of Grade 3 with the principal. This enabled the principal to be an integrated part of the teaching team. Collaborative meetings run by the coordinator were more clearly focused on the curriculum and its development.

In August 2020, one of the MYP teachers took on the role of MYP coordinator following interviews with interested internal candidates. This enabled the principal to focus more time on collaboration with SIS, the sister school. Collaborative meetings run by the coordinator are now more frequent and clearly focused on curriculum development. The DP coordinator is working on developing a scope and sequence of teaching ATL skills with teachers. There is also potential for the new requirements of the TOK course to develop collaboration between teachers of different subjects.

The curriculum leadership of the school now comprises a broader range of experienced personnel who meet as a regular forum on a weekly basis with the Head of School to plan and discuss articulation. Furthermore, since August 2019 the PYP units have been taught on a two-year cycle, which enables teachers of two grade levels to meet with the PYP coordinator and plan together each week. This has significantly improved collaboration. It has also enabled single-subject teachers to contribute more often to planning. Weekly faculty meetings have also become more focused on an exchange of pedagogical ideas as the Enhanced PYP has been implemented since August 2019. In the MYP Programme, teachers have grade-level meetings at least once per trimester. These meetings are scheduled and planned often in coordination with the Student Support team and used to discuss student concerns and strategies.

In addition, the MYP faculty has been working in mixed groups on reviewing and updating the "Assessment in the MYP" policy to reflect the IBO's new Programme Standards and Practices. Meetings for interdisciplinary units have already been planned following the new guide on Interdisciplinary Learning from the IBO which was released in February 2021.

Steps to promote collaboration did not only involve faculty but also students. Helping to build a whole school mindset of collaboration and international mindedness was the training of student leaders by JUMP. Their workshops in January 2020 enabled all teachers to be led by students and to collaborate in a unique way together. Overall, the Visiting Committee feels that OIS has adequately addressed this critical growth need at this stage.

6. **Enrollment**

    This was another critical growth need added by the school's staff to the four identified by the 2018 Visiting Committee.

    Elaboration and clarification from the school's 2021 Mid-cycle Progress Report

    Guiding questions:
    ● What makes OIS unique and attractive to families?
    ● How do we build on our unique relationship with SIS to fully realize the founding vision statements and increase our stature as a unique international school?
    ● How do we develop a strategy to get this message out to potential students both in Japan and abroad?

Action Plan Goal (6.1):
- To work towards and sustain enrollment at full capacity (280).

Comments and Recommendations from the 2021 Mid-cycle Visiting Committee:

At the time of the filing the 2021 Mid-cycle Progress Report, the school enrolled 271 students, of which 81 had a dual nationality. Students of Japanese nationality make up the largest group, followed by Korean, American, and Chinese. Notably, USA student enrollment has increased from 7% in 2018 to 9.6% currently.

The school is owned and operated by Kwansei Gakuin through a foundation that includes Kwansei Gakuin University and a group of eight schools. In December 2020, the foundation revised the school's capacity target downwards from 300 to 280. Because the school has been attractive to a number of Japanese families returning to Japan for safety and security concerns in times of the pandemic, the coronavirus has not had a drastic impact on student enrollments. Because of COVID-19 precautions, the school switched to distance learning in March 2020 but welcomed back all students for on-campus learning by August 2020.

For the future, the school's task would seem to be sustaining student enrollment at approximately the 280-target capacity. Within that goal, the staff will anticipate the time that the school's boarding program is re-activated and even expanded. There is also interest in achieving increased student participation in the school's IB diploma programme, and the WASC Visiting Committee concurs with this objective.

The Visiting Committee also regarded the admissions process at OIS as a strength of the school, and one that tries to ensure that the staff does not admit more students than they are able to support in the classroom, while being mindful of the issues involved for successful inclusion. The staff is also developing a marketing strategy which will focus on increased Kindergarten and IB DP enrollments.

The 2021 Visiting Committee did not believe that this objective needs to continue as a critical growth need of the school.

7. **Personnel**

"Personnel" was the 3rd critical growth need identified by the school as an addition to the 2018 needs cited by that Visiting Committee.

Elaboration and clarification from the school's 2021 Mid-cycle Progress Report:

Guiding Questions:

- What are the factors that contribute to attracting and retaining outstanding teachers?
- What structures and systems in the school can ensure that teacher needs and concerns are recognised and responded to appropriately?

When the goals were written for the action plan, provision of professional development opportunities was identified as a key objective and thus the 2019 action plan goal for this section is as follows:

Action Plan Goal (6.2):
- Increase professional development opportunities for faculty outside of IB-related development, such as instructional technology, inclusion and assessment.

Comments and Recommendations from the 2021 Mid-cycle Visiting Committee:

The school has focused on providing a wide and balanced range of professional development opportunities through the process of identifying and addressing issues pertaining to personnel, such as what are the factors that contribute to attracting and retaining outstanding teachers, as well as what structures and systems in the school can ensure that teacher needs and concerns are recognized and responded to appropriately. In this process, a balanced approach to PD allocation was followed with opportunities that were both IB and non-IB related, such as Harvard Project Zero workshops and a whole faculty PD workshop on international mindedness delivered by the Jump! Foundation. Even though there are still a number of other personnel considerations implied by the guiding questions to become Action Plan foci in the future, the 2021Visiting Committee feels that OIS is adequately addressing this growth need at this stage.

E. **Explanation of why any critical areas for follow-up or growth areas for continuous improvement have not been completely addressed, if applicable.**

The school has experienced some significant changes in lead personnel during the past three years. Also, the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic have impacted school operations at OIS as in other school worldwide. While much work has been done to address the four critical growth cited in the 2018 Visiting Committee Report, the Leadership Team acknowledged that these four should continue to be their priority focus during the remaining two years of this term of accreditation. The 2021 Visiting Committee supports this approach and recommended to the school that the additional three needs – collaboration, enrollment, and personnel – be set aside in order to increase focus on the basic four.

F. **Include a copy of the hyperlink to the school's most recent schoolwide action plan.**

During the 2021 "Exit Report" and in collaboration with the school's Leadership Team, it was agreed that the updated and revised Action Plan would focus on the four (4) critical growth needs" cited above. The Head of School also agreed to file the updated and revised Action Plan with WASC by the close of the 2020-21 school year.

Also during the "Exit Report," the Mid-cycle Visiting Committee reviewed the expectation of the Accrediting Commission of School related to the school's revised and updated Action Plan:

1. That the Action Plan MUST include "Major Recommendations" / Critical Growth Needs cited in the 2021 Mid-cycle Visiting Committee Report
   Verbatim citation of "Critical Growth Needs"
   School's leadership may add other areas for improvement and follow-up
   The Action Plan should be a succinct – user-friendly document
   o   Statement of the "critical growth need"
   o   Responsible person(s) by position ≠ "staff"
   o   Timeline to adequately address the need ≠ "ongoing"
   o   Resources needed – human and financial
   o   How progress will be measured
   o   Actions and services to address the need ≠ "continue to"

Schoolwide Strengths

The Mid-cycle Visiting Committee was pleased to cite these significant "strengths" of the school, which should be retained and built upon:

1. Facilities have been decluttered and upgraded, and a short-term as well as long-term plan has already been devised to further upgrade physical spaces, ensuring that they feel and are conducive to teaching and learning.

2. The school continues to nurture and promote a strong, family-like culture, focusing on the whole community's health, safety, and well-being.

3. The school has a teaching faculty committed to supporting the programs taught and going the extra mile with students depending upon needs.

4. The school environment related to faculty and students is one of trust and respect, promoting learning and balanced growth and development.

5. The parent community trusts and supports the school.

6. The school's planning and implementation of actions with regards to the pandemic, so that the whole community is kept healthy and safe, and that teaching and learning continue to be as consistent and effective as possible given the circumstances.

7. The KG Foundation's continued support to the school, ensuring financial viability and stability and showing commitment to its Mission and Vision.

8. The school for ensuring that more opportunities for collaboration planning and reflection are made available for the continuous improvement of the academic provision and support.

9. The school has strengthened the pedagogical leadership and support structure to further promote the implementation of academic programs, consequent professional development, and subsequent school improvement and effectiveness.

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement

Upon reading the school's mid-cycle report and meeting with several stakeholder groups during the visit, the 2021 Mid-Cycle Visiting Committee recommends that the same four critical growth needs identified in February 2018 be addressed during the next two years preceding the school's WASC accreditation full Self-Study visit:

1. **Improve the school's facilities**

   a. Designate a document to serve as the OIS Facilities Needs Assessment and Masterplan. (could be extracted from the *KG 2038 Campus Grand Challenge Plan*).

   b. Continue practices of regular inventory and disposal of unused instructional materials and supplies.

   c. Increase the presentation of student work and various displays throughout the campus.

   d. Increase to publicize in poster form the KG and OIS mission, vision, and values statements.

   e. Use displays and artifacts to increase the school community's sensitivity to and awareness of International Mindedness.

   f. At the appropriate time within the facilities improvement plan, increase the use of color within the school to de-institutionalize the appearance of the facility.

    g. Continue with the campus reform plan, focusing on improvements to the school's library and classrooms.

2. **Increase usage of student achievement data**

    a. Increase parents' understanding of the value and purpose of MAP assessments.

    b. Implement procedures to track individual student academic growth over time in addition to the groups data provided by MAP.

    c. Now that "International Mindedness" has been added to the Schoolwide Learning Objectives, identify procedures to measure progress over time. Perhaps referencing the WASC "global competencies" would be a help in this endeavor.

    d. Along with other measures of students' academic progress, publicize the progress Grade 1-5 EAL students make on the WIDA assessments. Also, continue the professional conversation related to using WIDA or some like assessments for the measurement of MS and HS students' progress in English language acquisition.

    e. Continue to administer annual surveys to students, their parents, and to the faculty, which will include not only "school satisfaction" questions but also the progress the school is making in the area of student well-being and mental health.

3. **Improve effectiveness of the school's Learning Support program**

    a. With appropriate student, parent, and faculty input, assess the effectiveness of the structure, composition, and outcomes of the school's Learning Support program.

    b. Increase efforts to define for students, parents, and teachers the roles and responsibilities of the staff members who serve in Counseling and Guidance and Learning Support.

    c. With appropriate faculty, parent, and student input, reassess the adequate of the human resources allocated to the Learning Support efforts.

    d. To the extent possible, ensure that the faculty appointed to lead the Learning Support program have the expertise and ongoing professional development to meet LS students' needs.

    e. Review the clarity and intent of all school policies related to the Learning Support program and finalize the staff's review of the Inclusion Policy.

4. **Implement a more transparent budget allocation and procurement system.**

    a. Within an ongoing professional discussion with the faculty, focus on this area of concern from the faculty and implement procedures to address these concerns.

    b. Assist the faculty in their understanding of the various financial and budgeting spreadsheets which have been developed.

    c. To the extent possible within the KG structure, reduce the amount of time it takes for teachers to obtain even the smallest of instructional materials and supplies.

    d. Provide the faculty a clearer understanding of the budget for instructional technology and what can and cannot be purchased with these resources and the reasons why.

Additional Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement

The Mid-cycle Visiting Committee provides the following additional areas for improvement and follow-up which the school's key stakeholders are encouraged to address, although these recommendations do not necessarily need to be included in the school's revised and updated Action Plan.

1. The school's Leadership Team needs to advance a professional conversation regarding a Child Protection policy, with an outcome of the development of appropriate policy documents and best practices.

2. With appropriate parental and student input, the faculty needs to implement procedures to reduce academic pressure and stress on students.

3. The Head of School needs to engage the school's leadership, faculty, and potential boarding school parents in plans to re-start the boarding school program.

4. As the KG Foundation has requested, develop actions toward an additional goal relating to the ethos and identity of the KG organization.

5. Finalize the development of an EAL Policy to replace the EAL Handbook.

6. The school's Leadership Team needs to implement procedures to increase opportunities for parental input to the school's leadership regarding school practices and operations.

7. Under the leadership and direction of the Head of School, the Leadership Team and faculty need to collaborate regarding the adequacy of current teacher evaluation policies and practices, in order to foster professional growth and consistently high levels of instruction throughout the school.