

GARFIELD/PALOUSE SCHOOLS

SELF-STUDY AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN VISITING TEAM REPORT

October 13 & 14, 2009

PREPARED FOR

**WASHINGTON STATE COMMISSION
NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED
SCHOOLS**

**VISITING TEAM CHAIRMEN
BUZZ RICHESON/JAY RYDELL**

NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS.

Commission on Schools

Washington State Committee

Garfield & Palouse School Districts Accreditation and Self-Study Summary

The Garfield & Palouse School Districts have successfully completed the self-study process prescribed for accreditation through the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) under the leadership of Beverly Fox Principal/Superintendent and Zane Wells Principal/Superintendent.

NAAS Standards for Accreditation...

1. Mission, Beliefs, and Expectations for Student Learning
2. Curriculum
3. Instruction
4. Assessment
5. Leadership and Organization
6. School Services
Student Support Services, Guidance Services, Health Services, Library Information Services,
Special Education Services, Family and Community Services
7. Facilities and Finance
8. School Improvement Standard

These standards delineate the minimum level of program and resource conditions that must exist in a school in order to provide a setting in which quality instruction can take place and to ensure that all students have a reasonable opportunity to learn. These standards are experience and research based through the NAAS Commission on Schools. In order to maintain continued progress Garfield and Palouse School Districts will submit an Annual Report to indicate how well it is accomplishing the goals of the school improvement plan as well as it is meeting the eight standards.

The third component of self-study is the State of Washington Accountability Standards. These standards ask a school to meet student performance requirements as determined by the state. A major factor in determining the accreditation status of a school rests with; the ability to have students meet or exceed the state standards. A positive relationship exists between the school improvement plan and the effort to improve student performance in state mandated tests. As a part of the school improvement process, schools examine student performance in state tests, identify areas needing improvement and develop or adopt strategies and interventions to assist students to meet state standards.

Following the self-study, a eight member Visiting Team reviewed the results and visited Garfield and Palouse School Districts on October 13 & 14, 2009. The Washington Commission wishes to express our appreciation to the following educators for the contributions they have made as a part of the Visitation Team.

Patty Mills	Teacher Oakesdale School District
Jake Dingman	Superintendent/Principal Oakesdale School District
Bill Holman	Vice Principal Lincoln MS Pullman
Jennifer Hardt	Counselor Cheney MS
Rae Ann Fleming	Special Education Teacher LaCrosse
Shelly Baerwald	High School English Teacher Medical Lake HS
Buzz Richeson	Consultant NAAS
Jay Rydell	Consultant NAAS

This team had three responsibilities: (1) to examine, as external observers, the accuracy and completeness of the self-study report, (2) to add the perspective of a visiting team to program areas and (3) to examine the educational soundness and practicality of the plans for improvement.

The team spent two full school days observing the schools in operation, visiting with staff, parents and students and meeting with individual committee members.

It is the consensus opinion of the Visiting Team that the Garfield and Palouse School Districts does a very commendable job of providing a quality education and an outstanding environment for their students.

The Team concurs with a large majority of the school's self-study findings and encourages the community to '**Celebrate**' the schools' strengths. We suggest the Visiting Team's commendations and recommendations be interpreted not as a list of items that must be corrected immediately, but rather as a set of suggestions to be used to prioritize future improvements in the school's educational programs.

In conclusion, it is the wish of the Visiting Team that Garfield and Palouse School Districts constantly review their vision of what they believe is best for young people and then look at what methods and means they have in their grasp in order to accomplish the specific goals that result from the self-study and visitation. It is to these ends that the Team respectfully submits this report. We wish Garfield and Palouse School Districts continuing success as it moves into the future.

Submitted by Visiting Team Chair's
Buzz Richeson/Jay Rydell

STANDARD #1 – MISSION, BELIEFS, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: The school's mission statement describes the essence of what the school as a community of learners is seeking to achieve. The expectations for student learning are based on and drawn from the school's mission statement. These expectations are the fundamental goals by which the school continually assesses the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Every component of the school community must focus on enabling all students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.

COMMENDATIONS:

Garfield-Palouse Schools

- Students seemed to feel safe, which reflects a positive learning environment
- Mutual respect between staff and students was apparent at both schools
- Mission statement is a working document which accurately reflects school & community expectations for student learning

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- That the Garfield/Palouse Schools review on regular basis with all staff and display in classrooms to allow increased awareness



STANDARD #2 – CURRICULUM.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: The curriculum including coursework, co-curricular activities, and other school-approved educational experiences, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links the school's beliefs, its expectations for student learning, and its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon the commitment and involvement of the professional staff to a comprehensive, ongoing review of the curriculum.

COMMENDATIONS:

Palouse

- High interest classes promote lifelong learning at Palouse
- Teacher's expertise appears to be utilized equally among grade levels at Palouse
- Palouse high school students model appropriate behavior and provide tutoring to elementary students
- A strong support system of paraeducators helping Palouse students and staff in the elementary was apparent
- Palouse online courses provide opportunities for advanced placement

Garfield

- Curriculum is aligned with school-wide & state academic expectations
- Staff is actively involved in selection of curriculum
- To meet individual student needs District supports modified curriculum
- Collaboration between grades & schools to ensure student skills transition

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Continue to explore alternative funding sources to offset the cost of daycare at Palouse
- Create opportunities for staff collaboration for curriculum & assessment needs at Garfield



STANDARD #3 – INSTRUCTION.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: The quality of instruction in a school is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning, the achievement of expectations for student learning, the delivery of the curriculum, and the assessment of student progress. Instructional practices must be grounded in the school's mission, beliefs, and expectations for student learning, supported by research in best practice, and refined and improved based on identified student needs. Teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional strategies and to collaborate with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

COMMENDATIONS:

Palouse

- Palouse students have access to Running Start
- Palouse schools encourage rigor in the classroom, which prepares students for post-secondary education
- Palouse staff seemed enthusiastic about their subject(s)
- Palouse teachers collaborate with colleagues via learning communities

Garfield

- Recognize individual needs of students
- Staff members collaborate with staff members to meet student needs

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Palouse schools continue block scheduling for the benefit of the student body
- Increase flexibility of options available to staff to increase instructional strategies at Garfield

STANDARD #4 – ASSESSMENT.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its purpose is to inform students regarding their learning progress and teachers regarding ways to adjust the curriculum and instruction to respond effectively to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates to the school community the progress of students in achieving the school's expectations for student learning as well as course-specific learning goals. Assessment results must be continually analyzed to improve curriculum and instruction.

COMMENDATIONS:

Palouse

- Learning communities seemed integral to the teaching and learning process at Palouse
- Good use of student learning plans for students not achieving standards at Palouse
- Collaborative redesign of elementary report card to reflect power standards in mathematics

Garfield

- Good communication in Elementary about student progress and needs
- Effective use of formative & summative assessments
- Collaborative redesign of elementary report card to reflect power standards in mathematics

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Continue to focus on formative assessment at Palouse

- Consider common assessment among teachers who teach the same subject(s) at Palouse
- Consider implementing another summative assessment to show growth over time
- Increase staff opportunities for review of assessment data at Garfield

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STANDARD #5 – LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: The way that a school organizes learning for students, fosters leadership, and engages its members has a profound effect on teaching and learning, The professional culture of the school must be characterized by thoughtful, reflective, and constructive discourse about decision-making and practices that support student learning and well-being.

COMMENDATION:

Palouse

- Admin gives clear & concise direction while still valuing staff input
- Building schedule reflects commitment to student needs
- Decision making process involves varied aspects of school & community
- The relationship between the superintendent/principal and the board is demonstrative of trust in the leadership of the school to make the right decisions for students and staff.
- Staff is committed to support of one another
- Strong superintendent/principal leadership within school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning.

Garfield

- The administrator provides structured time for meetings; communicates school vision for student learning
- Strong superintendent/principal leadership within school community by creating and maintaining a shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
- Intervention team provides guidance for students in need of learning assistance
- Adults in school know students well and assist in achieving school wide expectations; support in academic and emotional areas
- The relationship between the superintendent/principal and the board is demonstrative of trust in the leadership of the school to make the right decisions for students and staff.
- Student policies and handbook reflect understanding of current needs; up to date in content and format; created through input multiple constituents
- School climate is friendly and welcoming; first response of all staff members when asked what the best thing about working here was “the staff.”

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Palouse

- Increase input from non-certificated staff in regard to decision making process

Garfield

- Continue move towards using staff meeting time for PLC model; increase whole staff collaborative time
- Boards continue to develop collaboration and cooperation between the school districts

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STANDARD #6 – SCHOOL SERVICES.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support programs and services. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of integrated resources to enhance and improve student learning and well-being and to support the school's mission and expectations.

COMMENDATIONS:

Palouse

- Providing excellent guidance services to students
- Procedures for Health services are in place & followed
- RTI procedures in place to identify & assist struggling students (CMT)
- Students have adequate access to technology (3 computer labs)
- Library resources & staffing are excellent
- Staff works as team to identify & provide services to special ed students
- Positive partnership between school & community
- Strong awareness and communication of safety procedures; safety flip chart visible and available in all rooms and offices.

Garfield

- Counselor provides direct support and instruction to ALL students in all grades
- Focused interventions on student developmental and emotional needs; i.e. groups for junior high, elementary lessons
- School library staff to be commended for selection of wide range of materials, technology, and services available to students.
- Strong awareness and communication of safety procedures; safety flip chart visible and available in all rooms and offices.
- Unique community outreach opportunities with Grandparent/Special Person Day; Veterans Day create meaningful opportunities for students and adults involved
- Procedures for Health services are in place & followed

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Palouse

- Increase access to nursing services for students

Garfield

- Increase access to nursing services for students

STANDARD #7 – FACILITIES AND FINANCE.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: The school plant (consisting of site, buildings, equipment, and services) is an important factor in the functioning of the educational program. The school plant serves as a vehicle for the implementation of the school mission. The school plant should provide for a variety of instructional activities and programs and for the health and safety of **ALL** persons. The school plant should incorporate aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere while providing for needed flexibility. In addition to an appropriate facility, sufficient fiscal resources must be available, accounted for and effectively used in order for any school to accomplish its mission and expectations for student learning.

COMMENDATIONS:

Palouse

- Staff acknowledges needs for facility improvements but supports administration management of fiscal funds
- Business manger has solid sense of fiscal history and trends within the district
- Staff appreciates upfront information provided by administration when dealing with financial issues
- District is currently maintaining a healthy fund balance

- Strong communication between the business manager and the assistants; common coding, regular person to person meetings results in clear and well managed financial systems
- Facilities are well cared for; old facilities require much maintenance and effort

Garfield

- Strong communication between the business manager and the assistants; common coding, regular person to person meetings results in clear and well managed financial systems
- A planned and adequately funded program of building and site management ensures appropriate maintenance and building care
- Facilities are well cared for; old facilities require much maintenance and effort.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Palouse

- Continue to support daycare facility providing valuable community service and enhancing enrollment and student learning

Garfield

- Pursue appropriate permanent repairs that do not pose health hazards and safety risks; railing in elementary hallway with duct tape



STANDARD #8 – SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: A quality school develops and maintains an externally validated process and plan for school improvement. Goals resulting from the evaluation process should include targeted levels of achievement and be measurable.

COMMENDATIONS:

- We commend the Palouse/Garfield Schools for its continued review and validation of the School Improvement Plan.
- We commend the Palouse/Garfield Schools and community for the use of the self evaluation as a result of the School Improvement Plan.
- We commend the Palouse/Garfield Schools for aligning their goals with the School Improvement Plan and the use of their site based counsel.
- We commend the Palouse/Garfield Schools for providing the opportunity for all stakeholders to be involved in the improvement process
- We commend the Palouse/Garfield Schools for movement towards a PLC model of staff collaboration with a focus on student learning

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- We recommend that the Palouse/Garfield Schools continue to review and validate the current School Improvement Plan.
- We recommend that the Palouse/Garfield Schools results of the School Improvement Plan be utilized and passed on to all stakeholders
- We recommend that the Administration creates structured collaborative opportunities for staff to improve student learning