

SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

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

FOR

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ACS WASC FOCUS ON LEARNING INTERNATIONAL EDITION

VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

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Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

School Mission

SSIS is a college preparatory school committed to the intellectual and personal development of each student in preparation for a purposeful life as a global citizen.

School-wide Learner Outcomes (called Core Values at SSIS)

SSIS Believes In and Promotes:

- Academic Excellence
 - A challenging academic program, based on American standards, that teaches the student how to think, to learn, to problem solve, and to work individually and in teams while acquiring a foundational knowledge base of the world.
- Sense of Self
 - A community atmosphere in which each student can gain a sense of who he or she is in the world; to develop self-confidence, strong character, convictions, leadership abilities, grace, courage, the desire to be a life-long learner, and the commitment to achieve excellence in all he or she does.
- Respect for All
 - A perspective that each individual is a person of worth.
- Balance in Life
 - An academic program that promotes an appreciation for all of life and seeks to balance the sciences with the humanities; academics with the arts; mental wholeness with physical, social, and spiritual wholeness; and future career with family relationships.
- Dedicated Service
 - A view that looks beyond oneself to the assets and needs of the surrounding community and the world and finds fulfillment in unlocking potential in the service of mankind. The model SSIS graduate will demonstrate a caring attitude, be environmentally aware, and persevere for the good of the community.

Background

Saigon South International School is a privately owned, not-for-profit independent school located in the community of Phu My Hung (PMH), south of central Ho Chi Minh City. The school is part of a planned community featuring housing, green spaces, and some industry, developed by the Central Trading & Development Company and founders of Saigon South International School. The community is also home to Korean, Japanese and Taiwanese schools, as well as Vietnamese public and private schools.

The founders/owners of SSIS sought to create a premier international school in the area with unmatched facilities under the Core Values listed above.

Beginning in 1998 with only thirty-seven students and six faculty members in rented facilities, SSIS has grown rapidly to over 1000 students and 112 faculty members on its present 6 hectare (14.8 acre) campus. There are three purpose-built buildings housing the elementary, middle and high school divisions of the school, fields for athletics and recreation, and specialized facilities for music, visual art, drama, design and technology.

Programs

SSIS offers an American curriculum to students in grades PreK - 12. Students in the final years of high school have options in both AP classes and the IB Diploma Program. All students learn the Vietnamese language and culture from Kindergarten through grade five. In grades 6 -12, Vietnamese passport holders receive instruction for a minimum of ninety minutes per week. Others with sufficiently strong levels of Vietnamese may opt into the program as well.

The school operates in a one-to-one laptop environment beginning in grade 4; all students are required to bring their own MacBook.

The school runs significant numbers of after school activities at all levels and maintains a “sports for all” approach which sees a sizable proportion of students participating.

The most common region for university enrollment of graduates is the US, with 67 - 78% of graduates matriculating in the US over the past five years. The next most common region is Asia, followed by Canada and the UK.

Enrollment

The most recent enrollment data is summarized in this chart:

Year	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Whole School	1005	938	882	857	855	809
Elementary	467	436	412	412	417	406
Middle	215	204	199	198	197	194
High School	323	298	271	247	241	209

While there has been a fairly steady increase in enrollment over the years, the distribution of nationalities within the student body have changed since the school instituted nationality caps to ensure a more even distribution in each grade level. The most common nationalities include American, Vietnamese, Korean and Taiwanese. As this neighborhood continues to develop and attract foreigners, the school foresees a steady but small increase in enrollment in the years to come.

Student Performance Data

SSIS administers the following standardized tests: WrAP, MAP, PSAT, SAT, SAT II, AP and IB DP.

WrAP data:

While SSIS provided results of the WrAP for the last several years, no analysis was provided, except to note that the level of the results varies from year to year depending on the quality of the prompts provided by the ERB.

MAP data:

MAP is administered annually at the beginning and end of the school year to students in grades 3-10 since being piloted in 2010. SSIS stopped testing Grade 10 in 2015, as PSAT testing was also being administered at the beginning of the school year. SSIS is consistently above the Norm for International Schools and well above the Norm for International Schools within Vietnam. Complete results are shown below.

	Year	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	G10
MATH	2016	211.9	229.2	237.8	245.2	250.5	259.0	262.7	NOT TESTED
	2015	216.9	225.6	238.2	241.9	249.7	257.7	258.0	262.6
	2014	211.5	227.4	239.7	240.8	250.4	251.4	253.8	263.9
	2013	213.0	225.2	237.6	242.5	243.6	248.0	258.0	257.8
	2012	209.2	228.5	240.6	237.8	244.7	255.0	256.7	258.0
	2011	211.2	226.3	237.5	241.2	246.4	252.8	255.1	258.1
	2010	NOT TESTED	222.7	NOT TESTED	239.4	NOT TESTED	252.7	NOT TESTED	NOT TESTED
READING	2016	203.3	212.1	217.3	225.4	227.5	233.1	234.9	NOT TESTED
	2015	204.8	210.8	217.9	222.8	228.8	234.1	233.2	235.4
	2014	203.3	211.2	218.2	223.6	229.2	228.9	231.8	236.4
	2013	204.3	210.3	218.0	223.6	223.4	227.9	233.9	229.6
	2012	202.8	213.6	217.9	217.8	223.0	228.0	226.3	229.9
	2011	202.9	210.6	214.4	220.5	224.5	226.2	226.6	235.1
	2010	NOT TESTED	207.4	NOT TESTED	220.7	NOT TESTED	227.4	NOT TESTED	NOT TESTED
LANGUAGE	2016	206.5	214.7	217.1	226.4	226.3	232.5	236.1	NOT TESTED

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USAGE	2015	207.6	212.0	218.4	224.2	228.0	232.2	231.8	234.1
	2014	204.8	212.7	219.8	225.0	228.1	229.3	231.8	234.4
	2013	207.8	213.4	219.5	223.6	225.0	226.7	232.3	230.9
	2012	204.7	216.6	220.0	220.5	224.9	230.0	226.5	230.1
	2011	205.7	214.9	218.1	223.0	227.4	227.8	228.9	234.2
	2010	NOT TESTED	212.9	NOT TESTED	223.9	NOT TESTED	228.0	NOT TESTED	NOT TESTED

SAT:

The following chart compares SSIS to average SAT scores (in parentheses) since the class of 2008. The data show that SSIS fares significantly better than the world average in math and generally somewhat better than the world average in reading and writing.

Year Results	Critical Reading	Mathematics	Writing
Class of 2016	589	687	620
Class of 2015	552 (495)	656 (511)	599 (484)
Class of 2014	542 (497)	642 (513)	581 (487)
Class of 2013	573 (496)	668 (514)	590 (488)
Class of 2012	543 (496)	647 (514)	569 (488)
Class of 2011	531 (497)	646 (514)	565 (489)
Class of 2010	487 (500)	640 (515)	530 (491)
Class of 2009	515 (499)	629 (514)	515 (492)
Class of 2008	557 (500)	629 (514)	539 (493)

AP:

The College Board allows students to sit for exams even without enrolling in an “AP” designated course, which accounts for the higher number of AP exams offered compared to the designated AP courses available at SSIS. While the overall results are strong, there is a great deal of variability from exam to exam, a large part due to the small sample size in some cases.

Year	AP Exams	Total	5	4	3	2	1	% at 3+

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	Offered	Students Exams						
2015-2016	12	104	34.6%	27.9%	23.1%	6.7%	7.7%	85.6%
2014-2015	13	99	32.3%	25.3%	20.2%	12.1%	10.1%	78%
2013-2014	9	68	30.9%	25.0%	27.9%	5.9%	10.3%	83.8%
2012-2013	10	73	30.1%	31.5%	19.2%	8.2%	11.0%	76%
2011-2012	11	76	28.9%	36.8%	19.7%	13.2%	1.3%	85%
2010-2011	-	53	18%	32%	26%	14%	10%	83%
2009-2010	-	68	18%	24%	21%	18%	20%	61%
2008-2009	-	65	17%	17%	26%	28%	12%	60%

IB:

In addition to the general statistics below, SSIS provides detailed charts on the results in each subject group and how local results compare to world averages. Broadly speaking, the results hover close to world averages, with little significant differences.

Grad Year	Grade 12	Full Diploma Candidates	Candidates	Subject Exams Taken	% of Grade 12 in Full DP	Successful Diploma Candidates	Average Diploma Points for Passing	Highest Diploma Points	Full Diploma Candidate Exam Average
2015-2016	60	27	32	337	45%	26	34	42	5.42
2014-2015	59	27	30	340	46%	26	34	41	5.44
2013-2014	48	14	34	235	29%	13	35	39	5.63
2012-2013	53	17	32	231	32%	17	36	42	5.77
2011-2012	46	14	24	187	30%	14	35	40	5.61

Stakeholders' Perceptions

With the appointment of Mark Sylte as Head of School beginning in July 2013, work was begun on a new strategic plan for the period leading up to WASC reaccreditation. In the Fall of 2014, students (Grades 5-12), parents, and faculty were surveyed on twelve potential focuses for future initiatives.

The areas of focus offered for consideration were: (a) improving student admission to top universities, (b) improving student skills in finding and analyzing information, (c) improving student reading skills, (d) improving student writing skills, (e) improving student public speaking skills, (f) improving student math skills, (g) improving student career awareness, (h) improving student understanding of their personal beliefs, (i) improving student balance of on-screen and off-screen learning and communication, (j) helping students set individual learning goals, (k) helping students set personal growth goals, (l) improving student engagement in community service activities

There was agreement among the constituent groups that each area was indeed important for the school. Differences were evident, though, when each group was asked to rank the areas in order of importance.

Of the 12 school issues presented, parents choose writing skills, finding and analyzing information, and personal growth goals as their top priority, depending on their nationality. Students prioritized admission at top universities and the faculty, writing skills. Reading skills was the most common second priority.

Prior to the 2013-2014 school year, SSIS conducted community surveys on a regular basis. During the 2013-2014 school year, no general survey was conducted, though the aforementioned Focus Survey was used to gauge community perceived priority areas for development. The administrative team, after examining a number of models, established a new survey instrument which has been used with the faculty and parents over the last two years, and, beginning in 2016, with the students in Grades 3-12.

The results of this new survey over the last two years show that parents are satisfied overall at 97% in 2015 - 2016 and 95% in 2014 - 2015. From 2015 to 2016 there was an increase in the positive response to whether SSIS addresses each of the Core Values successfully. Parents had some dissatisfaction with the quality and choice of afterschool activities, while having a positive impression of communication and culture of results. The school notes that the level of dissatisfaction with the food choices on campus is something they recognize and are working to address.

Students were only surveyed with new instrument in 2015 -- 2016. The results show that they are very satisfied with the teaching of the Core Values, culture of respect and afterschool activities. They were somewhat less satisfied with communication and more so with food.

Teachers rated overall satisfaction positively at 90%. On the teaching of the Core Values, there were mixed results, with a high rating for Academic Excellence at 92% at the high end and Dedicated Service at the low end (58%). Most other areas are rated highly by teachers, except for Culture of Respect and Food.

In the Fall 2016, in response to both faculty and student feedback on the 2015 Student Educational Surveys, SSIS moved to the use of a research-based survey of student satisfaction known as the [Tripod Survey](#). All high school and middle school teachers surveyed each section of students in their Fall schedule. Elementary teachers of students in Grades 3-5 surveyed a single section, either homeroom students, in the case of classroom teachers, or one period of students in the case of specialists such as PE or music. Data is currently being analyzed and shared with teachers and administrators.

The survey instrument focuses on the “7Cs” of teaching, inquiring of students as to the teacher’s demonstrated ability to care, confer, captivate, clarify, consolidate, challenge, and manage a classroom, in that:

1. Care: Your success and well being matter to me in a serious way.
2. Confer: I invite, welcome, and respect your ideas and feedback.
3. Captivate: I make lessons intellectually relevant and stimulating because they are important.
4. Clarify: I have multiple good explanations; when you are confused, I will help you understand.
5. Consolidate: I review and summarize lessons to help make learning coherent and memorable.
6. Challenge: I insist upon real understanding, not just memorization, and I will not let you give up, even when the work becomes difficult.
7. Class Mgmt: Our class is orderly, on task, and respectful, with learning as our first priority.

Results were received before winter break (Dec 2016) and distributed to the classroom teachers and divisional administrators. While teachers are still in the midst of writing reflections and holding individual meetings with division heads to discuss student feedback and strategize ways to improve, some preliminary numbers can be shared here.

All School Statistics		
Number of Classes Measured	240	Includes ES homeroom and MS/HS subject classes
Score Range on Tripod Composite Scores	200-398	
Tripods expectation of an “average classroom”	270-330	
SSIS Highest Composite Score Earned	390	
SSIS Classrooms above 330	43%	SSIS classes scoring above what Tripod considers an “average classroom” on the composite score
SSIS Classrooms above 270	96%	SSIS classes scoring at or above what Tripod considers an “average classroom” on the composite score
SSIS Classrooms below 270	4%	SSIS classes scoring below what Tripod considers an “average classroom” on the composite score
Lowest Composite Score Earned	248	

Chapter II: Progress Report

SSIS has undergone a complete change in administration in the past four years:

- 2012: Interim Head of School Ellen Stern was appointed for one year after Charles Barton's departure while the Board was able to look for a permanent Head of School.
- 2013: Mark Sylte began as Head of School
- 2013: Tina Fossgreen joined as Curriculum Director
- 2013: A dedicated Middle School principal position was added; Molly Burger was appointed
- 2013: Shelley Wowchuk Joined as Athletic Director
- 2014: An Interim High school Principal was appointed
- 2014: Dan Keller was appointed as Elementary Principal
- 2014: Barbara Reynolds was appointed as AP in the Elementary School
- 2015: Jacob Hendrickson appointed as High School Principal
- 2016: Timothy Chute appointed as AP in the High School
- 2016: Roxanne Ross appointed as temporary AP in the elementary school

In addition, the current Diploma Program Coordinator is in his first year, following the former DPC who was only at SSIS for one year.

In conversations, administrators note that this significant change has presented challenges. These challenges include establishing an understanding of and a respect for the history of policies, programs and initiatives of SSIS; introducing a stronger focus on academic rigor; and implementing contemporary instructional practices.

As a result of the 2009 - 2010 self-study, SSIS identified seven critical areas for follow - up. These included:

Critical Area 1: The administration consider ways to attract, retain and develop highly qualified teachers, administrators and staff who are committed to the school's mission and educational goals.

Critical Area 2: The faculty, administration, and parents develop ways to further enhance understanding among all of the constituents about the school's purpose, educational goals and programs.

Critical Area 3: The faculty and administration allocate instructional resources to ensure student learning and achievement of ESLRs (Core Values).

Critical Area 4: The administration continues to recruit and enroll qualified students in line with the language and diversity targets established to promote an international balance of students and an academic environment where students are challenged and successful.

Critical Area 5: The administration and faculty should ensure the development and alignment of curriculum, assessment and instruction through the development of curriculum units that promote high levels of student learning.

Critical Area 6: The faculty and administration should develop structures within the

school that create expanded opportunities for collegial work. These structures should facilitate the analysis of students' assessment results that informs instruction and supports changes in professional practice to promote higher levels of student achievement.

Critical Area 7: The administration and faculty should review student learning needs in relation to technology. This will likely involve an analysis of the human and financial resources necessary to successfully implement 21st century learning skills that focus on learning across all divisions. Handbooks were reviewed with students at the beginning of the year and at times when a reminder is necessary.

Progress on these Critical Areas since the mid-term visit in 2013:

Critical Area 1: Attracting and retaining high quality staff.

This area was deemed completed by the 2013 Mid-term WASC Team. It has been removed from the action plans.

Critical Area 2: The faculty, administration, and parents develop ways to further enhance understanding among all of the constituents about the school's purpose, educational goals and programs.

- **2013 Midterm WASC Team deemed Critical Area 2 incomplete. New recommendations included:**
 - SSIS should work to streamline communication with parents and ensure that parents have quick and easy access to digital information.
 - With the advent of a new administrative team (new HOS, MS principal and Curriculum Director in 2013, new ES and HS principals in 2014) clear and sustained communication and dialogue with stakeholders is critical.
- **Progress on new recommendations:**
 - Communication with Parents
 - Began regular postings to parents on school's website.
 - Varied the times of parent meetings to increase attendance; added additional parent meetings on a range of subjects.
 - Expanded the translation communications to include Chinese.
 - Altered the calendar so parents/students can subscribe to University visits.
 - Established new communication protocol for major events
 - Updated PowerSchool to include ES schedule.
 - Invited parents to attend SSIS Innovate, a celebration of "making" and technology
 - Initiated parenting book club for all divisions lead by the Principals.
 - Communication related to Core Values, Educational Programs, Strategic Goals
 - Continued professional development concentrated in three areas: 1) Alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment 2) Technology Integration, and 3) the Maker movement.

- Developed annual administrator performance surveys
- Restarted a Community Climate Survey for faculty and parents, and later, students.
- Developed standardized exit interviews for Faculty to be administered by HR department.
- Began development of the Curriculum Framework to better communicate the Core Value; this includes the establishment of a position statement on the written, taught and assessed curriculum.
- Launched a new Robotics and Coding ICT course for MS and HS.
- Developed and displayed posters for Core Values in ES, using “kid-friendly” language.
- Revised Week Without Walls (WWW) to better support Core Values; and changed format of WWW parent information sessions to increase attendance

This critical area is carried forward into the current action plan and is stated as the following Critical Learner Need:

Further develop the School culture that: broadly defines and promotes multiple paths to success; embraces self-discovery; supports social-emotional well-being; and values the love of learning. This will result in the Core Values being embedded into the heart of all of our educational programs and decision making.

Critical Area 3: Allocation of instructional resources

This area was deemed complete by the 2013 Mid-term WASC Team.

Critical Area 4: Recruitment of diverse students.

This area was deemed complete by the 2013 Mid-term WASC Team.

Critical Area 5: Development of the Curriculum.

- **Midterm WASC Team deemed Critical Area 5 incomplete. New recommendation included:**
 - Review curriculum maps and set appropriate goals by grade, team and department. Revise the curriculum review cycle.
 - Provide further focused collaborative time for curricular alignment and unit mapping.
- **Progress on new recommendations:**
 - Revised curriculum review cycle to match the needs of the current SSIS curriculum.
 - Aligned PD around assessment and instruction
 - Revised PE, Science, Health and math Curricula
 - Provided collaborative time for curricular alignment and unit mapping
 - Focused mapping in Atlas Rubicon around enduring understandings, essential questions and assessments.
 - Continued sharing of faculty work on the integration of technology,

improved assessment models, and integrated approaches to learning through an annual Teachers Teaching Teachers (TTT) day.

- Analysed and implemented MS writing rubrics for English/ Language Arts and Social Studies in support of curriculum work.
- Redesigned the Grade 6-8 math curriculum to improve ability to meet individual needs, including accelerated program
- Advanced Fine Arts Curriculum by creating Grade 1-12 Drama Curriculum.
- Articulated ELA and Writing courses in Grades 6-8
- Increased integration of departments in MS

Critical Area 5 is not carried into the New Action Plan developed during the 2016-17 self-study; a more flexible Curriculum Review Cycle has been implemented and common planning is the norm across all divisions.

Critical Area 6: Creation of structures for collaborative work.

- **2013 Midterm WASC Team deemed Critical Area 6 incomplete. New recommendations included:**
 - Increase focus upon analysis of students' assessment results to inform instruction.
 - Continue to develop a range of tools identified by the Data Committee, data workshops and other sources to analyze data and enhance learning and instruction.
 - Increase the use of SMART goals on a systematic basis.
 - Increase the use of common assessments that gauge the extent of student learning within the divisions.
- **Progress on new recommendations:**
 - Used MAP, WrAP, other external assessments and course assessments to determine intervention needs and learning plans for students
 - Increased emphasis on the analysis of data from Data Committee and other sources to enhance learning and instruction
 - Increased use of SMART goals in the form of annual professional plans
 - Increased use of common assessments facilitated by increase collaborative planning time
 - Linked assessment analysis from standardized tests results to resource allocation.
 - Focused on analysis of students' assessment results to inform instruction
 - Full faculty training on formative/summative assessments was conducted by the divisional Principals and curriculum director.

This critical area is carried forward into the current action plan and is stated as the following Critical Learner Need:

Develop and utilize the K-12 system to disaggregate and analyze external and internal student achievement data and stakeholder perception data. This will result in refined academic programs and targets, and the reduction of any student achievement gaps identified from the analysis of all sub-populations as well as longitudinal data trends.

Critical Area 7: Review student learning needs in relation to technology.

- **2013 Midterm WASC Team deemed Critical Area 7 incomplete. New recommendations included:**
 - Roll out comprehensive ICT five-year action plan
 - Communicate expectations for when and how ICT integration will be mapped within Rubicon Atlas.
 - Analyze students' skills and usage through a survey related to 1:1 laptops and utilize the results to inform and direct future work.
- **Progress on new recommendations:**
 - Created a comprehensive ICT plan to move SSIS to a single, unified platform (Apple). This was approved by the Board.
 - Integrated ICT into units of study
 - Analyzed students' skills and usage and implemented changes in the structures of the 1:1 environment based on findings.

Portions of **Critical Area 7** carried to the New Action Plan by being incorporated into CLN #2.

Chapter III: Self-Study Process

School-wide Learner Outcomes (called Core Values at SSIS)

SSIS Believes In and Promotes:

- **Academic Excellence**
 - A challenging academic program, based on American standards, that teaches the student how to think, to learn, to problem solve, and to work individually and in teams while acquiring a foundational knowledge base of the world.
- **Sense of Self**
 - A community atmosphere in which each student can gain a sense of who he or she is in the world; to develop self-confidence, strong character, convictions, leadership abilities, grace, courage, the desire to be a life-long learner, and the commitment to achieve excellence in all he or she does.
- **Respect for All**
 - A perspective that each individual is a person of worth.
- **Balance in Life**
 - An academic program that promotes an appreciation for all of life and seeks to balance the sciences with the humanities; academics with the arts; mental wholeness with physical, social, and spiritual wholeness; and future career with family relationships.
- **Dedicated Service**
 - A view that looks beyond oneself to the assets and needs of the surrounding community and the world and finds fulfillment in unlocking potential in the service of mankind. The model SSIS graduate will demonstrate a caring attitude, be environmentally aware, and persevere for the good of the community.

Comments on the outcomes of the self-study process for SSIS

1. The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement

SSIS used the standard WASC approach to the self-study process whereby all teachers were assigned to both a Focus Group and a Home Group. In addition, community and student surveys allowed for student and parent voices. Parent and students were invited to participate in a 'Data in a Day' event in which they engaged in classroom and general school observations to look for ways in which the Core Values were being taught and for ways in which they are embedded in all aspects of daily life at school.

2. The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through schoolwide learner outcomes and academic standards

The school wide learner outcomes are known at the Core Values at SSIS. These were established by the Founders of the school in 2002. Since that time, they have not been revised, in accordance with expectations of the governing body. However, SSIS has undertaken a significant process to unpack these Values for their classroom implications and embed their teaching throughout the curriculum. Since the previous self-study, academic standards in several disciplines have been reviewed and renewed; the process of implementation of these standards has begun. This has been accompanied by a revision of the Curriculum Review Cycle.

3. The analysis of data about students and student achievement

The school has gathered and presented a significant amount of student achievement data from a variety of standardized tests. Much of the data presented is accompanied by scant discussion or analysis in the report, and data on reading comprehension in the elementary school from Fountas and Pinell tools is missing from the report, although it is included as linked evidence. The need for further systems to analyze student data has been identified as a Critical Learner Need.

4. The assessment of the entire school program and its impact on student learning in relation to the schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, and ACS WASC criteria

SSIS reviewed all aspects of the school program through the self-study process. The degree to which various elements of the program were reviewed through the lens of the SLOs varies from category to category. While this was evident throughout, much less attention was given to discussion on academic standards. The WASC criteria served as a starting point for the review process, but the level of analysis and evaluation was low in favor of straightforward description.

5. The alignment of a long-range action plan to the school's areas of need; the capacity to implement and monitor the accomplishment of the plan.

The current version of the schoolwide action plan is built precisely on the Critical Learner Needs identified in the school report. The VC agrees that these are appropriate learner goals for the school. However, as written in the current format, the plan has few concrete actions that will accomplish the goals. The VC has recommended that the school give significant attention to fleshing out the details of the plan in the next draft.

SSIS has been improving all systems and programs at the schools at a very fast pace for the past four years, since having been joined by a new Head of School and a few top administrators, followed by all other administrators in the three years since then. This new cohort of leadership has dedicated all efforts to the school improvement process, particularly in regard to strengthening the academic programs of the school, updating technology and instructional practices, adding contemporary programs (such as a maker space implementation) and updating curricular design and approach through the development of a curriculum framework. While all of these efforts are to be commended, the result is that many teachers find it difficult to keep up with the amount and the pace of change. Adding to this is a high level of turnover among the faculty in the last four years, which means that a relatively few number of people have a full understanding of the entire process and its purpose.

That being said, there is evidence to suggest that the pace has slowed more recently, and several administrators have openly reflected that it is time to slow down and dig more deeply into a few areas; this is also a recommendation from this VC. If the administration can follow through with strategically prioritizing initiatives, and there is good reason to believe they will, the school will be well placed to implement the current and future plans.

Chapter IV Part A: Quality of the School's Program

Category A. ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING

A1. School Purpose

School Mission

SSIS is a college preparatory school committed to the intellectual and personal development of each student in preparation for a purposeful life as a global citizen.

School-wide Learner Outcomes (called Core Values at SSIS)

SSIS Believes In and Promotes:

- Academic Excellence
- Sense of Self
- Respect for All
- Balance in Life
- Dedicated Service

These are explained in great detail starting on page 3 above.

These foundation statements were written by the Founders of the school in 2002. Since that time, they have not changed, in accordance with the Board's requirements. As such, it is clear that the Mission and the Core Values match the beliefs and philosophy of the governing body. Parent, teacher and student surveys suggest that they support these outcomes as well. These underlying purposes are communicated widely in the school and on its website. Conversations between the VC and various constituents suggest that there is a high degree of consistency between their beliefs and those espoused in the Core Values, and between these statements and the school's programs.

While current student data and identified global competencies have not informed a review of the mission or Core Values, SSIS has undertaken a process of unpacking these statements and ensuring that their Key Concepts are embedded throughout the written, taught and assessed curriculum. This process has been led by the Curriculum Framework developers with input and feedback from the curriculum advisory team.

A2. Governance Criterion

SSIS is owned and governed by the Phu My Hung (PMH) Corporation which is a subsidiary of the Central Trading & Development Company (CT&D) in Taiwan. The three member School Board consists of owners and senior management of CT&D. The Board is not elected. The Head of School and Senior Administrative Team are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school. Quarterly reports are made by the Head of School and Associate Head of School to the Board and board members are involved with strategic planning.

The Board approves the annual budget and has control over major capital investments and construction planning. In accordance with the school's license, the board is also responsible for providing general oversight to ensure adherence to the relevant

Vietnamese laws. The Board's policies are directly related to the School's Mission and Core Values. The School Board was involved in the development of the current Strategic Plan in October 2014. They receive quarterly reports which include external assessment data regarding student learner outcomes.

The School Board is typically not involved in daily operations or administrative issues at the school, instead delegating the day to day decisions to the Head of School. This information is explained to professional staff at the start of every school year and is defined in the handbook compendium. The school report states that the school community knows the School Board and their role in the school. Conversations with various groups of stakeholders confirm that there is an appropriate delegation of day to day operations to the head of school. There is no mechanism for the evaluation of the governing body.

The VC confirms that the Board Chair has a clear understanding of appropriate, contemporary governance practices.

A3. School Leadership

SSIS has policies that clearly define responsibilities for administration, faculty and staff. Policies are communicated to appropriate employees in schoolwide publications. There are orientation meetings which explain the operational practices and decision making processes of the school. The Academic Leadership team meets on a bi-weekly basis to address academic issues and other issues that start at the divisional level while the Senior Leadership Team meets weekly.

Each division has a leadership team that meets regularly to guide educational decisions to improve student learning. In addition, there is a vertical team for the Learning Support Team, and Critical Friends Groups structures for examining student work. In discussions with teachers, the visiting committee confirms that teachers perceive that these structures are effective and that they are well supported by the school's leadership.

The somewhat recent change in the administration presented the school community with some significant challenges for the first year or two. However, teachers generally now note that the direction and initiatives for coming years are clear and well-supported; the school should be commended for this trend. Nonetheless, continued attention to documenting and communicating structures would clarify roles and responsibilities to all, especially incoming teachers.

A4. Staff Criterion

The employment practices of the school conform to Vietnamese law and are in line with common practices in international schools. Through conversations with administrators and teachers, the visiting team confirms that the hiring practices are transparent, appropriate and effective.

The school report states that there are clear roles and responsibilities for all positions and that teachers are placed in positions that are appropriate to their qualifications. The school is to be commended for adding positions over the years to meet the growing and expanding needs of the school. Examples include the additional time allocation for Vietnamese language instruction, the distribution of roles associated with the IB Diploma

Program, an increase in psychological services at the elementary level, a head of College Guidance, among others.

SSIS has a variety of structures in place to support teaching and learning. These include leadership teams at each school level, the Curriculum Framework, and the administrative leadership teams. Conversations with teachers and with the Focus Group A members indicate that the roles of these structures have become more clear over time, and that, when uncertainty arises, leaders support teachers in finding the answers they seek.

Professional development at SSIS has been abundant historically. Recently, there has been a deliberate move to limit the variety of PD opportunities to ensure that they are more closely aligned with the major initiatives agreed upon by the school. PD is often tied to programmatic initiatives to support the implement new structures in classrooms. Teachers report a high level of support for and satisfaction with their ongoing professional development in both formal and informal ways. SSIS uses the Danielson Framework for the evaluation of teaching. In the recent past, there were two pathways for the teacher evaluation process, one of which did not include any administrator in the process. To improve accountability, the current administration changed this process so that all teachers are evaluated by their supervisors. In time, this led to the elimination of the peer based pathway. Currently, while the framework is implemented differently by different principals, the outcomes and purpose are the same throughout the school.

A5. School Environment Criterion

The school environment is characterized by high levels of respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism and high expectations for each student. Conversations with parents, students and teachers confirm that all members of the community are treated with respect. Students in particular note that they are well supported by classroom teachers, by their advisory teachers, by the counselors, by the administrators and by each other. SSIS is to be commended for its continued efforts to build a positive relationship with the parent body; parents are highly appreciative of the administration's efforts to communicate the initiatives of the school and feel that they have appropriate avenues for voicing concerns.

Student learning is visible throughout the school, in the form of artwork, drafts of designs in makerspaces, student work on classroom walls, and through the palpable energy of collaborative work in progress across grade levels.

In conversations with teachers and in the Focus Group A meeting, the VC heard consistently that teachers feel supported to innovate in their teaching practices and that administrators are open to considering change that better supports student learning.

A6. Reporting Student Progress

SSIS collects data on a range of external assessments in addition to tracking progress toward meeting internal goals. In the case of internal outcomes, student progress is reported to parents continuously through PowerSchool, and more formally at the end of each term. At the elementary level, report cards include evaluations of students' dispositions as well as their progress on academic standards. At the middle and high

school levels, report cards focus on academic grades which are supported by narrative statements.

External results for various standardized assessments are published yearly in the annual report. The WASC school report presents significantly more data than that found in the annual report. Much of this data is presented with little analysis or commentary on how this is used to alter programs or services. SSIS agrees with this observation, as evidenced its Critical Learner Need #2, which outlines the need for a systematic process for data collection and analysis.

A7. School Improvement Process Criterion

The current draft of the school wide action plan is organized entirely around the critical learner needs which arose from the self study process. The degree to which these goals are evidenced in systems such as professional goals, professional development, teacher evaluations and strategic planning will need to be addressed in the next revision of the plan. The leadership notes that the next cycle of strategic planning process will begin with the three goals of the schoolwide action plan and will layer in other, more external, factors such as marketing, facilities development, programmatic development and recruitment of teachers. There is a strong, conscious effort to ensure that all elements of planning for school improvement, including the schoolwide action plan, the IB DP action plan, and the strategic plan, are coordinated within a single document.

To ensure that the school improvement process, in the form of the schoolwide action plan, has maximum, positive impact on student learning, it is important that the leadership team identifies specific, concrete actions to reach the goals implied in the critical learner needs. Furthermore, there is great opportunity to expand leadership capacity at the school by involving a broad cross section of the school in the implementation of the plan and a purposeful approach to achieving this participation will carry the school forward significantly.

Areas of Strength for Category A

- SSIS has a clearly articulated Mission statement and set of Core Values which serve as a strong statement of identity and which guide the work of the school, and are well communicated throughout the school, in classrooms, in hallways and on the school's website.
- A competent governing Board which supports the Administrative Team's initiatives and fosters an environment in which policies and procedures are developed to support achievement of the Core Values.
- A professional, collaborative and passionate teaching faculty.
- School leadership is responsive, open and dedicated to student success.
- A positive school environment that celebrates student success and supports high level of achievement for all students
- A strong relationship between the parents and the school, grounded in open communication and mutual respect.

Key Issues for Category A

- Strengthen systems and supports to encourage innovative teaching practices

across all levels of the school.

- Continue to develop a system to assess and report on students' progress toward achievement of Core Values.
- Further refine the role of teacher leadership and the expected outcomes of collaborative planning.

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

- Conversations with teachers, students
- Meeting with parents
- Meetings with student representatives
- Daily conversations with leadership members
- Mission statement
- Core Values posters seen around the school
- Core Values referenced in discussions and conversations
- Governance section of website 'SSIS Link' (includes faculty handbook).
- Survey data on school, HoS and administrators.
- Board reports and associated information

Category B. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

B1. What Students Learn

Current Educational Research and Thinking

The SSIS curriculum follows an American-style education that focuses on student-centered approaches, with problem solving and critical thinking skills embedded throughout. SSIS delivers a curriculum that supports the achievement of the academic standards and Core Values for all students. All courses are aligned with the content standards of the respective subject areas and the Core Values are integrated across the school's curricular and co-curricular programs. All faculty members are expected to update curriculum maps on a regular basis.

SSIS teachers design their courses collaboratively using the research-based Understanding By Design philosophy which is grounded in standards. "Year at a Glance" documents are created to show course scope. At the end of each unit of study, teachers are expected to document their reflection on the effectiveness of instruction and assessments. All written, taught and assessed curriculum are housed in Rubicon Atlas with the intention that they are "living" documents.

Teachers use current educational research related to curricular areas to ensure a rigorous curriculum and best practices. The VC observed several examples including the implementation of Project Based Learning (PBL) into new SuperUnits which are cross-curricular in nature in the elementary division; use of sentence stems across the curriculum in the middle school; and a shift from a focus on competitive team sports to activities for life and incorporation of technology in high school physical education.

Academic Standards for Each Area

SSIS has developed a five-year curriculum review cycle that ensures the consistent review of standards. The cycle includes research, review, and adaptation of the standards and instruction to meet the needs of students. The SSIS subject curriculums have been recently reviewed so that they are based on the most recent standards from North America. At the high school level, all students in grades 11 and 12 can take courses in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma program or in Advanced Placement, or a combination of the two. Courses in both programs are based on rigorous standards. The HS recognizes the need to examine this to see if these IBDP and AP courses are appropriate for all students to take or if new school based courses need to be added. The VC agrees with this need.

Vietnamese law requires that all Vietnamese students attending international schools receive at least 90 minutes per week in Vietnamese language and culture. All students in the elementary school at SSIS, regardless of origin of passport, receive four lessons per week in Vietnamese language and culture in six differentiated levels. The units of study include language and culture, integrated into the regular curriculum as appropriate. These units have been developed by the elementary school Vietnamese teachers, without the benefit of readily available materials. The VC wishes to commend the school's dedication to the development of this program, as well as the committed professionals responsible for the work. SSIS delivers portions of the Vietnamese national curriculum to Vietnamese students in the MS/HS in Wednesday afternoon classes for ninety minutes.

The units of study include language, history and culture. As in the elementary school, these classes at the Middle and High Schools are leveled by students' language proficiency; three levels are available at each grade level.

Embedded Global Perspectives

The school leadership and faculty are working to ensure that global perspectives and issues are integrated within the curricular areas in all divisions primarily through the Core Values. Many units of study across the school have this integration.

Four integrated units of study, called SuperUnits, are currently under development or are being implemented in the elementary school with explicit teaching of global concepts as appropriate to the grade level and content.

At the middle and high school levels, the curriculum is humanistic and globally focused. There is a focus on reflection, global problems, and ethical analysis and the curriculum is aligned with the Core Values of Respect for All, Dedicated Service and Sense of Self. There are a number of high school clubs that focus on global issues including Model United Nations and Global Issues Network.

Helping support teachers and students in their global research are three libraries which provide resources that address diverse perspectives, including books in a multitude of languages.

Congruence

Because Understanding By Design planning is an expectation at SSIS, all units in all divisions are developed using this model. Examples of unit planners are provided across all divisions to help ensure even greater consistency.

Educational decision making for the school is guided by the "Curriculum Framework" which is founded on the Core Values. The SSIS Mission and Core Values are at the heart of the framework. This comprehensive document formalizes the learning progression from Early Childhood to Grade ten, leading to Advanced Placement (AP) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) program in grades eleven and twelve. It further articulates common language and learning experiences into a unified school approach to teaching and learning.

The Core Values are visually displayed in classrooms in all divisions throughout the school and are at the heart of the SSIS Curriculum Framework that guides decision making. Units of study continue to be developed using identified key concepts within each Core Value which are embedded into classroom instruction where appropriate. Where the Core Values are being explicitly taught, students are able to demonstrate understanding through personal reflections and connections made in the Advisory program. In VC discussions with students from the middle and high schools, the Core Values were referred to as important values which students believed are reflected in their behaviors. The VC commends the school for the fact that the Core Values being infused into classrooms came from all divisions from the elementary SuperUnit presentations to the middle school "Dragon's Apprentice" process to the high school PE program focused on life skills.

Student Work — Engagement in Learning

The VC recognizes through conversations with students in both formal and informal settings that students at SSIS value learning. The engagement of students is reflected in the attitude and work ethos from Early Childhood through Grade 12. When visiting classrooms in the different divisions of the school, student behavior reflects genuine engagement in the learning. Teachers at SSIS are dedicated to supporting students in their passion and teachers provide opportunities for students to explore, deepen and share their learning. Examples include, but are not limited to, hands-on experimentation, group discovery, research and collaboration in a Physics classroom highlighted by differentiation that allowed students a degree of choice. Movement and academic games were seen in several classes along with socratic seminars and meaningful use of technology. Examples were also given by Focus Group B of inquiry and project-based, experiential learning.

Accessibility of All Students to Curriculum

Instructional practices and other activities facilitate access and success for special needs students. Regular planning meetings between English as an Additional Language (EAL)/Learning Support (LS) and classroom teachers support instruction in the classroom. EAL/LS teachers are an integral part of the integrated unit planning in the elementary school. MS and HS EAL/LS teachers co-plan and teach as appropriate for their caseload.

Students, parents, teachers, counselors and administrators participate in Student Support Team (SST) meetings, Learning Plan meetings and parent/teacher conferences to ensure that the needs of all students are being met. Counselors and psychologists are integral parts of this process. Student progress is closely monitored to determine what interventions, scaffolds and supports are necessary for students to access the grade level curriculum. SSIS provided EAL in the mainstream focused professional development for all faculty during the 2014-15 school year delivered by the EAL department.

Acceptable Student Achievement

SSIS has high standards for student achievement in all areas of the academic curriculum, school wide Core Values and in extra-curricular programs. Students' high achievement on school-wide learning goals & externally assessed criteria demonstrates that instruction is challenging & effective.

Over the past eight years students at SSIS have been consistently above other international school and/or the world averages on both MAP assessments, utilized in grades three to nine, and WrAP, utilized in grades three to eleven. In addition as seen in Chapter 1, SAT scores are consistently above the US national Mean averages. Since 2008-2009 the Advanced Placement (AP) program at SSIS has grown in the number of course offerings and in student participation. The number of student exams has risen from 65 that year to 104 in 2015-16. SSIS students have performed well in these AP courses with nearly 86% of AP candidates scoring a 3 or higher and 35% scoring a 5 on the 2016 administration. Despite the fact that SSIS does not restrict students from taking IB exams, IB Full Diploma results have also generally been above world averages with additional students enrolling each year.

An area noted by the school for improvement would be the use of achievement data to inform instruction and make programmatic decisions. The VC agrees with this conclusion.

Integration among Disciplines

While there is evidence of transdisciplinary work across the school, the strongest work in discipline integration is at the elementary level. Early Childhood to Grade 5 are in the process of developing and implementing integrated units of study with a unit developed under themes for each grade level: Understanding Ourselves: Achieving my Goals in Life; Understanding Others: Serving the Needs of Humanity; Understanding the Environment: Sharing the Resources of our Planet; and Understanding our World: Managing the Complexity of Systems.

The middle school finds interdisciplinary connections when appropriate. Some examples include the Dragon's Apprentice unit with integrated English and Math in Grades 6-8; Biology: Human Body Systems integrated Science, Health and PE in Grade 7 and Human Rights Awareness Campaign integrated Science and Social Studies in Grade 8.

There is some interdisciplinary integration across subjects in the high school where appropriate. By intention the IBDP and AP courses promote interdisciplinary studies. However, SSIS reported and the VC confirms that there is more work that can be done to find connections across disciplines at both the middle and high school.

Curricular Review, Revision, and Evaluation

SSIS has a curriculum review and evaluation process that impacts each program to ensure the school is providing a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum. The Curriculum Review Cycle is based on a 5 year rotation (Research/Review of Standards, Development/Pilot/Order materials, "Full" implementation, Performance Indicators/Assessment and Planning for Review). This cycle also has led to the adopting of new curriculum standards in several departments. To support curriculum implementation, resources, often including a core text, are identified. The curriculum review process also helps align needs with graduation requirements, credits and grading policies. The school anticipates that the development of curriculum will provide a challenging, coherent, and relevant experience for all students across all divisions.

The SSIS Curriculum Framework is in its third year of development. An advisory team of 6 teachers (2 from each division) provides extensive feedback and revision to the developers. Phase I identified the key concepts within the Core Values. Phase II identified the educational positions and their implications for the written, taught and assessed curriculum. Phase III is currently being developed which includes a school wide and divisional impact analysis of the Educational Positions, development of an action plan for implementation and development of key components of Curriculum Framework.

Collaborative Work

Collaborative time is built into the daily schedule for all ES teachers; however, the way in which this time is used depends on individual teams. Some teams use the time to plan and review units of work, to write common assessments and rubrics and to share differentiation strategies. Other teams use it for the managerial aspects for the grade level and for disseminating information from the ES Leadership meeting. MS

collaborative time is used for grade level teams and departments to meet and discuss issues specific to students in the MS. This time is also used for some administrative tasks. The HS provides departmental common planning time. The Self-study report noted and the VC agrees that continued clarity was important for the use of collaborative time across the school.

Teachers use collaborative strategies to examine student work to inform instruction. Critical Friends Group protocols from NSRF (National School Reform Foundation) are frequently used. Protocol examples used by both faculty and students to run meetings, moderate student work and set group norms included “Probing Questions Stems” and “Running Charts”. These protocols are used across the divisions.

There is also an annual collaborative review of student work/achievement data within subject areas. External data (MAP, AP and IB data) and internal data (F&Ps, BOY writing, math placement, etc.) are used in this annual review.

The school indicated that vertical alignment teams will be reintroduced beginning in 2017-18 after being removed in the previous school year. This was in response to the recognized need for vertical collaboration across divisions.

Policies — Rigorous, Relevant, Coherent Curriculum

Each division has a student-parent handbook with school wide philosophy, school procedures and policies. These policies support the rigor, relevance, and coherence of the curriculum and of the students' learning experiences. The high school has written expectations regarding graduation, course completion, credits, and grades that guide each student's progression through the school's program of studies.

Student and faculty handbooks and course syllabi are available with course outlines, grading, and assessment practices, homework expectations, and other curricular and learning-related expectations.

While it was not consistent, classrooms in all divisions throughout the school had unit expectations, enduring understandings or rubrics on display to inform students about unit outcomes or expectations. More work on common formative and summative assessments will continue into the 2017-18 school year so that clearer expectations and guidelines about curriculum, instruction, and assessment are provided to students. Conversations with the leadership team confirm the need for a well-defined and comprehensive assessment philosophy for the school. The parent community holds a strong belief that the school has done an excellent job promoting high academic excellence while developing each child's holistic experience.

Articulation and Follow-up Studies

A director of university guidance was hired for July 2016 to focus efforts on building a student-centered college and university program focused on strengthening relationships with universities, participation on regional and international boards and committees, and enhancing parent education regarding trends, practices and facts regarding admissions worldwide. The hope is to raise awareness about the plethora of educational opportunities for students and families while raising the SSIS international profile. SSIS would like to begin to investigate ways to track and solicit feedback from alumni regarding their preparedness for life beyond SSIS.

B2. How Students Learn

Research-based Knowledge

The administrators and teachers use a variety of strategies to remain current in research-based professional knowledge for instructional content taught and the methodologies used to instruct and assess, from Project Based Learning and Visible Thinking to Inquiry and Design Thinking.

SSIS has developed a culture of continual professional development. This includes the hosting of several conferences. Recent examples include the 2016 Learning 2.0 Conference, the ELLSA 2017 Conference and the 2017 Vietnam Tech Conference.

SSIS faculty participate in ongoing research-based learning and transfer the knowledge gained into classroom practice. It was noted that sustaining the initiatives needs to be a well thought out and deliberate process, as the transient nature of the faculty means that each school year there are a number of new faculty who have not been involved in the initial training. Developing a process for orienting new faculty to these initiatives will improve the sustainability of the practices across the school.

Planning Processes

The curriculum director has oversight of the curriculum process which includes the Curriculum Framework. SSIS faculty have dedicated much time to updating curriculum maps supporting the belief that they are living documents. The completed curriculum maps - housed in Atlas Rubicon - have the potential to allow for the instructional program to remain of a high quality despite the turnover of staff. To ensure that all maps reflect the planned curriculum the VC suggests that dedicated and focused time continues for teachers to work collaboratively to revise and update maps. Further, even though curriculum maps have been worked on across the school in most subject areas, greater attention needs to be given to assessments as they are not always aligned to the standards. Collaboratively reviewing and updating assessments would improve the quality of the maps and provide the foundation for more consistent instruction across teaching teams of the same subject. Collaboratively recording dated reflections after teaching each unit would provide an accurate picture of the taught curriculum.

Professional Collaboration

Opportunities exist for teacher collaboration at SSIS. These opportunities occur during staff development days collaborative team planning time, release time and curriculum teams during multiple weekly meetings. Collaborative learning is highlighted during the Teachers Teaching Teachers day(s) where teachers get to share their expertise and faculty learn from each other. Teachers, and teacher teams, recognize that planning together and looking at student work together will provide opportunities for embedding professional learning into the school day as well as providing more consistency in practice within teams. The use of an assessment process to collect, disaggregate and analyze student data would provide for a more differentiated approach and greater student learning.

Collaboration between administrators and teachers on Assessment for Learning to improve assessment practices across the school began during the 2015-16 school year and is continuing for the 2016-17 school year. Divisional Leadership Teams

(administrators and teachers) also use various collaborative strategies to examine curricular design and student work to improve learning and teaching at leadership team meetings (weekly in ES, every other week in MS and HS). The Academic Leadership Team uses collaborative strategies to examine curricular design and student work to improve learning and teaching.

Grade-level and departmental teams of classroom teachers collaborate with instructional coaches, EAL teachers, learning support teachers, and other specialists during regular team/department meetings for unit planning, identifying student needs, reviewing student assessment data, developing common assessments, and establishing protocols for sharing, reflecting and refining.

Professional Development

SSIS invests in its teachers through professional development, both on-site and overseas conferences and workshops. Teachers remain current in instructional content and research-based instructional methodologies. According to the school report, professional development for teachers, teacher assistants and administrators can be linked to two Core Values of the school: Academic Excellence - how to think, to learn, to problem solve, and to work individually and in teams - and Sense of Self - the desire to be lifelong learners.

On-site professional development is provided each year for continued learning opportunities at the school (School-based PD on Assessment for Learning and Teachers Teaching Teachers (TTT) days for example). The professional development allowance has risen in the past few years and appears to be adequate. This allowance is given to each teacher for regional conferences (IBDP Workshops, AP Workshops, Learning support SENIA conference, EAL, ELLSA conference, ELLSA Vietnam meet-ups, HCMC EAL Teachers, Buck Institute PBL workshop). These funds can also be used for workshops to pursue teachers' personalized PD based on need. In addition, the school encourages and supports teachers to present at regional conferences.

SSIS employs five full-time on-site instructional coaches who work throughout every school day providing real-time, job-embedded professional development. SSIS staff regularly present at external and internal PD opportunities. The Curriculum and Instruction Office maintains records of all teacher professional development expenditures. In addition to outside SSIS, PD also occurs after school on Wednesdays. Teacher professional development books are purchased by the school. Current curriculum & teaching materials are available for SSIS teachers via Moodle and Atlas.

The school-based professional development led by administrators is often focused on school wide initiatives that enhance the curriculum and improve learning and teaching. Learning 2.0 Conference and Learning in the Making were held on campus during the first semester of the 2016-17 school year.

Finally, teachers are expected to share with their colleagues what they gained from the workshops when they return and also complete a PD reflection for all outside PD.

Challenging and Varied Instructional Strategies

Teachers incorporate a range of instructional strategies in the classroom to support student learning. Teachers in classrooms throughout the school are providing

challenging learning opportunities using strategies involving critical and creative thinking, collaboration and communication. The transdisciplinary nature of the SuperUnits in the elementary school, “Dragon’s Apprentice” in the middle school and several highly interactive strategies from Socratic Seminars to designing and producing at the high school were observed by the visiting team.

SSIS’s Core Value of Balance in Life promotes an academic program that instills an appreciation for all life and seeks to balance the sciences with the humanities; academics with the arts; mental wholeness with physical, social, and spiritual wholeness; and future career with family relationships. All Grade 11 and 12 students must take some AP or IB courses and 50% of the 2016-17 Grade 11 class are enrolled in the full IB Diploma Program. Assessments focus on critical thinking, problem solving and application skills.

Technological Integration

At SSIS, technology is purposely integrated into all subject areas within the school so that all students develop a wide range of technological skills. The school has a 1:1 Ipad program in grade 3 and a 1:1 laptop program in grades 4-12. These programs align with the SSIS’s Core Values of: Academic Excellence, as students are taught how to use technology properly; Respect, as students are taught to respect the intellectual property of others; and Balance in Life, so that students remember to be physically present and have personal connections with other individuals rather than always relying on technology for communication.

SSIS has three full-time instructional coaches for technology who offer mentoring and skill development for teachers who are integrating technology in their classes and for students who need individual technology support. It was noted by the visiting team that technology PD needs to remain focused and intentional to support teachers in more meaningful integration.

The VC commends the school for being recognized as an Apple Distinguished School.

Student Understanding of Learning Expectations

SSIS students sometimes participate in activities to examine and unpack rubrics, mark schemes and exemplars to help them understand what is expected and how to meet standards. Student perception data from the Tripod surveys indicated that 60% of SSIS students surveyed said that they received grading rubrics prior to or with the assignment. 60% of SSIS students surveyed said that they are given the opportunities to compare their work to grading rubrics or example work before turning in the assignment. While the school acknowledges that students learn best when clear standards and expected performance levels are communicated to them before assignment and assessments, evidence gathered during interviews with students as well as tripod surveys does not support that this is done in all areas of study at the school.

Student Perceptions

The SSIS self-study team indicated that student input and feedback is highly valued and sought after by the administrators and teachers. This is related to the Core Value of Sense of Self which calls for students to gain a sense of who he or she is in the world; to develop self-confidence, strong character, convictions, leadership abilities, grace, courage, the

desire to be a life-long learner, and the commitment to achieve excellence in all he or she does.

The VC met with two separate groups of students. The perceptions were quite consistent between the two groups. Students felt:

- pride in their school and especially its level of academic expectations;
- that there was diversity and acceptance at every level;
- the adults were friendly and accessible;
- there were many opportunities in the co-curricular program;
- the Core Values were more than “posters on the wall”, that they were embedded in the school.

Student Needs

SSIS faculty across the divisions recognize the importance of differentiation which meets the needs of individual learners. The Visiting Committee observed examples of differentiated approaches in instruction and assessment including small group work centered on student choice and a variety of methods for students to demonstrate their learning. Teachers are available beyond school hours to allow for individual student conferences and remedial sessions based on need.

English as an Additional Language students are identified either by data from entrance assessments, EAL assessments, or meetings between EAL teachers and classroom teachers. Once identified, EAL students receive support via EAL specialists who work with individual students.

Learning Support students EAL students are identified either by entrance assessments, LS/EAL assessments, or meetings between LS/EAL teachers and classroom teachers. Once identified, LS and EAL students receive support via appropriate specialists who work with individual students, small groups, large groups and classroom teachers.

Teachers use instructional accommodations consistent with student learning plans from LS (e.g. extra time, “chunking” assignments). In the high school, developmental writing courses are offered to support students who need additional support for English language learners.

Student Use of Resources

SSIS student learning is not confined to textbooks or chalk-and-talk learning. The Core Values of the School, Academic Excellence, Sense of Self, Respect for All, Balance in Life and Dedicated Service require SSIS teachers to use a variety of collaborative activities, technology, library/media resources, community resources and information from various cultures and languages. The School has three libraries and two full-time Librarians who ensure that students have access to online databases across levels to assist with research and literacy. SSIS students gain a good understanding of global competencies through using a wide-range of multimedia and technology. The school is well resourced in this area, going beyond PowerPoint and video projectors to maximizing the use of Google Apps for Education, iPads, the ES Maker Space and the MS Design Lab. SSIS students extensively use technology to move beyond the limits of physical textbooks, hands-on learning materials, and physical location. The Visiting Committee noted that parents and students were overall very happy with the school’s facilities.

B3. How Assessment Is Used

Appropriate Assessment Strategies

SSIS has homework, grading and assessment documents for all divisions. The assessment documents identify the importance of assessment and evaluation in communicating with students about their learning as well as validating and informing instructional practices in the classroom. On speaking with several teachers, administrators and the section B focus group, the VC recommends the development of an assessment philosophy to guide practice across the school.

It was noted that many units of work in Rubicon Atlas identified summative assessments but that they were not necessarily aligned with the identified standards for the unit. The VC recommends that the school reflect on the significant amount of work completed in Atlas in order to ensure that assessments are aligned with the identified standards for the unit.

Basis for Determination of Performance Levels

Student performance levels are well determined and tracked in all subject areas across the school and are used to ensure that student growth is apparent. This is evidenced by the variety of standardized assessment measures used throughout the school.

For students with learning needs, performance levels are documented with Learning Support Plans across the divisions. Growth is measured in several ways throughout the year; progress reports communicate the status of Learning Plans which clearly outline the criteria for meeting goals.

Rubrics have been developed and are implemented across the school. The middle and high schools have clear grade descriptors and the middle and high schools have drafted a consensus Assessment Agreements document for 2017-18. VC suggests that the school take these shared agreements to create a document which clearly delineates assessment and grading philosophy from classroom practices.

Demonstration of Student Achievement

It is clear that SSIS students have high achievement on external assessments such as MAP, WrAP, SAT, AP and IB.

The examination and evaluation of student work and other assessments demonstrated student achievement of the SSIS academic standards. Exemplars are used in each course/grade level to give students benchmarks.

As student achievement in the Core Values is often rooted in measuring dispositions, there is a higher degree of subjectivity when assessing. How to assess the Core Values will be the primary focus of the Curriculum Framework in Phase III. However, it was noted that there were several examples across the divisions where it was already happening. Service initiatives in each division, reflections in personal blogs, personal choice projects and participation in Weeks without Walls are just a few examples. The VC confirms that while significant progress has been made in this area, work in embedding the Core Values within the various content areas should continue to be a priority.

The curriculum director noted that examining current reporting out of the determined performance levels for students will be an upcoming initiative.

Correlation

In several subject areas and grade levels, learning activities, instructional approaches and assessments are identified. However, based on examination by the VC of several unit maps housed in Rubicon Atlas, they are not always aligned to the identified standards for the unit of study. Though happening in some parts of the school, it isn't systematic in all divisions. As SSIS continues the great work of documenting the curriculum, it would be valuable to focus on aligning the assessments to the standards identified for each unit.

The VC recognizes that SSIS is working on Phase III of the Curriculum Framework. The focus of this phase is to not only find ways to embed the Core Values into classroom instruction but also to find ways that the values can be meaningfully assessed.

Modification/Decisions based on Assessment Data

Focus Group B noted that assessment data is collected, analyzed and sometimes used to make changes and decisions about curriculum, instruction, professional development activities, and resource allocation. Teachers modify and revise the curriculum and instruction as a result of student assessment. This is particularly evident in the data from the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Tool and writing assessments being used to modify and individualize instruction in the ES. Teachers are sharing these modifications with the grade level teams. The VC concludes however, that while modifications/decisions on instruction, assessment and professional development based on assessment data were found in pockets, they were not seen systematically across all divisions. Conversations with Focus Group B validated the VC's findings and the VC encourages the leadership team to continue exploring efficient data gathering and analysis methods.

Student Feedback and Teacher Monitoring

The school believes that student feedback is an important part of monitoring student progress of the school-wide Core Values and the curricular standards. Student reflections and feedback are used across the divisions to allow students to communicate their learning. While the strategies vary, the VC found that many teachers utilize student feedback to support student progress in meeting course or grade level objectives. SSIS reported and the VC agrees that use of team collaborative time for these discussions will continue to provide a more cohesive and consistent approach to how feedback is used to support individual student needs.

There were several examples of pre and post formative monitoring at the elementary level especially in mathematics and language arts. In addition, feedback for learning was seen on several teachers' Moodle pages for formative work leading to summative assessment. Across the divisions assessment and other data is collected over time to inform intervention teams and EAL/Student Support.

Areas of Strength for Category B

- Consistent and ongoing efforts to map the written, taught and assessed curriculum.
- Collaboration among teachers and with administrators has moved the school toward a guaranteed and viable curriculum centered on student learning.

- The school's five Core Values (Academic Excellence, Sense of Self, Respect for All, Balance in Life, and Dedicated Service) play a major role in student learning.
- Technology is integrated into all subject areas within the school to enhance student learning.
- Teachers are highly dedicated and work diligently to stay current in research and best practices in instructional strategies to support opportunities for student learning.
- Teachers are supported by SSIS which provides a variety of opportunities for ongoing professional learning both on and off campus.
- A commitment to the development and implementation of the Curriculum Framework focusing on embedding the Core Values into the curriculum.
- Students are achieving at high levels.
- There is a growth mindset demonstrated by all members of the SSIS learning community.

Key Issues for Category B

- Analyze assessment and other data to determine effectiveness of classroom instruction, impact of programs and the role of professional development in increasing student learning.
- Develop a schoolwide assessment philosophy, including practices and beliefs, that describes an aligned, consistent and coherent K-12 assessment system.
- Focus on aligning assessments to the standards identified for each unit.
- Communicate the standards and expected performance levels to students clearly and consistently.

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

- Comprehensive study of the self-study report
- Unit maps in Atlas Rubicon
- SSIS Website and documents
- Interviews with divisional administrators
- Tripod student surveys
- Interviews with the school leadership team
- Interviews with the Director of Curriculum
- Interviews with faculty re: curriculum, instruction and assessment (focus group B)
- Meeting with students from all divisions
- Examination of report cards
- Classroom observations across all divisions
- Reviewing of assessment and grading policies
- Review of parent-student handbooks from each division
- Meetings with individual teachers and teacher leaders from all divisions
- Informal conversations with faculty and students
- Interviews with parents

Category C. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

C1. Student Connectedness

The school has extensive health services available for students and faculty. Two licensed nurses have overlapping schedules to cover the school day so that at least one nurse is available during all school activities including evening and weekend activities. The visiting committee was able to confirm that the nursing staff have good systems and protocols in place for tracking student health records. Before field trips and/or other school events teachers are notified about any student health concerns. The nurse offices are well resourced and first aid kits were recently purchased to provide extra supplies for school events. Six Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are available at multiple points around campus. Currently, all TAs are trained in AED usage and there is a plan in place to give all staff training next August.

A newly implemented EC-12 health curriculum and program further supports student health, with full implementation to be completed by the end of this year. Student opinions concerning the success of the program will be assessed via surveys, with teachers looking for an improvement in pastoral care in upcoming iterations. Some concerns were voiced about the staffing load for ES P.E. teachers; they would like to have more P.E. built into the students' schedules to promote higher levels of physical activity. Divisional Principal Coffees and parenting workshops addressing student health issues, stress, sexuality and parenting strategies are used as a means of engaging parents in conversations about student health issues. Students reported that they feel comfortable talking to teachers and counselors about academic and personal concerns, also stating that they feel the school community is supportive of LGBT students. There are continued efforts to support students in healthy choices during the lunch times.

Adequate career counseling and career exposure for students is included in all grade levels EC-12 creating a strong career component. Each elementary grade has at least one unit that contains specific career connections which are deliberately explored. One highlight occurs in Grade 8 when students join the HS Career Fair and direct exploration of the work of NGOs in Vietnam. Career exposure in HS is managed through Naviance and extended to create direct connections to college/university applications.

There is an excellent level of availability and adequacy of counseling services for students and referral processes to external counseling services; this includes social/emotional, academic, career and college counseling in all divisions that is extensive, sustainable, and systematic. Counseling services are supported with a psychologist in ES, one counselor in MS, and two comprehensive HS counselors both of whom provide social/emotional, academic, career and university counseling. Through student interviews, the visiting team was able to confirm that the students feel like they have great access to and support from their counselors and praise the addition of the new position in the high school. The visiting committee recognizes that next steps were already underway in implementing a more articulated EC-12 pastoral care focusing on character education. There were concerns written about the lack of educational psychology assessments for students already receiving services, but improvements in the

transition documents between divisions and availability of local, off campus psychologists have addressed many of these concerns.

The student referral process is well documented and includes multiple avenues of referral to ensure student needs are not missed. Counselors attend student of concern meetings, and academic review meetings, and maintain accurate logs of students served. All divisions have Student of Concern (SOC) meetings at the team and/or department level to ensure student academic needs are identified as soon as possible. SOC teams create and implement intervention plans. If these intervention plans are not enough to address student achievement issues, students are then referred to the SRT. Student Referral Teams (SRT) work in each division to review student referrals generated from classroom teachers as well as through other academic or counseling screeners. SRTs meet on a regular basis in each division.

At all divisions, teachers can refer a student to a solution-focused meeting where learning strengths and challenges are considered and an action plan developed to address areas of need. All students identified for learning support services have individual learning plans that include background information, current achievement data, a description of prioritized learning needs, specific learning goals with measureable targets and instructional strategies, and accommodations to be implemented in all classes. These learning plans are developed with input and participation from learning support specialists, classroom teachers, administration, counseling, and parents. A range of EAL/LS services, including push-in, co-teaching, and pull-out supports are provided. Beginning in the 2017 - 2018 school year, each elementary grade level will have one dedicated EAL teacher supporting the teachers and students. Annual meetings are held to update and review learning plans; learning plan updates are sent to parents on a quarterly or semester basis depending upon plan specifications. All students identified for EAL support services are assessed with the WIDA annually to ensure there is a clear understanding of student achievement gaps and needs. SSIS exits students from the EAL program as they show proficiency.

SSIS reports that it is unclear who is responsible for the coordination of services between divisions and the visiting committee confirms that it would be beneficial if a role was redefined to manage the “bigger picture” of student support. This includes the process of intervention and referral. Concerns exist regarding the lack of a school wide coordinator position as this impacts the level of coordination between divisions, services, and clarity in how developed processes and materials are approved and promoted.

The growing population of the school, coupled with the high academic rigor of many high school courses, has Focus Group C members concerned about their ability to best service their students in the future. SSIS wants to be a community school that is able to support students whose needs change as they mature. The team is committed to pushing harder to support all students, at all levels, using data driven structures to help students succeed.

Examples of divisional interventions include:

In the ES, after extensive and specific assessments offered through the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark System, students have tailored, small group or individual intervention at least three times a week. The assessments start with phonemic and phonological awareness skills, and move through a series of language and comprehension skills to find

the specific gaps in knowledge. A differentiated 4-6 week intervention is planned and delivered. Students are then assessed again to see growth. SSIS reported few students at the elementary level require math support. When such support is required, teachers use a mix of push in support and mixed grouping, with Touch Math and Bridges used in the upper elementary for math support.

MS teachers and students utilize an online program (ALEKs) that creates an individualized math intervention based on students' current skills. Students generally utilize ALEKs in their regular math class and, if needed, spend additional time on ALEKs in order to close the academic gap. The online program provides progress monitoring capabilities and tracks rates of improvement as needed.

Middle school learning support students utilize Fluency Tutor and NewsELA in order to improve their reading comprehension and fluency. Students complete this intervention in their Learning Support classes.

At the middle and high school level, academically at risk students are identified during Academic Concern and Probation meetings. These students have academic support plans that are managed by the counselors, administration, and/or advisors.

Students receiving EAL and Learning Support services have a very positive view of the services they receive. Many students in MS and HS also identify things in addition to direct academic support that are a positive outcome of the services (improved confidence, support in dealing with stress and ability to cope with difficult situations).

School leadership and staff link curricular activities to the academic standards and schoolwide learner outcomes, i.e., global competencies; providing opportunities for students to communicate with diverse audiences locally and worldwide at all grade levels. This is specifically detailed in the curriculum framework.

Extensive opportunities exist for students to participate in co-curricular activities at all divisional levels with the greatest number of participants in HS. Parents commented on how inclusive the sports program is, allowing participation and enjoyment for students with multiple proficiency levels. The committee was also able to review ASA offerings and confirmed that there were a wide range of activities for students to participate in throughout the year. ASA opportunities and participation has grown over the past three years. Athletics opportunities have also increased over the past 3 years.

Students frequently have the opportunity to contribute to local and/or global actions and service opportunities in all divisions and at all grade levels. At the HS level, the majority of the service and action opportunities are initiated, organized, and implemented by the students themselves. These include a vast array of student clubs working with local orphanages, NGOs and service groups. Many of these clubs are in conjunction with the CAS program.

The school process for regularly evaluating the level of student involvement in co-curricular activities is effective and includes information about projects on global issues, joining networks, and exchanges.

C2. Parent/Community Involvement

A wide range of strategies and processes for increasing parent and community involvement exist in all divisions. These include regular postings to eNews, teacher blogs,

and social media sites; a systematic communication strategy for parent events is utilized for all major events (this includes posting on eNews, email communication and SMS reminders on a set schedule). A wide variety of activities are held throughout the year to promote parent and community involvement. The visiting committee confirmed that the parent community was involved and supported in their participation.

The school presents regularly to parents via Principal Coffee, curricular showcases and maker events, yearly Curriculum Nights, Week Without Walls information sessions, monthly UniTalks in the High School division, quarterly HoS parent coffees and socials, monthly HoS/Country Ambassador meetings, and PTA driven groups/socials.

PowerSchool also provides parents and students with grade information. The parent community shared that they feel welcomed as participants in their child's education.

The school utilizes effective strategies to assist parents and the school community in understanding the academic standards and Core Values in the curricular and co-curricular program. Non-English speaking parents are effectively included in the learning/teaching process as active partners through the use of clear visuals, materials, translation as needed, and Country Ambassador supports. SSIS reports and the VC confirms, that parents generally have a good understanding of the curriculum and academic standards as well as the Core Values. Concerted efforts have promoted understanding of the Core Values in connection with all programs.

The school effectively uses existing community partnerships with groups within the host country to support students. These include partnerships with local businesses, charity organizations, and community organizations. These are further evidenced in the development of Elementary SuperUnits where students are participating in out-of-school trips within the community and/or having guest speakers come in to speak with students. In addition, the students have opportunities i.e. the Dragon's Apprentice to sell some of their student-made products and donate their money to local charities.

Areas of Strength for Category C

- The faculty are dedicated and passionate about student relationships and endeavor to personalize and support all students at SSIS.
- The students at SSIS are highly engaged, positive, and supportive making the school a very special place to learn.
- The climate of SSIS is extremely positive and the students, teachers, and parents all work cohesively to challenge students while at the same time supporting them in their social, emotional, and academic achievement.
- The faculty embraces the need for change and is willing to undertake new structures to better support the needs of all students.
- The addition of the new Director of University Guidance has been a positive support in the HS and is well received by students and parents.
- SSIS has extensive health services and faculty are committed to ensuring student safety and wellness.
- The availability of co-curricular and extracurricular activities is plentiful in the ES, MS, and HS and their link to the Core Values and academic standards is clear and purposeful.

- There is frequent and clear communication between school, parents, and students, which fosters a strong sense of community and connectedness.
- The Parent Liaison position provides positive support and facilitates parent and teacher meetings.

Key Issues for Category C

- Evaluate the need for EC-12 coordination, vertical alignment, and long-term strategic thinking in the area of Student Support Services.
- Continue the current work aimed at sustained and systematic implementation of the support services processes
- Assure that the referral procedures outlined in policies are well executed.
- Regularly evaluate interventions in place i.e., selection of interventions, communication of implemented interventions, training of teachers in intervention.
- Use the collaborative insights of faculty to design strategies to minimize the parental stigma associated with the use of support services.

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

- interviews with teacher leaders
- interviews with divisional administrators
- interviews with faculty re: student personal and academic growth
- meeting with students from all divisions
- classroom observations across all divisions
- meetings with individual teachers from all divisions
- informal conversations with faculty and students
- Interviews with parents
- ASA documents
- Student referral
- SSS Handbook

Category D. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

D1. Resources

The school's financial practices are excellent, with budgets prepared at specific times, annual public audits and an internal audit by the parent company. There is a stated policy on ethical business conduct that explicitly requires employees to report ethical breaches. This policy is exemplary.

The strategic plan provides a list of objectives for the school which in principle serve as a guide for resource allocation. In practice, resource allocation appears to be negotiated between central administrators and division administrators, with expenditure information available to division administrators and teachers. Budgets for school divisions and departments are based on historical data, with major variances negotiated with the business office. Teachers uniformly report being well-resourced and able to secure additional resources easily.

The school has been recognized by the Vietnamese department of education as having excellent facilities; this is evident on arrival. There is a maintenance department that responds to issues raised around safety and maintenance. The school identifies the need for a facilities coordinator to take a more proactive approach to safety issues. In the self-study it was noted that “There needs to be some formalized mechanism to ensure that there is a highly qualified person-in-charge of facilities management - specifically in the area of student safety.” The VC endorses this recommendation. According to the Associate HoS for Finance and Operations, this position has been budgeted for and will be hired for the next school year.

In an effort to attract and retain high quality teachers, the school provides a number of PD opportunities and personal PD allowances with expectations concerning approval, benefits to the school and post-PD sharing. The school hosts several conferences which provide opportunities for faculty.

The school has made efforts to ensure an attractive compensation package these include pay raises as well as increases to the housing benefits offered. This appears to be having an effect by reducing teacher turnover. Panel discussions with classified staff revealed great pride in the school. Classified staff felt that their contributions were valued and that they were well treated.

The school’s resources are clearly sufficient to sustain the school program and are effectively used to carry out the school’s purpose. The school runs a healthy budget surplus and constructs three and ten year financial models. The school leadership and staff are involved in the major resource allocation decisions. Although effective, budgeting processes may need to be tied more closely to program priorities.

D2. Resource Planning

School personnel have spent time visiting other schools to review practices, primarily in connection with technology. The school is well aware of the requirements of the current regulatory regime and of forthcoming changes, such as the need to bill and pay in local currency in the next few years.

The school reports on various resource-related quantities, such as staff strength, to the government as per local regulations. The school shares aggregated information about revenues and expenditures with parents and other stakeholders through the annual report. Feedback from stakeholders is managed through the use of surveys.

The school has invested in a high quality website, photographs and promotional videos. This has been supported by the creation of a digital marketing position and a school photographer. Resources have been allocated to this task.

The school has effective financial models built on enrollment projections, but appears to lack a more detailed resources plan or facilities plan: In the school’s self-study it was noted that “SSIS can aspire to have a long range resources plan that is linked with programs. The plan should look at student numbers, and what programs would

strengthen SSIS, and then think about what resources would be appropriate to meet these goals.” The VC affirms this finding.

Areas of Strength for Category D

- The school is able to attract, and increasingly to retain, high quality staff.
- Financial and business practices are excellent with a commitment to business ethics.
- Facilities are spacious and well appointed.
- The school is well resourced.
- Websites, photos, videos and marketing materials are of high quality.
- Marketing and publicity is supported by sufficient personnel.

Key Issues for Category D

- Consider whether facilities management and safety require more oversight. Existing structures are effective, but responsive rather than proactive.
- Develop a resources and facilities plan based on identified needs tied to the mission.

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

- Board reports and presentations
- Meeting with Focus Group D
- Internal & external audits
- Discuss between the VC Chair and the HoS
- Govt reports
- Surveys

Chapter IV Part B: School Wide Strengths and Areas for Follow-Up

As a result of the 2009 - 2010 self-study, SSIS identified seven critical areas for follow - up. These included:

Critical Area 1: The administration consider ways to attract, retain and develop highly qualified teachers, administrators and staff who are committed to the school’s mission and educational goals.

Comment: This area was deemed complete during the Mid-Term visit.

Critical Area 2: The faculty, administration, and parents develop ways to further enhance understanding among all of the constituents about the school’s purpose, educational goals and programs.

Comment: This Area has evolved into one of the current Critical Learner Needs. The VC notes that significant work has already been to begin to address this need.

Critical Area 3: The faculty and administration allocate instructional resources to ensure student learning and achievement of ESLRs (Core Values).

Comment: This area was deemed complete during the Mid-Term visit.

Critical Area 4: The administration continues to recruit and enroll qualified students in line with the language and diversity targets established to promote an international balance of students and an academic environment where students are challenged and successful.

Comment: This area was deemed complete during the Mid-Term visit.

Critical Area 5: The administration and faculty should ensure the development and alignment of curriculum, assessment and instruction through the development of curriculum units that promote high levels of student learning.

Comment: This area is not carried into the New Action Plan developed during the 2016-17 self-study; a more flexible Curriculum Review Cycle has been implemented and common planning is the norm across all divisions. However, the VC has included an area for follow up that addresses assessment at SSIS, as there is much work still to be done.

Critical Area 6: The faculty and administration should develop structures within the school that create expanded opportunities for collegial work. These structures should facilitate the analysis of students' assessment results that informs instruction and supports changes in professional practice to promote higher levels of student achievement.

Comment: This is critical area is carried forward into the current action plan and is stated as Critical Learner Need #2

Critical Area 7: The administration and faculty should review student learning needs in relation to technology. This will likely involve an analysis of the human and financial resources necessary to successfully implement 21st century learning skills that focus on learning across all divisions. Handbooks were reviewed with students at the beginning of the year and at times when a reminder is necessary.

Comment: Portions of this area are addressed in Critical Learner Need #2.

Schoolwide Strengths and Critical Areas for Follow-up

School-wide Areas of Strength

1. SSIS has a clearly articulated Mission statement and set of Core Values which serve as a strong statement of identity and support student learning
2. A competent governing Board which supports the Administrative Team's initiatives and fosters an environment in which policies and procedures are developed to support achievement of the Core Values.
3. Financial and business practices are excellent, demonstrating a commitment to business ethics.
4. A commitment to the development of the Curriculum Framework focusing on embedding the Core Values into the curriculum.
5. The faculty and administration are dedicated and passionate about student relationships and learning; ongoing professional learning; and are willing to innovate and collaborate to personalize support for all students.

6. The students at SSIS are highly engaged, positive, and supportive, making the school a very special place to learn.
7. The climate of SSIS is extremely positive and the students, teachers, and parents all work cohesively to challenge students while at the same time supporting them in their social, emotional, and academic achievement.
8. The availability of co-curricular and extracurricular activities is plentiful in the ES, MS, and HS and their link to the Core Values and academic standards is clear and purposeful.
9. Facilities are spacious and well appointed with well resourced materials.
10. The support staff provide essential services that allow for a highly functioning and positive school environment.

Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up

1. Strategically prioritize school initiatives; build systems and capacity to ensure sustainability for continuous school-wide improvement.
2. Further develop the School culture that: broadly defines and promotes multiple paths to success; embraces self-discovery; supports social-emotional well-being; and values the love of learning.
3. Develop and utilize the K-12 system to disaggregate and analyze external and internal student achievement data and stakeholder perception data.
4. Develop systematic intervention programs to support all students in the attainment of high standards in all subject areas and divisions.
5. Develop a schoolwide assessment philosophy, including practices and beliefs, that describes an aligned, consistent and coherent K-12 assessment system.

Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

Saigon South International School schoolwide action plan includes the following goals:

Critical Learner Need #1: *Further develop the School culture that: broadly defines and promotes multiple paths to success; embraces self-discovery; supports social-emotional well-being; and values the love of learning.*

Critical Learner Need #2: *Develop and utilize the K-12 system to disaggregate and analyze external and internal student achievement data and stakeholder perception data.*

Critical Learner Need #3: *Develop systematic intervention programs (ranging from remediation to extension/enrichment) to support all students in the attainment of high standards in all subject areas and divisions.*

Link to critical areas for follow up:

The critical learner needs have become the major goals in the action plan. As such, there is a very strong link between the CLNs and the action plan. The VC has identified one further area for follow up, focusing on assessment, that is appropriate to add into the

next draft of the school wide action plan. Also, the VC identified an area for follow up that is about the plan and goals themselves. That is, with the number of goals stated in the plan and the other initiatives in process at the school, it is important that SSIS prioritize these developments to ensure sustainability and depth.

Lastly, the Head of School discussed the next steps for the strategic planning process which will include a look at other areas for development that are not directly associated with student achievement, such as long term facilities development, recruitment practices, etc. It is the understanding of the VC that all such plans will be merged together to ensure clarity and follow through.

Feasibility of completing the action plan:

The current draft of the action plan includes the three goals listed above, which are feasible and appropriate. However, the plan needs further development to include more specificity about actions and people responsible. SSIS has the human and financial resources needed to complete the plan.

Existing factors that support school improvement:

- High level of professionalism among staff and administration
- Widespread care and concern about the well-being of the students at YIS and for the school as an organization
- Support of the Board Chair
- Strong educational background of the administration
- Structures in place support the work needed

Impediments to improvement that the school will need to overcome:

- The relative newness of a vast number of teachers and administrators has led to somewhat low levels of capacity; it will be important to include these newer members of the faculty in the coming stages of school improvement.