

From: Greer, Shannon [mailto:sgreer@gwacademy.org]
Sent: Saturday, March 08, 2014 3:42 PM
To: Burns, Marlies
Subject: Fwd: George Washington Academy Written Summary

Dear Marlies,

Below is a summary of the questions you asked of us.

Warmly,
Shannon Greer
George Washington Academy
Board of Directors, President

1) Mission of charter school-

The mission of George Washington Academy is to provide an academically rigorous education for the students in St George and the surrounding communities, complete with a strong character education program. It is our goal to establish a learning environment, based on the principles of self-discipline and respect, where each child will develop the skills necessary to help them succeed in a rapidly changing world.

2) Brief description of student population (e.g., number of students by grade, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, etc.)

Enrollment by grade as of 2/21/14

K= 130

1st=149

2nd= 127

3rd=152

4th=126

5th=100

6th=116

7th=67

8th=39

Approximately 13.7% percent of our students are of an ethnic or racial minority, and 8.8% of the 1006 students we have are students with disabilities.

3) School analysis of the data points included in this report

- academic proficiency, LA= 93.5%, Math=96.6%, Science=88.4%, Reading at grade level=91.4%

- graduation rate, 93.6% of students who attended GWA graduated from HS. For the 2013-14 SY 100% of our current 8th grade class [39 students] will graduate from GWA.
- ACT scores, N/A
- student retention, We have a 79.5% retention rate [lower in 6th and 8th grades see explanation below**]
- student transfer rate (within year enrollment), We have a 4.2 % student transfer rate.
- Average Daily Membership compared to October 1 count). We had approx. 1,013 students on October 1. As of 2/21/14 we have 1006 students. Our information shows that the majority of our students who leave our school do so because their families are moving out of the area.

**We traditionally see a drop in our retention rates for students going into 6th and 8th grades as students opt to join the Intermediate and Middle schools at those points. Washington County School's are Elementary-K-5th, Intermediate Schools-6-7th, Middle Schools-8-9th and High School-10-12th grades.

4) Provided supports you offer students and teachers that help keep your school's academic and engagement performance in the top quarter of Utah charter schools There are several things that we are doing to provide our students and teachers with the needed resources to continually meet the goals of our charter.

- Our curriculum challenges our students and since it is written into our charter, it is consistent. Having a consistent curriculum for our teachers helps them to achieve mastery in both understanding of the curriculum as well as appropriate delivery. This consistency also ensures a learning continuum that is aligned from one grade level to another.
- Mandatory Team Level Planning/Reflecting meetings which provide our faculty the opportunity to discuss concerns, design strategic plans to focus our resources and celebrate successes within our school.
- Our teachers are expected to develop Year Long Plans (180 days) then turn them in to our Administrative team prior to the last day of the school year. Which helps to insure that all of the subjects are covered to the extent necessary. It also assures that all students, in each class in a grade level have been exposed to the curriculum prior to moving on to the next grade.
- Two Student Study Teams that act as a support to both teachers and parents of struggling students. They are responsible for implementing various interventions for a 6 week period that determine students' need for support.
- We offer an After School Reading Lab and a pull-out reading lab for students needing additional support in fluency building.
- We provide continuous training of staff in relation to the implementation of our curriculum and research based instructional practices. Curriculum specific training is offered each Summer and expected by each new teacher hired.
- Our administrative staff maintains a school-wide assessment documentation which keeps track of at-risk students. That document is also used to help give teacher necessary feedback.
- According to our charter, we ask 40 hours of volunteer time from every family enrolled at our school. The additional help in the classroom allows teachers to focus a little more on individual student needs.

- The Board of Directors and the Administrative staff share high expectations for the faculty, staff, teachers and students at GWA. We strive to keep those expectations clearly defined and shared with everyone involved. Parents and students at the school have an expectation of success.
- The Board, along with the Administrative staff review the student data regularly to assure that goals are being met. The board uses data to drive decisions for the school.

5) Best practices you would recommend to other LEAs to achieve the same high ranking.

The items listed above as well as providing highly trained teachers contributes to the success we have had at GWA. There are a few additional things that have added to the success we have achieved.

- Our vice principal publishes a weekly newsletter that includes "snaps" (employee notes of appreciation). This is a huge morale booster and helps foster a more collaborative staff.
- Full Day Kindergarten: This allows students additional learning time when kids are passionate about school and they are prepared to move at a rigorous pass when they enter first grade.
- Consistency between classes and grade levels on a variety of items has helped us set a standard and create a culture of excellence.
- We offer parent education nights where our teachers help our parents become familiar with our curriculum and teach them ways they can support their students at home.
- There are several Board Committee in which members of our faculty and staff have been invited to participate. Their insight is very valuable and they appreciate the opportunity to have a voice in some of the decisions that are made at the school.
- The Board and the Administrative team has worked hard to establish a positive climate at the school, where both teachers and students are happy to be there. That means recognition, and tokens of our appreciation as often as possible.