

Sample of Visiting Committee Member Prewriting

Some chairpersons aren't keen on bullets. Give this writing your best shot. Whole sentences are certainly preferred. If you can't manage that, at minimum get the idea on paper so it's not lost.

A1. To what extent does the school have a clearly stated vision based on its beliefs, student needs, and current educational research?

- Valiant High School has stated a clear vision. The District vision and the school vision are aligned. The revision and development of the vision statement received input and support from stakeholders. Changes to the vision statement were based on educational research.
- Faculty and staff developed the school's vision statement by "collective professionalism" during professional workshops and conferences. Both the SSC and Governing Board made input for the statement. Both groups approved the final statement in March 2005.
- Valiant High School has stated three goals that address high achievement, personal responsibility, and positive relationships.

To what extent does the governing board and the central administration support the vision?

- The District and Board of Education acknowledge and support both the school vision and graduation goals.
- The XYZ Unified School District Board of Education and District administrators support Valiant High School's vision to improve student achievement through content standards and the graduation goals. District has adopted common learning results from each of the high schools to serve as their overall goals, allowing individual schools the flexibility of retaining those learning results that personalize the school's goals.

To what extent is the school's purpose defined by expected schoolwide learning results?

- Stakeholders were involved in the development and adoption process of the ESLRs.
- Both the standards and ESLRs are incorporated into the school's curriculum and accountability process.
- The ESLRs will be available in Spanish.
- Valiant has begun the process of incorporating the State standards and ESLRs into the curriculum.
- Teachers have begun to share how standards and ESLRs are integrated into the curriculum.

Questions:

- What input did the Spanish-speaking parents have in the development and approval process of the ESLRs?

A2. To what extent does the school leadership make decisions and initiate activities that focus on all students achieving the ESLRs?

- The administration encourages staff involvement in instructional planning, goal setting, and implementation of the vision.
- Stakeholders work with administration to plan how to better help the students meet the ESLRs.
- Why is the collaborative common planning period a time to meet informally rather than formally?
- Issues, discussed and decisions reached by the consensus team are impact student learning.
- Administrators visit classrooms to observe how ESLRs are being implemented.

To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

- The certificated staff has in place a new “value point” procedure that allows shared responsibility for improving student achievement.
- The common preparation period facilitates communication and collaboration among the faculty.
- The faculty has developed thematic units.
- Rarely are teachers functioning in isolation.
- Block scheduling and the year-round calendar have been approved by the SSC.

Questions:

- What’s the feeling about implementing both block scheduling and a year-round calendar?
- What might be the impact of these on teacher isolation?

A3. To what extent is staff supported, utilized and monitored to facilitate student achievement of ESLRs?

- The school staff began to write the ESLRs in 1994.
- During staff inservice days, time was devoted to writing the ESLRs. Decisions made were based on how to better meet the needs of students.

Questions:

- When/how is Valiant’s staff development plan monitored?
- What changes to the curriculum has been made since 1994?
- What instructional strategies are now in place?
- Describe your standards based instruction. Describe the data-driven interventions. Describe your Technology Plan.

- How does the single session with block scheduling help students achieve the ESLRs?

To what extent are leadership and staff apart of an organized structure committed to professional development?

- The four-year staff development agenda includes technology application, literacy skills, tolerance training, multifaceted assessments, core curriculum and ESLR integration.

Questions:

- What grants have you received?
- What examples exist of ESLRs integrated in the core curriculum?
- Have all staff members participated in the in the District's staff development and inservice training?
- Is the common planning period in the master schedule used for staff development monitoring and follow-up?
- What evidence of incorporating cultural diversity throughout the curriculum will we see?
- How is the effectiveness of the staff development plan assessed?
- Teachers have developed thematic units, rubrics, and authentic assessment instruments to gauge student progress.

A4. To what extent is the school a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning?

- Valiant has added a second Campus Security Officer.
- All teachers have telephones in their rooms.

Questions:

- What is student/family perception of safety?

To what extent is the culture of the school characterized by trust, professionalism, high expectations for all students, and a focus on continuous school improvement?

- There exists a sense of a very "personal community" with a special student-teacher relationship.
- Teachers see fewer students for longer periods of time daily thus facilitating and enhancing rapport.
- Teachers work toward the goal of success for all students.
- Teachers work collaboratively to redefine goals and to sharpen their common vision that is focused on student needs.

Note: NO evidence has been cited. You must in your final report.