

SECTION I
GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL
OSAN HIGH SCHOOL

Principal: Marie Cullen
Principal's Tenure in the School: Two years
School's Web Address: www.osan-hs.pac.dodea.edu.
Grades: 7-12
Total Enrollment: 389

	Enrollment
Grade 7	70
Grade 8	83
Grade 9	71
Grade 10	58
Grade 11	65
Grade 12	42

Professional Staff: 47
FTE of Professional Staff: 46.5
Number of Staff New This Year: 7

Setting

Osan American High School (OAHS) is situated 48 miles south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in Osan, South Korea. OAHS is on Osan Air Force Base, home of the 7th Air Force Unit and 24 tenant units all hosted by the 51st Fighter Wing "Mustangs." This base is the most forwardly deployed permanently based wing of the Air Force. The mission of this base is to maintain combat readiness to ensure stability in Northeast Asia. The motto of the base is "Ready to Fight Tonight."

From 1984-1994 high school students were bused from Osan to Seoul American High School, one hour away. In 1995, OAHS opened. The school has exceeded its capacity and currently has several temporary classrooms to accommodate the overage. A new middle school complex will open in 2009 for grades six, seven, and eight to help alleviate the problem, but because OAHS serves students in grades 7-12 from Camp Humphreys, the impending free flowing space maybe short lived.

The city of Osan is a shopping mecca in South Korea. The Korean culture of dance, art, and pottery making can be seen throughout the city. Religious temples are also an integral part of Korean culture. In Osan, there is the Gweulri Shrine set-up by Gong Sea Rin a 64th descendant of Confucius. The population is around 137,000 people.

The climate in Osan reflects that of the south in the United States, with mild winters and extremely hot summers. The spring months of March through May are plagued with yellow sand from the China and Mongolia deserts. The often high yellow sand levels can require limited exposure to the outdoors during these times.

Students

Approximately 389 students represent 47% females and 52% males. The majority of the students are category I (94%) or command sponsored who are either military dependents or children of contractors. These are the students for which DoDEA schools exist. The other students are category III who are classified as “space available” and cannot be admitted until the category I students have been enrolled. The majority of the students are classified as other (48%), Air Force 27%, Army 25%, and Navy less than 1%. The student population is 1% Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 1.5% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 13% Asian, 10% African American, 29% white and 45% multiracial.

Program

The programs offered are regular classrooms, special education, English as a second language, READ 180, math support classes, JROTC, and AVID. A talent and gifted program for middle school students is also present. AVID enrollment is around 8% of the student population. Approximately 26% of the student population is enrolled in AP classes, 16% in honors classes, and 22% in JROTC. In the middle school 27% of the students take high school Algebra I and 46% take a high school foreign language class. One middle school student takes high school geometry.

Middle school students are able to participate in co-curricular activities such as tennis, cross country, band, student council association, chess club, international club, dance team, yearbook, intramural basketball and volleyball, and Math Counts.

High School co-curricular activities include; drama, Model United Nation, student council, band, color guard, rifle/drill team, wrestling, tennis, cross country, basketball, volleyball, soccer, football, cheerleading, and yearbook.

Staffing and Organization

There are 47 members of the professional staff. The majority of teachers have masters degrees, 30% have bachelors degrees and the rest have doctoral degrees. The majority of the faculty has been teaching for six to ten years, with the majority of the teachers only in DoDEA for one to five years. The gender breakdown is 68% male and 32% female. The majority of the teachers are Caucasian (63%), 16% are African American, 11% Asian, 5% Hispanic, and 5% Native American.

School Environment

The students are enthusiastic and energetic learners. The school environment is child-centered. The halls and display areas are filled with years of student artifacts and achievements. Students are polite and orderly.

The school facility is clean and well maintained. Parent and volunteer involvement is a strength in the school. There is a positive relationship between the school and the community.

SECTION II DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Overview

The school provided the team with documentation of the school improvement efforts completed during the cycle. The documentation presented a roadmap of the school improvement efforts undertaken during the preceding five years. During year four of the cycle, the school improvement leadership team (SILT) reviewed the efforts of the cycle and with the help of the entire faculty redirected the school improvement efforts. The present plan and documentation include the results of this reorganization. This has created a “cycle within a cycle.” The goals remained constant, but interventions have been altered. Data gathered prior to year four were sporadic, and the current SILT was unable to discern exact findings. Under the leadership of the SILT, the efforts and results for the last 18 months have been documented for this visit. It has done a very thorough job of evaluating the events of the cycle and identifying the strengths and challenges that must be considered as the next cycle is begun.

Involvement in the School Improvement Process

Findings

- Members of the SILT conducted an in depth analysis of the challenges faced during this cycle of school improvement. They made the decision to “begin again” in year four of the current cycle in order to refocus the efforts of staff and students. This provided more direction for all stakeholders. It also afforded the staff the opportunity to reflect upon the successes and areas of improvement necessary as they moved forward. This decision also resulted in a limited amount of data to document student achievement at the end of the cycle.
- Many teachers have “stepped up to the plate” to assume leadership roles on the committees and subcommittees created through the school improvement process. This promoted more staff ownership and support for the selected interventions and activities.
- Faculty members support the implementation of the school improvement goals and interventions. Artifacts documenting the interventions are collected from each teacher on a regular basis at department meetings. This aids in faculty accountability as well as documentation of student growth.
- Continuous staff turnover presents a challenge to the efforts of school improvement. Only a small number of faculty members remain from the beginning of this cycle. This lack of continuity may have contributed to a lack of staff buy-in and support for the school improvement efforts.
- There is evidence throughout the building of the selected goals for this cycle. Posters detailing the school improvement goals are on every classroom door.
- Student participation in staff development activities is encouraged. A student representative serves on the SILT and contributes information from the students’ perspective. Students appear knowledgeable regarding the school improvement goals. School improvement efforts are a part of the daily announcements and evidence of the use of interventions can be found in classrooms and hallway displays.

- Members of the military command are supportive of and participate in school activities. School liaison officers from both Osan and Camp Humphreys are part of the SILT and contribute to the school improvement efforts. Because of the mission of Osan Air Force Base, the school is considered an integral part of Team Osan.

Next Steps

- As a new cycle begins, the school must take steps to ensure a continuous school improvement effort is implemented by faculty and supported by administration. High mobility rate of staff can lead to disintegration of continuous improvement. Consistent documentation of school improvement efforts should be available and easily accessible to all staff members.
- Establish a visual flow chart or diagram that illustrates all committees or departments of the school improvement process so that the staff and school community can better understand the structure and generate support for the plan. A log or notebook of committee responsibilities to ensure continuity of the process must be developed and preserved.
- Share student performance data with current faculty and with all new and returning faculty at the beginning of the school year.
- Students should be brought more fully into the school improvement process in order to encourage a sense of greater ownership in the goals and interventions. Such involvement might best be developed through the student council or through groups associated with the specific goals. The student group might take on the responsibility for certain activities associated with the goals.

Leadership for the School Improvement Process

Findings

- Following a period of unsustained leadership and engagement in the school improvement process, a new administration and SILT leadership, during the fourth year of the current cycle, assumed responsibility for renewing a school-wide effort to reengage in the SIP process.
- The SILT exercises effective leadership over the school improvement process and established four committees to manage implementation of the plan: reading comprehension, problem solving, data analysis/technology, and home school community/communications.
- Faculty demonstrates great respect for the accomplishments of the co-chairs of the SILT.
- The SILT conducted a productive self-examination of the issues associated with how the school improvement plan was implemented over the first three years of the cycle and identified specific problems associated with sustaining the initial plan.
- Pacific area and district level administrators provided support to the school in the analysis of the past improvement plan and provided a roadmap for moving ahead into the next cycle.
- The district expects and supports principal engagement in school improvement through the development of leadership skills, culture building, collaboration, and knowledge of curriculum and instructional processes. This “Korea Principal’s Initiative” is reinforced regularly at district meetings and is personally managed by the superintendent.
- The DoDDS Pacific and Korea District offices provide leadership to the school for school improvement through consultative services provided both on and off site.
- The school has three departments with assigned chairs who meet occasionally with the principal.

Next Steps

- The department chairs should be engaged systematically in meaningful decision making regarding both school operations and school improvement. This body should function as a principal's advisory group to help establish a more collaborative and collegial decision making environment. The department chairs should provide a direct link from the teachers to the decision making process and serve as a communications channel for the school.

High Expectations for School Improvement

Findings

- Staff and administration model high expectations for the students by holding high expectations for themselves. OAHS faculty has been resourceful in overcoming transition hurdles in the SIP process. The educational technologist and SIP co-chairs assumed the task of hand scoring the local assessment to provide needed data during their first year in the school.
- AP teachers are seeking ways to decrease the gap between AP course grades and AP scores.
- Faculty members utilize artifacts to look at student work collaboratively within their teams, thus providing opportunities to identify consistent performance by students. Irregularities are addressed as required to support student learning.
- The seminar period is used to promote student learning and achieve academic success. Students have the opportunity to seek help in specific subjects or make up work from an absence. This dedicated period provides faculty with the time necessary to provide academic support for all areas of academic success.
- At-risk programs have been developed to enhance student learning. The A Team, comprised of the guidance counselors, nurse, and assistant principal, meets to address referrals regarding students experiencing academic or social difficulty. Interventions are identified and implemented by the A Team to help the students be more successful, or the student is referred to the CSC for further action.
- In accordance with the new DoDEA graduation policy requiring a 2.0 minimum GPA for graduation, the senior counselor tracks student GPAs beginning in the junior year to determine the ability to meet this standard. In the event that a student is not meeting the graduation requirements, the counselor notifies the parents and the student with updated information and support.
- A school improvement update is shared by the SIP co-chairs at every faculty meeting. The educational technologist works collaboratively with the SIP co-chairs to support the efficient management of data. Throughout the school, student work is displayed documenting evidence of SIP interventions. The collection of intervention artifacts from the departments reflects student involvement within each of the goals.
- The team saw evidence of programs and activities focused upon recognizing positive student achievement through the Renaissance recognition program at the high school level. At the middle school, students are given Cougar Bucks for positive behavior; they can be spent at the Cougar store.

Next Steps

- There should be a continued emphasis upon meeting high academic standards for all students. In order to ensure this process for students referred to the A Team, improved communication should be facilitated between the team and appropriate staff members.

- Develop and maintain SIP “turn-over binders” to help when new people take on leadership roles with the SIP committees. This process would ensure continuity of the school improvement process and contribute to a greater likelihood of meeting the goal of higher student achievement.
- Data analysis regarding student achievement within the goals should be reviewed regularly. The analysis and the implications of the data should be processed under the direction of the SILT and widely distributed to the school community at regular intervals. This should include both formal and informal data.

School Culture and Climate in Support of School Improvement

Findings

- Data-driven decision making is becoming part of the school improvement process. Data were collected previously, but no uniform system was in place to promote its utilization.
- Knowledge and understanding of the school improvement process is not consistent throughout the school.
- Teachers expressed a desire to be more closely engaged in collaborative decision making on both operational and school improvement activities. The school does not present a collaborative environment for teachers to work with the leadership on issues of common need.
- Teachers expressed a need for more personalized communication regarding school issues and less reliance on e-mail messages.
- Many teachers expressed their concern that there is a closed culture within the school that discourages questions from the staff regarding school and administrative issues.
- Parents expressed a desire for more complete and timely information regarding school issues as well as reports of student achievement when requested. They expressed concern about inconsistent communication from the various teachers.

Next Steps

- The school should develop a systematic way to gather and analyze data from all assessments and formalize an information system that allows data analysis to become an ongoing part of school improvement from one year to the next.
- A major effort to ensure that instructional objectives align with assessments should be undertaken. The school should consider the essence of each goal when selecting assessments to ensure accurate measure of student achievement.
- There must be a systematic process to ensure that all teachers are engaged in meaningful decision-making for operational matters affecting the teaching environment as well as in managing the school improvement plan.
- Since there is such a large annual turnover in professional staff, it is imperative that all teachers new to the school be quickly engaged in collaborative relationships within their departments and with the school leadership.
- Communication from the school leadership to the teaching staff should take on a more personalized nature with less emphasis upon e-mail.
- The school leadership must employ a more systematic communication process to keep parents and the community advised of events within the school and to establish parent/teacher communication expectations for all staff.

SECTION III GENERAL APPRAISAL

School Improvement Plan

Findings

- This school enjoys a high level of academic achievement, and students are encouraged to take increasingly higher level classes. A large proportion of students are enrolled in Advanced Placement and honors classes.
- In 2002, the school developed a school improvement plan based upon an analysis of data with two goals for increased student growth: reading comprehension and problem solving. A set of assessments to measure student growth and interventions expected to cause that growth to occur were developed. Implementation of the school improvement plan then stalled for two years and limited attention was directed toward it. During the 2004-05 school year, a new administration and new SIP leadership rebuilt the plan and began again to direct school community energies toward increased student performance in the goal areas.
- During the past 18 months, the SILT and the four associated committees have done a good job of redeveloping a structure to manage school improvement. All teachers have taken on a role within one of the committees, and the school improvement plan has extended throughout the school community. The SILT demonstrated a high degree of self-analysis regarding the strengths and limitations of the past SIP cycle. Improvement in student growth within the goal areas was not effectively demonstrated, and the SILT has made an excellent diagnosis of factors associated with that result. There is reason to believe that the capacity for school improvement has grown as a result of this experience.
- The high rate of attrition among faculty and administration presents challenges to sustaining momentum for delivery of a school improvement plan.
- The faculty indicated a desire for increased participation in meaningful decision making both at the operational and school improvement levels. Opportunities and encouragement for collaborative planning and decision making seem limited within the school culture, and this working environment tends to reduce the opportunity for teachers to make a substantive contribution to overall school effectiveness.
- There is a staff perception that communication patterns within the school between faculty and administration are strained. This communication problem tends to reduce the opportunity for the type of collaborative learning environment associated with highly effective schools.

Next Steps

- Planning for succession among school improvement leaders and for quickly bringing new staff members into the SIP process must be put into place. A systematic process should be used to maintain momentum despite a consistently changing leadership group. Carefully maintained data and a narrative of past events should be summarized each spring and reviewed each fall.
- Specific checklists of expected SIP activities and teacher responsibilities associated with the interventions and assessments should be presented by designated SIP leaders each fall to new and returning teachers. The SIP goal committees should regularly monitor the extent of teacher implementation of the agreed upon interventions. The SIP leadership should be considered key teacher leaders within the school culture and given the recognition, responsibility, and authority to carry out its roles.

- A major effort needs to be taken to open up the school culture for more collaborative decision-making between teachers and the school leadership. Data regarding teacher perception of the climate for teaching and learning should be gathered and that data should inform reconsideration of the desired working environment for the school.
- As a way to reduce communication problems, increased opportunity should be provided for teacher leaders to participate in leadership structures such as a dynamic department chairs committee or a principal's advisory committee. Such a leadership committee should meet at frequent intervals, probably weekly, and be engaged in meaningful discussion regarding current issues within the school. Teachers should be brought into these discussions through feedback sessions within regular department meetings.

DoDEA Instructional Quality

- Three scheduled sections of AVID reflect that student success for identified students is a guiding force in developing the master schedule. Separate AVID sections for middle school students provide best-practice student placement.
- The school promotes exploratory learning opportunities for students through the practice of offering multiple classes within a single setting using a class-within-a-class process. Examples of this are found in technology education and business education classes.
- There are no test score or grade restriction hurdles to prevent student enrollment in rigorous classes such as Advanced Placement (AP) or honors courses. AVID students are enrolled in classes of rigor including AP classes.
- The seminar period is used to promote student learning and high academic achievement. Students have the opportunity to seek help in specific subjects or make up work resulting from an absence.
- Various instructional methods are utilized throughout the school including small group instruction, cooperative groups, project based learning, one-on-one tutoring, and class-within-a-class guidance.
- Opportunities for high achieving high school students include AP and honors classes. Gifted education is provided for identified middle school students. Co-curricular programs are available to all grade levels and include the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium, Math Counts, band, drama, Model United Nations, yearbook, and journalism.
- Differentiated instruction was observed as follows: small group—carrousel activity in which students rotated to share ideas, whole group—read aloud with guide questions, diversified instruction within the class (group work, independent reading, computer work).
- Technology is infused across the curriculum and throughout the grade levels to support effective instruction. This is evidenced by the use of technology including “SMART Boards,” computers, data projectors, art, and professionals and technical studies. Various software programs are used by students in core and encore classes as well as in the information center.

DoDEA Curricular Standards

- Evidence of DoDEA curricular standards exists throughout the building. Posters for each curricular area are posted in all classrooms. References to corresponding standards are listed with assignments in some classrooms.
- The team observed several instances where standards were stated on classroom whiteboards.

DoDEA Initiatives

Student-to-Student (S2S)

This is an initiative designed to aid in student transitioning into and out of the school. Two students and two faculty members were sent to Texas for training. The goal of the program is to ease the pain students often encounter by having to leave their home/school/culture.

Incoming students are introduced to other students, faculty members, and organizations with which they might become involved. In addition the program sponsors socials and helps integrate S2S students into the community. Outgoing students make contact with another S2S organization in the area where they are transitioning.

DoDEA Reads

This initiative is supported throughout the school through the use of the READ 180 program.

Math Support Classes

Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry lab classes are in compliance with DoDEA expectations. An area-wide algebra coach is utilized to model best practices in math instruction.

Other Characteristics

- The school has developed exchange programs with Korean high schools. This exchange provides opportunities for both students and teachers to spend time in Korean schools and for the school in turn to host gatherings of Korean students and teachers.
- The school provides a clean, inviting atmosphere for students. The facilities are well maintained and decorated with examples of student work or school activities.

Team Recommendation

The NCA CASI visiting team is pleased to notify the Department of Defense State Committee that Osan American High School has met the NCA CASI school improvement requirements.

Limitations on the Distribution, Use, and Scope of This Document

It is the official intent of the Board of Trustees of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement that this report on the evaluation of the school be considered a privileged document, to be submitted directly to the administration of the school. The distribution of the report and its availability for public consideration beyond that point rest solely in the hands of those administrators. Neither the chairperson nor the other members of the evaluation team are authorized to release any of the information contained in this report without the express approval of the administration of the school.

The primary purpose of the evaluation team has been to examine the educational setting of the school, including courses of study, learning materials, student needs and interests, staffing, and facilities. A particular focus of the team has been to evaluate the development and implementation of the DoDEA/NCA SIP.

It has not been the purpose of the visiting team to evaluate individual members of the school staff. The use of this report as an official assessment of any staff person's professional competency would be in violation of the process and the intent under which the school evaluation was conducted. Such use would be inherently invalid since at no time during the team visit has the team been concerned with the evaluation of individual staff member performance.

Additionally, it has not been the purpose of the visiting team to prescribe a specific company's instructional materials or programs. The team has attempted to evaluate the school's learning materials in light of the needs of the students being served and the relationship of the materials to the goals and objectives of the school. Any references to specific instructional materials contained in the team report are merely for consideration by the school. The school staff exercises the responsibility of selecting learning materials appropriate for the learners.

The members of the evaluation team have utilized their best professional judgment in drawing the conclusions reported in this document. The team members are not to be held accountable for any injudicious or unauthorized use of this document.

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Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement