

**MID-CYCLE VISIT  
VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

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

**FOR**

**NOLI INDIAN SCHOOL**

**24335 Soboba Road**

**San Jacinto, CA 92581**

**Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians**

**Bureau of Indian Affairs**

**Original Self-Study Visit Dates: April 25, 2016 - April 27, 2016**

**Revisit Dates: January 28, 2019 - January 29, 2019**

**Visiting Committee Members**

Mr. Gregory M. Calvert, Chairperson

Assistant Principal, Chase Avenue Elementary School

Cajon Valley Union School District

Mrs. Christina Foster

Assistant Principal, Vail Ranch Middle School

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## I. Introduction

The Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians envisions a future through educational opportunities provided by Noli Indian School (Noli). Noli is an Indian school that was founded in 1990 as an alternative school for Native American students who were not finding success in the traditional state public school system for a myriad of reasons. The school was designed to be an alternative option of a comprehensive educational program that provided a small setting and focused on the native culture and importance thereof. All students are enrolled members of federally recognized tribes and represent over 20 tribes from across the United States. Noli is a commuter school; students commute from Riverside, San Bernardino, Imperial and San Diego counties. Noli's schoolwide learner outcomes, "3 R's" for citizenship are the foundation for the school's expected Schoolwide Learner Outcomes: Respectful, Responsible, and Reflective.

The school evaluates the success of student growth using attendance numbers, graduation rates, Northwest Evaluation Association / Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA / MAP) assessment data, consistently reviewing student grades and success of student progress in the new reading program, Rewards. They also provide student surveys to get feedback directly from the students themselves about the climate of the students.

Since the last WASC visit, Noli began working with the Institute for Student Achievement (ISA), an educational consulting group, who has partnered with Noli over the past two years and provided coaching to administrators, teachers, and the educational technicians (Ed Techs). Noli, in collaboration with ISA, uses data to make informed decisions on school-wide improvement. This support includes reviewing data, observing classrooms, coaching instructional staff, surveying students and staff, and synthesizing the information with administration to assist in changes schoolwide.

Noli has also secured a significant grant which has allowed them to, among other initiatives such as the ISA partnership, create a staff mentor program for new staff on campus. New staff are paired with veteran staff and provided guidance and support to learn the culture and customs of Noli, especially if the staff is not of Native descent, to provide insight and guidance into the Native culture.

Noli added a Curriculum Coordinator position, who is also a middle school math teacher and works in collaboration with ISA coaches to build plans for math and science. They have also added an Advisory Coordinator position who has reintegrated and revised an 18-minute advisory into the school day twice per week to allow for discussion and advisement during these times, including grade checks. This has provided for more connectedness between teachers and students.

They have fully implemented AVID into the high school and have begun conversations with middle-school students about college. AVID strategies are seen in all classes by use of cornell notes. Students' mindsets and conversations have changed over the past few years from little focus of going to college to more significant numbers of students planning on attending college. In addition to AVID, Noli integrated after-school tutoring that is offered four days per week and is supported by teachers and Ed Techs. Some tutoring is assigned to specific students; otherwise, students have the

flexibility to show up and get help on homework and assignments as they see fit.

Noli has coordinated with Mt. San Jacinto College (MSJC) for students to participate in concurrent enrollment while finishing high school. With participation in this program, a student could graduate high school with 24 college credits at MSJC already completed. Noli has also secured an agreement with California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM) for guaranteed admission for Noli students who meet admission requirements for CSUSM. This allows Noli graduates guaranteed college admission after graduating high school should they want to attend CSUSM.

The Leadership team at the school is comprised of the Principal, Vice Principal, counselors, coordinators, teachers and the Athletic Director. The WASC report was written in collaboration with all members of the team contributing information relevant to the process and then asking for feedback from the staff regarding the information provided in the report. The staff had both formal and informal weekly meetings to focus on the improvement needs of the school, and this was inclusive of the leadership team and staff. There was consistent collaboration in the growth and betterment of the school as they continued to use WASC, ISA, AVID and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) to help guide their growth and ensure everyone had a voice and success in the process.

Noli stakeholders continue to support the previously identified strengths identified in the last WASC report:

1. Strong family atmosphere and the school's focus on the Native American history and culture. This is evidenced by the relationships of the staff and students. Staff reports that there is an extraordinary level of respect, professionalism, and support from administration when trying to get professional development and the integration of Native culture into the curriculum.
2. Noli provides culture lessons that are specific to the Luiseño and Cahuilla tribes, which is a draw for students and families to send their students to the school and learn traditions and histories about their Native tribes.
3. Low student-to-teacher ratio: Students prefer coming to Noli to receive more individualized attention and build meaningful relationships with staff rather than enrolling at a traditional public school.
4. Dedicated staff with caring hearts as evidenced by the staff consistently trying to build relationships with the students, providing support, and trying to support students with their social-emotional needs.
5. Noli's growing athletic programs that help improve school spirit and student confidence levels.

## II. Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up/Schoolwide Action Plan

### Schoolwide Critical Areas for Follow-Up

The Visiting Committee, in its report from the full self-study visit, concurred with the school's identified areas that were outlined in the schoolwide action plan. These are summarized below, along with commentary regarding progress that Noli has made in each of the critical areas for follow-up:

#### 1. Increase student academic proficiency levels in reading and math

This school year, Noli transitioned from Read 180 as a reading intervention program to Rewards. This change was in response to recommendation by ISA. The Noli team and ISA convene regular (monthly) meetings to work on curriculum, teacher strategies, and collaboration amongst teachers to improve overall instructional practice.

Rewards brings Noli a revised writing component. Teachers have worked together to increase writing across the curriculum, even in math. Noli teachers report, and VC members have observed, that students like to "flaunt" their content-level vocabulary.

Teachers report that benchmarking has improved use of data in managing academic growth.

Data on Read 180 has been more limited in comparison to Rewards. Rewards allows more interaction with students and teachers. With continued implementation of Rewards, Noli staff will have more data available to measure the program's impact on student learning.

Noli hired a third math teacher, and the math instructional team is transitioning to an integrated pathway for high school, including adoption of new curricula for both the high school and middle school.

While math scores demonstrate moderate gains and reading scores are above Native American averages, Noli acknowledges that significant gains in both reading and math have not been achieved, and the school continues to strive to improve student proficiency levels in both areas.

#### 2. Regular collaboration amongst the Noli site leadership team (SIT) that more thoroughly implements the WASC self-study process, Native Star, NASIS, and other school and student systems

Noli has demonstrated a strong effort in implementing the WASC self-study process here at the school and amongst stakeholders. The assistant principal attended a WASC visit in the 2016-17 school year, the principal has scheduled attendance for WASC Visiting Committee training to facilitate participation in a WASC visit in the 2019-20 school year, and the academic counselor is planning to attend training and a visit in the future, as well. Further, it is evident that Noli has embraced the WASC self-study process and integrated the process into the culture of the school. Notably, the overall culture of the school has embraced the WASC

self-study process as one of continual self-reflection and ongoing improvement.

In the development of the mid-cycle report, Noli established sub-committees and convened meetings with broad input from stakeholders. Noli has shown an improved awareness of the WASC self-study process and related expectations and responsibilities. Further, the school staff has integrated the WASC process into various components of school.

In addition, the Visiting Committee, in its report from the full self-study visit, identified areas that needed to be strengthened. Commentary is included regarding progress that Noli has made in each of the critical areas for follow-up:

1. A-G course approval through UC Doorways

Noli has made significant strides in gaining A-G course approval through UC Doorways. With the exception of a few elective classes, all Noli classes for high school are approved via UC Doorways. Noli students are able to complete A-G requirements with UC-approved courses. Combined with strong improvements in their college-going environment, particularly with the implementation of the AVID program and continued college awareness programming, Noli students are making significant gains in their college-going mindset and overall eligibility for college. Further, the school has partnered with CSU San Marcos and established via an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in May of 2017 guaranteed admission for Noli students. The school is also in collaboration with other universities, such as the University of Redlands and Pomona Pitzer, to establish similar MOUs.

2. Improve student engagement levels by implementing more student-guided and project-based lessons

Collaboration with and support from ISA has helped teachers make gains in their instructional practice. All teachers have reported working with ISA, and the majority of teachers report a strong, positive impact on their practice as a result of Noli's partnership with ISA. Along with the support from ISA, several Noli teachers have participated in the AVID Summer Institute, which supports implementation of student-guided projects.

Additionally, the school has adopted curriculum with inquiry and investigation embedded, they have integrated art projects that align with curriculum, and they have reported improved collaboration amongst students.

Further, teachers report having increased expectations for students to demonstrate their learning in presentation fashion, and they've implemented instructional strategies such as socratic seminar, think & ink, turn & talk, and jigsaw. Teachers report a shift in students' mindset & thought processes due to inquiry-based models.

Also, the school has worked to include more information and literature that is culturally relevant for Native Americans, with the expectation that this will help improve student engagement.

Even with these gains, the school has a continued need to make improvements in student engagement levels by implementing more student-guided (student-led) and project-based lessons. Visiting Committee members observed in the majority of classes low levels of student engagement and learning activities that do not promote active student participation in student-led or project-based activities. Students have also expressed the need for more hands-on learning activities in the classrooms.

3. Enhanced Professional Development program for teachers

Teachers have expressed appreciation for a strong level of support from Noli leadership for professional development. Noli is in the second year of a three-year grant that is providing, among other supports, direct coaching for teachers from ISA. Also, eight teachers have participated in AVID Summer Institutes, and the school is planning to continue to have additional teachers future institutes. Teachers expressed that as other professional development opportunities arise, the school regularly supports their attendance. Noli has also partnered with other Indian schools through visits and other exchanges of practice.

4. Improve parent engagement, involvement, knowledge of programs and attendance at school events

Noli has implemented Infinite Campus, a program that serves as a student and parent portal for stakeholders to access live data related to grades, attendance, and other school-related information. In working with parents and students, the Visiting Committee is able to affirm that the application is also available on mobile devices, and parents and students demonstrate ease of use. Additionally, the academic counselor has reported that students, during conferences in the counseling office, are able to access the program, thus enhancing the productivity of student meetings. Parents also report that their students are able to teach them how to use the program, which further enhances parent engagement in their child's educational experience. The academic counselor, at the time of student enrollment, reviews Infinite Campus with parents and encourages them to enroll in and regularly use the program.

Parents have expressed that Noli has improved their efforts with engagement, including adjusting modes of conference to include phone conferences (implemented this school year). Parents expressed appreciation that Noli is accommodating parents, especially with many families living in areas with large geographical distances from the school.

Parents and staff report that more parents are showing up to events compared to previous years. The school is also implementing routines that place different staff members at the gate in the morning to greet parents and students as they arrive to school.

Parents provided the following ideas for improving parent engagement: hold more parent meetings, communicate more regularly with parents (i.e. newsletter), and improved use of other forms of communication (i.e. mobile apps).

Noli staff members are aware of the continued need to improve efforts in meeting the challenge of parent engagement, and the school is making strides in this regard. For example, a program through NASIS will be implemented in the coming school year to improve communication through phone messaging and emailing.

5. Provide the addition of a female staff member to the counseling department to better respond to the social and emotional needs of all students

Noli secured a significant grant after the full self-study in 2016. Grant funding allowed the school to hire a full-time female counselor in the spring of 2017, and she has become an integral part of the counseling team, specifically offering direct support for female students on campus. Additionally, the school implemented a behavioral health series for middle school, in collaboration with a Native teacher and counselor.

Noli recognizes the significant needs of its student body, and stakeholders have expressed the need for ongoing and improved support in the areas of substance abuse, depression, and suicide prevention. The school is seeking to add an additional staff member who will support students more directly in areas related to alcohol and substance abuse.

### III. Commendations and Recommendations

#### Commendations:

Noli has made significant progress in the following critical areas for follow-up and in carrying out the action plan.

- Regular collaboration amongst the Noli site leadership team (SIT) that more thoroughly implements the WASC self-study process, Native Star, NASIS, and other school and student systems
  - The leadership team and staff met regularly throughout the course of the past couple years to discuss and strategize about the improvements of the school. The leadership team would regularly solicit feedback from staff and students to ensure that all stakeholders were a part of the process of any changes that took place. Further, Noli has made strides in the integration of the WASC self-study process into the regular improvement process of the school. Also, team members have begun to participate in WASC visits and training for upcoming WASC visits as Visiting Committee members.
- A-G course approval through UC Doorways
  - Noli has almost all high school courses approved for A-G course approval through UC Doorways, which allows all students who graduate from high school to be A-G compliant if they want to apply for a 4-year college.
- Enhanced Professional Development program for teachers
  - Noli procured a grant allowing them to work directly with ISA, which allowed them to provide individualized professional development, team professional development, and schoolwide professional development over the past two years. Additionally, Noli has integrated AVID throughout the high school and middle school. The evidence of AVID strategies and supports are seen throughout all classes and students' mindsets have begun to change positively in the few short years about going to college.
- Provide the addition of a female staff member to the counseling department to better respond to the social and emotional needs of all students
  - Noli secured grant funding and hired a female counselor in the spring of 2017. The counselor now runs student groups and is becoming more integrated into the school culture.
  - Noli has expanded their culture program by hiring an additional culture teacher and also offering more in-depth courses in high school that delve deeper into specifics of their culture along with offering culture classes at the middle-school elective level.

**Recommendations:**

Existing critical areas for follow-up that need continued improvement:

- Increase student academic proficiency levels in reading and math
  - Noli has made moderate gains in student proficiency levels in reading and math; the school recognizes the need for significant gains in these areas.
- Improve student engagement levels by implementing more student-guided and project-based lessons
  - Noli engages students in teacher-driven lessons consistently throughout the day; continued growth in student-directed and student-led learning, student presentations, and student activities within the classroom that engage all modalities (including hands-on activities). Academic activities can also add more opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways (presentations, projects, etc.).
- Improve parent engagement, involvement, knowledge of programs and attendance at school events
  - Noli has made gains in parent engagement by the implementation of the Infinite Campus / NASIS parent (& student) portal. Continued growth can be realized in the engagement of parents in the educational process, communication regarding activities and school programs, and the facilitation of feedback from parents.

New critical areas for follow-up identified through the WASC re-visit process:

- Increase access to technology for all students
  - As Noli continues to expand access to technology for all students, it is critical that stakeholders devise a plan to help ensure equitable student access to technology and effective use of technology in educational practice.
- Expand opportunities for all students to gain exposure, experiences, and understanding of post-secondary educational and training opportunities
  - As students at Noli begin to think about their trajectory after graduation, some students may not align with the traditional 4-year university experience; these students can benefit from an improved understanding of post-secondary opportunities and their relative benefits (i.e. community colleges with possible transfer options to universities, trade schools, etc.). Noli has made strong gains in building a college-going culture with students participating in the AVID program, and it is critical that Noli remain cognizant of potential gaps in opportunity, exposure, and benefits that may develop between these students and those not participating in the AVID program.