

**REPORT OF THE VISITING COMMITTEE  
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES  
FOR**

**HEIGHTS CHRISTIAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**  
12900 Bluefield Avenue  
La Mirada, Ca 90638

(owned and operated by Family Resource Ministries, Inc, a non-profit corporation)

**FOCUS ON LEARNING**  
Initial Accreditation

Date of Visit: February 27 - March 1, 2006

**Visiting Committee Members**

Dr. Wes England  
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**O**n behalf of the WASC Visiting Committee members, we want to thank the entire faculty and staff of Heights Christian Junior High School for their preparations and cooperation in making this accreditation process successful. We would also like to extend our thanks to the students, parents and community for their time, input, and forthrightness in developing the Self-Study Report that is reflective of HCJH School and the starting point for continued student achievement.

**L**astly, we would like to thank HCJH, Rolland Esslinger, and Claud Lamar for their guidance and assistance in the preparation and coordination of the accreditation and Self-Study Report. The efforts of the total Hawk Family are commended as a starting point for achievement of your expected schoolwide learning results (ESLRs) in your action plan.

*the WASC visiting committee*

## **CHAPTER I: Student/Community Profile**

*Briefly summarize the most critical information from the student/community profile that impacts the school. Include the following:*

- § *Brief description of the students and community served by the school*
- § *School's analysis of student achievement data*
- § *Other pertinent data*
- § *NOTE: The entire profile does not need to be included but insert or attach pertinent charts/graphs on student performance.*

*Comment on significant findings revealed by the profile and/or pertinent items that were not included in the profile.*

Heights Christian Junior High School (HCJH) opened its doors in 1999 and is located in La Mirada, CA, about ten miles south of Los Angeles. It is owned and operated by Family Resource Ministries, Inc., a non-profit religious corporation. The FRM Board indicated that FRM is a business, and is not affiliated with a particular church. It is the mission of FRM's schools to educate students to know Christ personally, excel academically, think biblically, and positively impact their community for Christ.

La Mirada is a blend of residential, commercial and light industrial, educational and cultural environments, which provide a quality of living and a strong economy for its residents and businesses. Housing is primarily single-family, with about 70% owned and 29% rented. The median household income is approximately \$57,623 annually. The school is located close to Biola University, a highly regarded Christian university, and one of the larger employers in the area.

Heights Christian appears to have a positive relationship with their neighbors and the local community. Parents are involved in the school, and the school makes every effort to keep the local businesses and community informed of special events at the school. The school is a member of the La Miranda Chamber of Commerce.

HCJH has a current enrollment of 250 seventh and eighth grade students. HCJH is open to all students but does give preference to students enrolled in FRM elementary schools. HCJH welcomes students of diverse backgrounds. Although the school does not screen for academic achievement, assessments in English and Math are given to assist with proper placement. Heights Christian Junior High School seeks to provide a distinctive Christian environment in and out of the classroom.

The school's current population is 49% boys and 51% girls. The re-enrollment rate is 90-95%. The school's English Language Learner (ELL) population is less than 1% and no special accommodations are provided. The school uses complete immersion into

the classroom with individualized assistance as needed. Enrollment has increased yearly since the school's opening.

HCJH's academic program provides students with math, English, science, history and bible courses. Required "mini-courses" (physical education, Spanish, Perspectives, music appreciation, computers and Integrity) are available, as are additional electives in dance, video yearbook, drama, sports, etc. Students who struggle academically are referred to the Success Program where one-on-one assistance is provided to help students perform successfully in the classroom. About 20 students are currently enrolled in the Success Program.

The school staff totals 32 (full and part-time), with 34% male and 65% female. All of the instructional staff hold academic degrees. Part time teachers are required to have experience in their subject and while a degree is preferred it is not required. Current teaching credentials are held by only three staff members, with the remaining 26 either without credentials, or expired credentials. Five of the current staff are not teaching in their college major or minor area, but were placed due to experience. The FRM Board indicated they were more concerned with good academic teaching from a Christian perspective than with teacher certification. While the Board preferred credentialed teachers, credentials were not mandatory for employment. While it is preferred that all teachers have teaching credentials, exceptions are made with the understanding that credentials should be pursued.

The HCJH administrative team indicated that following the accreditation process, the school hopes to attract individuals entering the teaching profession who need an intern type experience. These individual intern opportunities may provide the school with future teachers.

The instructional program of the school is aligned with the California State Standards. Instruction utilizes a variety of learning modalities, and a high priority is set on staff development/professional development - both at the school level on a regular basis, as well as attendance at outside conferences and seminars. Teachers are observed on a regular basis with a written follow-up and conference. Teachers are encouraged to visit and observe other staff members. FRM provides a curricular specialist to assist all its schools.

## **CHAPTER II: Progress Report**

§ *Briefly comment on the school's major changes and follow-up process since the last self-study.*

Heights Christian Junior High School opened in 1999 with 177 students. The school's current enrollment is 250 students. This is HCJH's initial Self-Study Accreditation effort. However, during the WASC application process, the school was visited and several preliminary recommendations were made at that time. Each of these recommendations has been addressed.

**Recommendation #1:** The Board and Administration develop a salary structure for teachers that will provide a competitive wage in keeping with the common prevailing rates, in order to ensure their ability to maintain competent staff.

**Response:** Beginning teacher salaries start around \$27,000 per year with supplemental increments for completion of Master's degree (\$2000), CA teaching credential (\$3000), and experience (up to ten years - \$400 per year). Administrative salaries are negotiated with the FRM corporate offices.

**Recommendation #2:** The Board and Administration develop a long range plan that addresses the development of a permanent site for the school, and concomitant needs vis-a-vis tuition and staff changes.

**Response:** The FRM Board feels the current school site (a former public school), with a twenty-year lease, is adequate for its current and future needs. The Board and HCJH feel the school site meets the needs for a small learning community; when the school size indicates additional expansion, facilities will be found. The Board would rather have more locations than increase the enrollment size of the school which they feel would have a negative impact on the school environment, their ESLRs and the FRM mission statement.

**Recommendation #3:** The Administration and Staff develop a structured staff development plan that addresses the ability to deliver program to students.

**Response:** The FRM Board and Executive Director has recently hired a K-8 Superintendent to work with all FRM schools, and to provide continuity and planning for staff development. Staff development opportunities are provided HCJH staff during monthly faculty meetings, ACSI conferences, and three special pupil-free days during the school year. Addressing CA state standards, benchmark assessment with CA standards, rubrics, and the WASC accreditation process have been the focus for staff development during the past year.

**Recommendation #4:** The Board and Administration develop a Science Laboratory (with appropriate equipment) for use by all students during science class.

**Response:** HCJH feels their current limited classroom space precludes a dedicated science laboratory, although each science classroom does have equipment available for all students through a desktop science program and the use of the internet. Money is available to purchase consumable science program items.

**Recommendation #5:** The Board and Administration work on improving the technology plan to embrace individual classrooms, and provide networking capability throughout the school.

**Response:** HCJH has a three-phase technology plan. The computer lab has been upgraded with new computers, server, and networking equipment. Phase Three (distribution of technology campus-wide, and improved staff instruction and curricular productivity) is in the bid process and ready for implementation.

§ *Discuss how the school through its action plan has accomplished each of the critical areas for follow-up, including the impact on student learning.*

The school's initial Action Plan is focused on assessment and the continuing development of instructional strategies to improve student achievement. HCJH has developed a multi-component action plan that focuses its efforts on assessment and student achievement through:

- Item 1 - Assessment Action Plan
- Item 2 - Technology Action Plan
- Item 3 - Professional Development/Staff Development Action Plan
- Item 4 - Tutoring Action Plan

### **CHAPTER III: Self-Study Process**

*Comment on the school's self-study process with respect to the parameters and accuracy.*

*Did the school accomplish the five parameters of the self-study? (See Reference Card #1).*

1. The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study?

In discussions with the various stakeholders, it was apparent they were involved in the development of the self-study of the school. Although the parent/community and student focus groups were limited in size (per the self-study) these individuals were knowledgeable about the process, and what was written. In discussions with the classified (clerical, custodial, cafeteria) staff the local school staff were knowledgeable about the process and content of the self-study, although there was limited awareness from the custodial and cafeteria staff about the self-study. This was due to the fact they are contracted services from FRM rather than full-time school personnel.

2. The clarification of the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results?

The FRM's mission statement and subsequent HCJH original ESLRs were formulated, revised and adopted by the Board, administration and faculty in 2001. The current

ESLRs were revised and adopted in 2004, following extensive discussion and revision by the HCJH stakeholders in light of their desire to bring the ESLRs into line with the state Standards. The school and the Board review the ESLRs annually, although the Board indicated they were currently satisfied that ESLRs reflect the mission and goals for the school.

3. The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning with respect to the criteria?

HCJH is a two-year junior high school. The school administration indicated that it is difficult to track student progress with norm-referenced testing as incoming seventh grade students come from a wide variety of elementary schools and testing methods. The school has developed benchmark testing using the CA Standards in their various classes to help track student success and achievement. Overall, students at HCJH generally score at the "proficient to advanced" level on the CA Content Standards in the core areas.

4. *The development of a schoolwide action plan that integrates subject area/program and support plans to address identified growth needs?*

The HCJH administration, faculty, staff, parents, and the FRM Executive Director, have developed the schoolwide action plan to meet the needs of their students and the school. Assessment has been the recent focus as the school attempts to identify academic needs. The school has identified the lack of baseline information for entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. The school has undertaken quarterly benchmark assessment testing to provide student data for use in improving academic instruction in the classroom.

5. The development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the action plan?

The FRM Board, its Executive Director, and HCJH are committed to the WASC accreditation process, including the development of and monitoring of the schoolwide action plan. HCJH, during the self-study process, has developed a multi-component approach for their action plan. While unique in its concept, the plan elements focus on school and student needs and support each other. Monitoring accountability is included in each plan.

§ *Does the observable evidence reflect a sampling of what ALL students are doing and producing with respect to the WASC criteria and the school's expected schoolwide learning results?*

The HCJH Self-Study is comprehensive in its efforts to meet the WASC criteria. If anything, the visiting committee found the self-study to be understated as to the

school's achievements and instructional efforts. 85-90% of the HCJH students are scoring at proficient or advanced on the CA Competency Standards Test (for core areas) as observed in school assessment materials. Most of the remaining HCJH students are at the basic level on the test. The school has identified the lack of baseline information for entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. The school has addressed this concern with the development of their own quarterly benchmark testing which is being used to track student progress and direct instructional efforts toward the ESLRs.

§ *Does the observable evidence support the school's identified area for growth?*

The school has identified the lack of baseline information for entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. The school has addressed this concern with the development of their own quarterly benchmark testing which is being used to track student progress and direct instructional efforts toward the ESLRs.

## **CHAPTER IV: Quality of the School's Program**

**Part A: For each category:**

- A. Organization for Student Learning**
- B. Curriculum and Instruction**
- C. Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth**
- D. Resource Management and Development**

§ *Summarize an analysis of what currently exists and its impact on student learning.*

§ *Highlight areas of strength (if any)*

§ *Highlight the key issues (if any)*

*List important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues*

## **CATEGORY A. ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

### **What currently exists...**

#### **A1. School Purpose Criterion**

To what extent...

§ *has the school established a clear statement of purpose that reflect the beliefs and philosophy of the institution?*

Family Resource Ministries, Inc., the owners of Heights Christian Junior High School, has a definitively stated mission statement that reflects a clear purpose for the school. "Our mission is to educate students to know Christ personally, excel academically, think biblically, and positively impact their community for Christ." The mission statement is publicized in a variety of ways to the community, parents, students and staff of HCJH.

§ *is the purpose defined further by adopted expected schoolwide learning results that form the basis of the education program for every student?*

The HCJH expected schoolwide learning results were developed as a collaborative effort of the entire staff during the first two years of the school's existence. The ESLRs have been continually reviewed and revised since their adoption in 2001. The educational program at HCJH is based upon the ESLRs and the school seeks to produce students that model the ESLRs. ESLRs are posted in all classrooms and offices, as well as on the school's website.

#### **A2. Governance Criterion**

To what extent...

§ *does the governing authority adopt policies which are consistent with the school purpose and support the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results for the school?*

The Family Resource Ministries, Inc Board functions as a governing body and provides insight, vision and direction for the overall organization and Heights Christian Junior High School. FRM has established and adopted a comprehensive policy manual addressing all aspects of the corporation and the governance of its schools. These policies are consistent with the mission statement and ESLRs, and support student achievement. The mission statement and ESLRs reflect the vision of the corporation, not a particular church. As stated previously, FRM is a 501.3c religious corporation; non-church affiliated.

§ *does the governing authority delegate implementation of these policies to the professional staff?*

The FRM Board has delegated to the FRM Executive Director the leadership responsibility for oversight and daily operations. The leadership team works with the school administration to ensure that policies and procedures are consistent with the school purpose, and supports resources to assist the school to accomplish its expected schoolwide learning outcomes and student achievement. The school feels that FRM has shown great support for the school's administration and has allowed the day-to-day decisions to be made by the Principal. The Board has confidence in the school administration and cites it as one of the major success factors for the school.

§ *does the governing authority monitor results?*

The school indicated in their self-study that the FRM leadership team reviews expected schoolwide learning results and oversees their implementation into the educational program in cooperation with the school Principal. Assessment results are reported to the FRM Board on a regular basis by the K-8 Superintendent. The Board also monitors finances and other aspects of the educational program. The FRM leadership team also makes efforts to monitor parent and student satisfaction for the school, its program, and its activities. Test (SAT) results are also monitored by the leadership team.

### **A3. School Leadership Criterion**

To what extent ...

§ *does the school leadership make decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the school on student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results?*

The school staff feels the school administration is forward thinking and continually seeking new ways to improve the school (ie. revision of the ESLRs, adding Bible as a daily subject, constant encouragement to the teaching staff for differentiated instruction, improvement of technology in the computer lab, benchmark testing in 2004/2005, Success Program to help students struggling academically, Odyssey class for GATE students, SOAR program which promotes academic success). The ESLRs drive the instructional program.

§ *does the school leadership empower the staff?*

The staff feels that encouragement and opportunities are given them to be leaders on the campus. They feel the administrative staff seeks to delegate responsibilities and to create teams which work in the best interests of the school. Teachers are also encouraged to be creative in the classroom and to propose new and innovative programs that enhance student learning. The staff, as well as parents, appreciate the open door policy of the school, its staff and administrators.

§ *does the school leadership encourage commitment, participation and shared accountability for student learning?*

The administrative team is actively involved in the accountability process which sets the tone for the rest of the staff. As indicated previously, teachers are also encouraged to be creative in the classroom and to propose new and innovative programs that enhance student learning. The HCJH administration and staff work together to keep students on-target in the learning process.

#### **A4. Staff Criterion**

To what extent ...

§ *are the school leadership and staff qualified for their assigned responsibility?*

The FRM leadership team has demonstrated great support for hiring high-quality staff for the school. While it is preferred that all teachers have teaching credentials, exceptions are made with the understanding that obtaining credentials should be pursued. The HCJH principal hires teachers based upon their ability and background to teach subject matter. NOTE: According to the self-study, 26 of 29 teaching staff (89%) are not currently credentialed and five of the current teaching staff are not teaching in their college major or minor area.

The FRM Board indicated they were more concerned with good academic teaching from a Christian perspective than with teacher certification. They also indicated that teachers with teaching credentials are more likely to move away from the school and need to be replaced.

Staff development consists of time allotted at monthly meetings and time spent in department groups and peer observation, combined with conference opportunities. The school is encouraged to include follow-up and evaluation as part of both the staff development and professional development process.

§ *are the school leadership and staff committed to the school's purpose?*

The HCJH staff are committed to the mission of the school and the ESLRs which were developed by the school community. The staff gives many extra hours to the school and its students, as does the FRM staff which often participate in school activities and activities that support the staff.

§ *does the school leadership and staff engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning?*

FRM and the school administration encourage staff members to participate in a variety of professional and growth activities, conferences, etc. during the year. Resources, subs, and time are provided for staff wishing to attend professional activities.

#### **A5. School Environment Criterion**

To what extent ...

§ *does the school have a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that reflects the school's purpose?*

Heights Christian Junior High School strives to provide a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for all its students. The principal makes decisions with safety as the most important priority concerning the school program, facilities, and all student activities. Safety needs and expectations are shared with all faculty, staff and students both verbally (chapel and meetings) and in writing (communications and handbooks). Many of the school's staff members are first aid/CPR trained, although they have no nurse and rely on the paramedics for emergencies. HCJH has also designated a "peanut free" lunch table for students with nut allergies following an emergency situation last year. Students with special needs are provided extra textbooks so they do not have to carry books home each night. All staff members are provided a "health needs" list for reference with students with special needs. The principal feels all students must be nurtured if the school is to be successful and has implemented a variety of programs which nurture students.

§ *is the school environment characterized by a respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support, and high expectations for each student?*

Campus visitors often comment on the positive environment of the school. Staff and students are required to treat each other with respect regardless of racial, social and/or economic differences. Students are expected to maintain high levels of academic success and citizenship. When they falter, prompt intervention is undertaken.

#### **A6. Reporting Student Progress Criterion**

To what extent ...

§ *does the school leadership and staff regularly assess student progress toward accomplishing the school's expected schoolwide learning results?*

HCJH assesses students on a regular basis with the ESLRs in mind. Assessments include quarterly benchmark testing, annual SAT testing, etc. Special programs and opportunities are provided students to demonstrate academic proficiency and to communicate achievement with parents.

The school should refine the existing criterion-referenced assessments that give them immediate feedback which they disaggregate and use to drive instruction, and will be used to accurately compare historical data. In pursuing this goal, the staff have already experienced positive outcomes and student growth.

§ *does the school leadership and staff report student progress to the rest of the school community?*

Student achievement is shared with parents via phone, email, conferences, and special events. Standardized and schoolwide results are also shared with parents and student results are tracked by the staff, grade-to-grade.

## **A7. School Improvement Process Criterion**

To what extent...

§ *does the school leadership facilitate school improvement which is driven by plans of action that will enhance quality learning for all student's?*

Heights Christian Junior High School is committed to seeing all its students progress and be successful in their academic, social, and spiritual endeavors. The school culture shares the desire for all students to improve and succeed. Special programs assist in these efforts: SOAR (improvement motivation with rewards for success), Success Program (one-on-one tutoring and study hall), Odyssey (motivation for GATE students) and technology opportunities for all students. Teachers are required to integrate technology into their instruction. FRM is also involved in the academic progress of students as they provide resources for classroom improvement.

§ *does the school leadership have school community support and involvement?*

There appears to be strong community support for the school, both from community involvement with the school and with the involvement of the parents in school activities. One of the biggest campus support groups is the PTF (Parent Teacher Fellowship) which works with the school on various fundraising activities in support of campus programs and activities. The Student Council works with the school and staff in many service-oriented projects. Booster Clubs also assist the school's special programs (sports and music).

§ *does the school leadership effectively guide the work of the school?*

The self-study indicated that the school's leadership works hard to guide the work of the school; everything from its daily operation to teacher evaluation, from supervision and security to staff training and regular information meetings.

§ *does the school leadership provide for accountability through monitoring of the schoolwide action plan?*

The school is in the process of developing its initial action plan which will be overseen by the school administration, the FRM leadership, and the school faculty.

**Areas Of Strength for Organization for Student Learning Category** (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students.

1. The school's mission statement and ESLRs are clear and concise, and available to all students, staff, parents, and community. (A1)
2. The self-study indicated that a "great strength" of the school has been the FRM's organization that allows the principal and school administration to run the daily operations of the school. (A2)
3. There appears to be an openness by the FRM Board and leadership team to receive input from the HCJH administration and staff. (A2)
4. The expected schoolwide learning results drive the instructional program. (A3)
5. The administration supports a variety of school programs which promote the school, challenge and reinforce student learning and the ESLRs, and motivate students and school spirit. (A3)
6. The school feels there is a cohesiveness and teamwork within the staff. (A3)
7. The self-study, and parent, staff, students discussions, indicated that the caring staff and administration were the major strengths of the school. (A4)
8. There are multiple programs designed to nurture and encourage students (ie. SOAR, Success program, talons, Student Council, sports, Hawk of the month). (A5)
9. Students expressed appreciation for a caring staff in a safe environment. (A5)
10. Parents and staff felt there is a great deal of school-to-home communications; by phone and by email. (A6)

**Key issues for Organization for Student Learning Category** (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students

1. The school feels that increased participation through an online satisfaction survey of families would be helpful in collecting and reporting evaluations of the school's success. (A2)
2. The self-study indicated a need for a better mentor program for new teachers, including more time to help staff implement new programs/ideas. (A3)

3. There is a need for the school's teaching staff to become credentialed. (A4)
4. The school is encouraged to include follow-up and evaluation as part of both the staff development and professional development process.
5. The self-study indicated a need for increased disaster supplies and better methods of tutoring students who are struggling academically. (A5)
6. The school feels there is a continued need to explore ways of giving "practical application" to academic core subject matter. (A6)
7. The school should refine the existing criterion-referenced assessments that give them immediate feedback which they disaggregate and use to drive instruction, and will be used to accurately compare historical data. A6)
8. School staff feels greater communication about Parent Teacher Fellowship meeting (via distribution of meetings minutes) is needed. (A7)

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

Student Work/Samples

Professional Development Agendas

Teacher Lesson Plans

Interview with Organization for Student Learning Focus Group

Interview with Curriculum and Instruction Focus Group

Interview with Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth Focus Group

Interview with Resource Management and Development Focus Group

Interview with FRM Board members, K-8 Superintendent, district representatives

Interview with students, parents, staff, administration

Classroom Observations

Observation of Courses of Study

Observation of ESLRs

Observation of Master Schedule of Courses

Review of Family Resource Ministries, Inc. Handbook/Board Meeting Minutes

Review of of assessment data

## CATEGORY B. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

### What currently exists...

#### B1. What Students Learn Criterion

To what extent ...

§ *does the school provide a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the school's purpose and results in student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results through successful completion of any course of study offered?*

HCJH strives to provide a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum for all of its students based upon the school Christian purpose, mission, and statement of faith. Curricular planning considers the seven-year curriculum review and adoption cycle, and is research-based, with instructional materials emphasizing the CDE content standards. The school should refine the existing criterion-referenced assessments that give them immediate feedback which they disaggregate and use to drive instruction, and will be used to accurately compare historical data. Quarterly benchmark testing is helping to assess student achievement in meeting curricular objectives and standards, and in meeting the school's ESLRs. Staff development activities focus on current research-based best practices. Teachers in subject area under review meet regularly with the administration to discuss strengths and weaknesses of current materials. FRM provides ample funding for curriculum and supply need.

Content standards and ESLRs are co-dependent in that ESLRs address essence of school purpose and goals, and content standards provide guidance to the curricular objectives. All academic teachers map their courses and create benchmark tests based on the California Content standards. The teaching of biblical truths and principles permeate all classes and activities. HJCH continues to search for a practical procedure to ensure that evaluation of student achievement results leads to meaningful changes in curriculum and instruction. Currently, frequent assessment measures are used to plan and modify challenging, meaningful and relevant instruction for classes and individual students. In addition to the data from quarterly benchmarks, teachers use their own test scores and rubric reports to address the needs of their students.

#### B2. How Students Learn Criterion

To what extent ...

§ *does the professional staff use research-based knowledge about teaching and learning?*

Annually, the instructional staff survey potential staff development concerns for the coming school year. The administration, working with the K-8 Superintendent, develops and organizes the staff development program for the staff. These activities are then

presented at faculty meetings, department meetings, and in-service workshops. Teachers are required to participate in these activities and to share experiences. The schools membership in ACSI provides a larger professional community including conferences on curriculum and instruction.

§ *does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results?*

HCJH provides its students with a full day of instructional activities; core subjects are taught in the morning (including Bible), with elective and mini-course provided after lunch. PE is offered three times per week and is a required subject. Athletic activities are also available to the HCJH students. Mini-courses are also offered three times per week on a quarterly rotating basis permitting all students to experience the activity. Seventh grade students take Spanish, computers, music appreciation and apologetics. Eighth graders take Spanish, computers, integrity and perspectives. Special elective classes are provided on Tuesdays and Thursdays. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students also have the opportunity to spend twelve days in Washington, DC and related historical areas.

Students are assessed and placed in the appropriate math and English classes. All other subjects accommodate students with mixed abilities. Students with deficiencies or special needs are assisted via the Success Program. Teachers use a variety of instructional techniques designed to create experiential environments. Teachers also plan the integration of technology into the existing curriculum with the aid of the full-time computer teacher.

### **B3. How Assessment Criterion Is Used**

To what extent ...

§ *is teacher and student use of assessment frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process?*

HCJH uses formal and informal student classroom assessment. CA standards-based assessment is used for quarterly benchmark assessment. SAT 10 was also identified as an assessment tool. Teachers are encouraged to utilize a variety of classroom assessment techniques. "Vertical diversity" (multiple assessment strategies for each unit) and "horizontal continuity" (linking teachers and departments to standards, outcomes, and assessment) were identified in the self-study as methods to integrate assessment with the teaching/learning process.

Teachers communicate frequently with students and parents about student progress. A philosophy of mastery-based learning allows students to revise work and academic appointments are available for one-on-one re-teaching of course content. Teachers

communicate frequently regarding student progress, when a changes, and to notify parents of pending tests and benchmark assessments. Teachers regularly send unofficial progress reports to parents. Official report cards are sent from the school eight times per year.

§ *are the assessment results the basis for measurement of each student's progress toward the expected schoolwide learning results?*

The most significant change in the instructional program over the last six years of the school's existence has been the emerging emphasis on standards. The school's quarterly assessments provide the benchmarks that help the teachers assess important concepts and standards. The benchmarks reflect not only student learning and achievement, but the effectiveness of the instructional program and the school's success in meeting their ESLRs.

§ *are the assessment results the basis for regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instruction?*

According to the self-study, student outcomes and assessment strategies were the key components of a two-year staff development plan from 2003/04 -2004/05 that focused on differentiated instruction. All academic teachers participated in the staff development during which they created rubrics for their subject areas, providing an objective basis for assessment and linkage to the standards. The benchmarks help to align the instructional program with the standards and ESLRs, and help to track achievement in the core content areas. Teachers report that they would like to have longitudinal data from standards-based benchmarks to show trends over time. Using assessment results to evaluate curriculum and instruction is a strength of the HCJH faculty. A review of the curriculum and assessment results also precedes the evaluation and adoption of materials.

§ *are the assessment results the basis for the allocation of resources?*

Assessment results do not appear to be the basis for allocation of resources, although improved academic achievement assessment will probably facilitate the need for increased staff time to interpret results and develop instruction to challenge these increases in achievement.

**Areas of Strength for Curriculum and Instruction Category** (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students

1. HCJH has a regular curriculum and text adoption schedule which is funded by FRM and overseen by the school administration. (B1)

2. The afternoon program of mini-courses and electives permits the school to provide a diversified program, lower the teacher/student ratio, and maximize student productivity. (B2)
3. HCJH's Washington, DC trip has been very successful and well-received by its students, staff, and parents. Each year about 150 students and 60 parent/chaperones are involved. (B2)
4. HCJH has a research-based staff development program emphasizing student achievement. (B3)
5. Teachers plan the integration of technology into the existing curriculum with the aid of the full-time computer teacher.
6. Using assessment results to evaluate curriculum and instruction is a strength of the HCJH faculty. A review of the curriculum and assessment results also precedes the evaluation and adoption of materials.

**Key Issues for Curriculum and Instruction** (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students

1. There is a need for the continued implementation of the evaluation process for student work. (B1)
2. The school should refine the existing criterion-referenced assessments that give them immediate feedback which they disaggregate and use to drive instruction, and will be used to accurately compare historical data. (B1)
3. As technology and staffing permits, the administration is encouraged to continue implementation of the Accelerated Reader program the curriculum schoolwide in addition to its use in the Success Program.(B1)
4. The school is encouraged to proceed with plans to expand instructional strategies via the disbursement of technology to each classroom and staff development. (B2)

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

Student Work/Samples

Professional Development Agendas

Teacher Lesson Plans

Interview with Organization for Student Learning Focus Group

Interview with Curriculum and Instruction Focus Group

Interview with Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth Focus Group

Interview with Resource Management and Development Focus Group  
Interview with FRM Board members, K-8 Superintendent, district representatives  
Interview with students, parents, staff, administration  
Classroom Observations  
Observation of Courses of Study  
Observation of ESLRs  
Observation of Master Schedule of Courses  
Review of Family Resource Ministries, Inc. Handbook/Board Meeting Minutes  
Review of of assessment data

## **C. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH**

### **What currently exists...**

#### **C1. Student Connectedness Criterion**

To what extent ...

§ *are students connected to a system of support services, activities and opportunities at the school and within the community that meet the challenges of the curricular/co-curricular program in order to achieve the expected schoolwide learning results?*

HCJH students have access to a variety of support services, activities, and opportunities. It is an area that the school indicates is highly effective and unique. Support services and activities include, but are not limited to: computer lab, library, Success program, student guidance and counseling (usually done by the principal), student profiles (available to teachers that help meet student needs), study hall, SOAR, and extra-curricular activities (athletics, music, yearbook, student council). Student involvement in special support services can be self-initiated, teacher initiated, or parent initiated.

#### **C2. Parent/Community Involvement Criterion**

To what extent ...

§ *does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to ensure that parental and community involvement is integral to the school's established support system for students?*

HCJH feels that one of the strengths of the school is the involvement of the parents and community. The Parent Teacher Fellowship (PTF) is highly visible on campus, helping in the classroom, with fundraising, volunteering at special events, etc. The school also maintains a close relationship with the City of La Mirada, participating in community activities, and keeping the community aware of the activities at the school. Communication appears to be one of the main priorities for HCJH. There is a coordinated, planned effort to encourage open lines of communication with students, parents, community, and staff. The school's use of technology to assist in communication and involvement was cited several times in the self-study and in discussions with parents, community and staff.

### **Areas of Strength for Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth Category** (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students

1. The integration of biblical principles throughout all school programs. (C1)

2. Student and parent focus group discussion highlighted the love and care from the administration and the school staff as well as among the students. (C1)
3. The availability of current technology as well as a full-time computer teacher and support system for students and staff. (C1)
4. The visiting committee commends cafeteria staff for their commitment to HCJH, and the culinary delights they provide daily. (C2)
5. The involvement of the Parent Teacher Fellowship activities on campus, and parental involvement with the school in a wide variety of areas/activities. (C2)
6. In discussions with parents, they expressed confidence in what was being taught in the classroom as well as the excellent communication with the teaching staff. They also cited the homework hotline, prompt return of phone calls by teachers, and the regular communication to parents from the school about school activities. (C2)
7. Parents and teachers both indicated their appreciation for the "open door" policy at the school. (C2)

**Key Issues for Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth Category** (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students

1. As technology and staffing permits, the administration is encouraged to continue implementation of the Accelerated Reader program the curriculum schoolwide in addition to its use in the Success Program. (C1)
2. Student focus group discussion indicated a high area of concern for the condition, maintenance, safety and smell of the rest rooms on campus. (C1)

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

Student Work/Samples

Professional Development Agendas

Teacher Lesson Plans

Interview with Organization for Student Learning Focus Group

Interview with Curriculum and Instruction Focus Group

Interview with Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth Focus Group

Interview with Resource Management and Development Focus Group

Interview with FRM Board members, K-8 Superintendent, district representatives

Interview with students, parents, staff, administration

Classroom Observations  
Observation of Courses of Study  
Observation of ESLRs  
Observation of Master Schedule of Courses  
Review of Family Resource Ministries, Inc. Handbook/Board Meeting Minutes  
Review of of assessment data

## **D. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

**What currently exists ...**

### **D1. Resources Criterion**

To what extent ...

§ *are the resources available to the school sufficient to sustain the school program and effectively used to carry out the school's purpose and student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results?*

The FRM Board is the governing body for Family Resource Ministries. The Board and the Executive Director oversee the functions of the K-8 Superintendent and the school. Each level has their own responsibilities and limits, with the Board as the ultimate approval source. FRM provides organizational support, budgeting, accounting, purchasing, maintenance and implementation, legal, safety training and support, human resources, support and resources for curriculum instruction, and technology support.

### **D2. Resource Planning Criterion**

To what extent ...

§ *do the governing authority and the school execute responsible resource planning for the future?*

The principal does not prepare budgets per se, but works with the Board, the Executive Director and K-8 Superintendent to determine school needs. The principal is responsible for staff resources on site. Office clerical staff collect tuition and deposit it into the FRM tuition account, using QuickBooks for this purpose. Fundraising revenue is placed in a separate account from tuition money.

FRM personnel visit the campus on a regular basis to plan improvements and identify needs. FRM has sufficient fiscal resources to support curriculum and instruction at the various elementary and junior high schools under their supervision based on current and anticipated enrollment. FRM entered into a long-term lease with the City of La Mirada for the Heights Christian Junior High School site. As enrollment at their school

increases, new sites for additional facilities will be found. FRM's philosophy is small learning communities (about 300 students each) which permit individual attention, care, and support for academic achievement.

**Areas of Strength for Resource Management and Development Category** (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students

1. Family Resource Ministries, Inc provides adequate support for HCJH, enabling the HCJH administration to focus on student learning, teacher instruction, and parent support. (D1)
2. FRM's commitment to the accreditation process and support for the school's identified schoolwide action plan; its monitoring and accountability. (D1)
2. The HCJH campus is located in a safe, residential area and has adequate space for its school programs. (D1)
3. FRM Board, the Executive Director, and school leadership are responsible for strategic, long-range planning for the school. (D2)
4. FRM's emphasis is on small learning communities. When numbers increase, new sites will be found. (D2)

**Key Issues for Resource Management and Development Category** (if any) that need to be addressed to ensure quality education for all students

1. HCJH feels there is a need for improved guidelines for the handling of cash on campus.(D1)
2. HCJH feels there is a need for an improved system of dealing with daily facility repairs and maintenance needs. (D2)

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

Student Work/Samples  
Professional Development Agendas  
Teacher Lesson Plans  
Interview with Organization for Student Learning Focus Group  
Interview with Curriculum and Instruction Focus Group  
Interview with Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth Focus Group  
Interview with Resource Management and Development Focus Group  
Interview with FRM Board members, K-8 Superintendent, district representatives  
Interview with students, parents, staff, administration  
Classroom Observations

Observation of Courses of Study

Observation of ESLRs

Observation of Master Schedule of Courses

Review of Family Resource Ministries, Inc. Handbook/Board Meeting Minutes

Review of of assessment data

Review of FRM/HCJH budgets

**Part B: Synthesize the strengths and key issues from all categories into schoolwide strengths and schoolwide critical areas for follow-up.** Include the information below.

§ **General comments about the emerging schoolwide strengths and critical areas for follow-up.**

The school and its stakeholders are commended for preparation of a thorough FOL self-study. All stakeholders in their various schoolwide and focus groups, as well as informal discussions helped the visiting committee analyze the existing school and its programs. Clarification of data and evidence were provided as needed or requested in a prompt and professional manner. The school leadership and the FRM Board provided resources and preparation for the school's self-study effort for their initial accreditation process. The visiting committee found the staff, parents, and students appreciative of the quality of education at HCJH. HCJH has a strong supporter in the Family Resource Ministries, Inc.

§ **Schoolwide areas of strength** (list numerically). Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.

1. The school's mission statement and ESLRs are clear and concise, and available to all students, staff, parents, and community. (A1)
2. HCJH's Washington, DC trip has been very successful and well-received by its students, staff, and parents. Each year about 150 students and 60 parent/chaperones are involved. (B2)
3. The integration of biblical principles throughout all school programs. (C1)
4. Student and parent focus group discussion highlighted the love and care from the administration, teachers and school staff as well as among the students. (C1)
5. In discussions with parents, they expressed confidence in what was being taught in the classroom as well as the excellent communication with the teaching staff. They also cited the homework hotline, prompt return of phone calls by teachers, and the regular communication to parents from the school about school activities. (C2)
6. FRM's commitment to the accreditation process and support for the school's identified schoolwide action plan; its monitoring and accountability. (D1)
7. FRM's emphasis is on small learning communities. When numbers increase, new sites will be found. (D2)

8. Teachers plan the integration of technology into the existing curriculum with the aid of the full-time computer teacher.
9. Using assessment results to evaluate curriculum and instruction is a strength of the HCJH faculty. A review of the curriculum and assessment results also precedes the evaluation and adoption of materials.

- § **Schoolwide critical areas for follow-up** that will do the following: (list numerically) Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.
1. The school feels there is a continued need to explore ways of giving “practical application” to academic core subject matter. (A6)
  2. The school should refine the existing criterion-referenced assessments that give them immediate feedback which they disaggregate and use to drive instruction, and will be used to accurately compare historical data. (A6)
  3. The school is encouraged to include follow-up and evaluation as part of both the staff development and professional development process. (A4)
  4. As technology and staffing permits, the administration is encouraged to continue implementation of the Accelerated Reader program the curriculum schoolwide in addition to its use in the Success Program. (B1)
  5. The school is encouraged to proceed with plans to expand instructional strategies via the disbursement of technology to each classroom and staff development. (B2)

## **CHAPTER V: Ongoing School Improvement**

The schoolwide action plan is focused on student achievement and based on self-study findings. The development of a comprehensive system of strategically employed assessments is the action item of highest priority. Teachers and administrators would like to expand their current assessment program to include longitudinal data from a variety of authentic and criterion-based assessments.

The planned increases in technology will support the assessment plans as well as staff and professional development, enabling multi-media presentations and increasing differentiated instruction. The leadership has plans to use technology for monitoring and reporting student progress.

The follow-up process that the school intends for monitoring of the schoolwide action plan appears to be adequate. The school is committed to continued development and the visiting committee encourages all staff members to embrace the school’s action plan, to adjust their teaching strategies as needed based on data received from student assessment.

1. **Assessment Plan** - Focus upon development and use of various assessments: formative, summative, standards-based assessment, development of assessment benchmarks, etc. to better track student achievement and to improve the instructional program for all students.

2. **Technology Plan** - Phase Three - Distribution of technology throughout the school, classrooms, offices, and campus. Phases One and Two have already been completed with their focus being on development of a computer lab and administrative technology.
3. **Professional Development/Staff Development Plan** - Develop and implement effective professional development plan with outside resources, in combination with current staff development plan to promote viable, research –based instructional strategies and teacher credentialing.
4. **Tutoring** - Development and implementation of effective academic support system for all students.

**Comment on the following school improvement issues:**

**Adequacy of the schoolwide action plan in addressing the critical areas for follow-up; Consider these questions:**

- *Do the action plan sections address the critical areas for follow-up?*
- *Will the action plan steps enhance student learning?*
- *Is the action plan a “user friendly” schoolwide action plan that has integrated all major school initiatives?*
- *Is the action plan feasible within existing resources?*
- *Is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and system wide?*

Based upon the school's self-study, discussions with their faculty, staff, administration and the FRM Board, the actions plans listed above do address the critical areas for follow-up. The highest priority is assessment and the other three action items will be integrated in support of the assessment program to improve student achievement of the school's ESLRs. Each plays a part in the overall improvement process for HCJH.

**Existing factors that support school improvement**

Family Resource Ministries, Inc., owners of Heights Christian Junior High, have the resources and personnel to accomplish needed school improvement areas. Their commitment is stated in their expected schoolwide learning results, their mission statement, and in discussions with their Board, K-8 Superintendent and school administrative staff. FRM has seen the need for increased support at HCJH and has provided additional specialized staff and resources to meet the school needs. FRM has also hired a K-8 Superintendent to work with all the corporation's schools in curriculum and instructional matters, including support for the schoolwide action plans of HCJH.

**Impediments to school improvement that the school will need to overcome in order to accomplish any of the action plan sections**

The FRM Board and the school are committed to the WASC accreditation process, including support and accomplishment of the action plans.

**Soundness of follow-up process to monitor accomplishment of schoolwide action plan**

The HCJH action plans are well thought out and supportive of the school's ESLRs. The plans were developed as part of the collaborative process involved in the school's initial accreditation process and have the support and commitment of the FRM Board, K-8 Superintendent, administration, school and staff.

The school indicated they will focus their initial action plan attention on the continued development of the assessment plan. Continued work on technology, professional development and tutoring services will facilitate progress on the assessment programs. The technology action plan is in its final phase of implementation. The next stage, which includes schoolwide distribution of technology is of high importance to all stakeholders and will forward many of the planned development in curriculum, instruction and assessment. All action plan areas are related and will support the overall success of HCJH; its programs, students and school.