WALDORF SCHOOL
ORANGE COUNTY

AWSNA/WASC - Description of Priorities for Future Work

Having completed a comprehensive self-study examining the school's implementation of AWSNA Principles and WASC standards, Waldorf School of Orange County (WSOC) has identified clear priorities for continued development. These priorities arise from an honest assessment of current practices and reflect the school's commitment to continuous improvement grounded in Waldorf education principles.

MAJOR GOALS

1. Governance Structure and Collaborative Relationships

WSOC rated Principle 7 (Governance and Leadership) at Level 3 on the Principle Assessment. While substantial progress has been made in revising governance structures and developing the WSOC Governance Matrix, the relationships among governing bodies do not yet fully reflect a living example of collaborative social renewal. Strengthening this area remains a key priority.

Specific areas for growth include:

- Strengthening systematic communication among the College of Teachers, Administration, and Board of Trustees
- Developing clearer and more transparent shared decision-making processes
- Ensuring all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities within the threefold governance structure

The school recognizes that healthy organizational relationships model the social principles it seeks to cultivate in students and form the foundation for all other institutional work.

What Stakeholders Should Understand

- Governance clarity improves efficiency and morale.
- Collaboration between realms (Board, College, Admin) is being strengthened.
- Decision-making structures are being clarified for transparency.
- Workload and responsibilities are being reviewed for equity and clarity.

2. Assessment and Data Collection Systems

Beginning in Spring 2025, WSOC implemented a multi-modal strengths assessment alongside standard academic assessment. This reflects a student-centered approach that moves beyond reliance on standardized testing while honoring Waldorf principles.

The next phase of work involves:

- Systematically collecting and analyzing assessment data
- Developing clear protocols for administration and interpretation
- Sharing findings with faculty and families in meaningful ways
- Using results to inform pedagogical decisions

The goal is to create assessment systems that provide valuable insights into student growth while remaining developmentally appropriate and aligned with Waldorf philosophy.

What Stakeholders Should Understand

- Assessment is being implemented thoughtfully and collaboratively.
- Teachers are involved in evaluation and refinement.
- Data collection supports student growth and instructional clarity.
- The process is phased, measured, and reviewed regularly.

3. Succession Planning and Teacher Development

Recognizing that faculty are the foundation of the school's strength, succession planning has been identified as a major priority. This involves intentionally identifying, recruiting, training, and mentoring new teachers to ensure continuity of educational excellence.

Key initiatives include:

- Strengthening mentoring programs for newer teachers
- Creating leadership development pathways within the faculty
- Building partnerships with Waldorf teacher training programs
- Developing comprehensive onboarding processes

WSOC acknowledges that succession planning requires sustained, proactive systems rather than reactive hiring practices.

4. Middle School Strengthening

The middle school has been identified as an area requiring focused attention to serve as a strong bridge to high school.

Priorities include:

- Expanding the sports program to provide age-appropriate physical challenges and team experiences
- Strengthening enrollment through enhanced programming and clearer communication
- Developing the mathematics program to ensure strong high school readiness
- Refining the advisory system to support students during this developmental transition
- Creating more opportunities for leadership and independence
- Strengthening alignment between middle school and high school programs

The goal is to ensure a cohesive and supportive progression through the upper grades.

What Stakeholders Should Understand

- Middle School growth is strategic and budget-supported.
- Staffing increases support academic rigor and student success.
- Parent engagement is part of program strengthening.
- We are investing in professional development and enrichment.

5. Facilities and Long-Term Stability

Securing a long-term lease remains a major institutional priority. Facility stability provides the foundation for program development, enrollment growth, and capital improvement planning.

In addition to lease security, priorities include:

- Planning for thoughtful facility expansion
- Improving existing spaces to better support educational needs
- Ensuring the campus reflects Waldorf aesthetic principles
- Meeting contemporary health, safety, and accessibility standards

Stable and well-designed facilities support both community confidence and long-term institutional planning.

What Stakeholders Should Understand

- Facilities stability is a strategic priority.

- We are proactively planning for long-term security.
- Communication with stakeholders remains a priority.
- We are responsible stewards of our campus and community partnerships.

MINOR GOALS

1. Alumni Association Development

WSOC values maintaining meaningful connections with alumni and creating pathways for Waldorf graduates to enroll their own children. Previous alumni initiatives proved overly ambitious given available resources, and the school has revised its approach to focus on sustainable, achievable efforts.

These include:

- Alumni enrollment incentives
- Legacy recognition programs
- Modest tuition incentives
- Outreach to both WSOC alumni and Waldorf graduates from other schools

The goal is to build a thriving multigenerational Waldorf community.

2. Financial Sustainability

Although currently financially stable, returning to and maintaining a balanced budget remains an ongoing priority.

This includes:

- Careful enrollment management
- Strategic development initiatives to strengthen the endowment
- Increased scholarship funding
- Prudent financial planning aligned with long-term goals

WSOC seeks financial systems that support educational excellence while remaining accessible to diverse families.

3. Enrollment Strength and Stability

Strong and consistent enrollment across grade levels supports both educational programming and financial health.

Future efforts will focus on:

- Enhancing admissions and marketing communications
- Strengthening retention strategies
- Ensuring programming meets the needs of contemporary families
- Maintaining stable middle school enrollment

Sustained enrollment strength ensures continuity and program vitality.

4. Facility Expansion

Beyond lease security, the school envisions expansion to meet future needs, including:

- Additional classroom space
- Enhanced specialty subject areas for arts and practical work
- Expanded garden and outdoor learning areas
- Gathering spaces for community events and performances

These improvements will be pursued systematically as resources allow, with priority given to those that most directly enhance the educational program.

5. Parent Engagement in Upper Grades

While parent involvement is strong in early childhood and elementary grades, participation tends to decrease in the upper grades. Strengthening engagement during these years is an important goal.

Strategies include:

- Creating volunteer opportunities appropriate to adolescent development
- Offering parent education programs focused on upper-grade developmental stages
- Building stronger social connections among high school families

The aim is to maintain robust school-family partnerships throughout the entire educational journey.