

ABBEVILLE CHRISTIAN
ACADEMY

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
PLAN

2009 – 2010

VISION

PROFILE

PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION

RESULTS

Part I: VISION

Overview: Narrative Description of the Process of Defining the School's Beliefs and Mission

In order to define the beliefs and mission of Abbeville Christian Academy, members of the staff, faculty, parents, former graduates, business leaders, and the board were given a school evaluation opinion inventory questionnaire. Once these inventories were returned and tallied, the beliefs and mission committee met to discuss the results of the survey.

These results were analyzed in light of information gained through our examination of our school profile, a study of the achievement level of our students, and the modifications needed to enable our students to succeed amid the changing expectations of today's workplace.

Once formulated, a comprehensive statement of our beliefs and our mission were written and were once again presented to the original committee and to a representative sample among our school population. All feedback data was then incorporated into our completed statement of our beliefs and mission.

Our Beliefs:

- Students' learning is the chief priority of our school.
- Students' learning needs are the primary focus of decisions impacting the work of our school.
- All students can learn.
- Students learn best when actively involved in the learning process.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs.
- A student's self esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect among and between students and staff.
- A safe, physically comfortable, and attractive environment promotes student learning.
- Teachers, administrators, parents, and the community share the responsibility for advancing the school's mission.

- The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative to ensure that our students will become high-principled, confident, self-directed, lifelong learners.

Our Mission:

The mission of Abbeville Christian Academy is to provide a safe Christian environment in which to develop well-educated, well-disciplined students with positive self-esteem, a sense of fair play, and the leadership skills needed for the 21st century.

ACA seeks to develop character, spiritual values, intellect, patriotism, leadership, and individuality of its students. Parental support and participation are vital to our program.

ACA will maintain a student-centered philosophy with realistic objectives, realizing that the student's well-being and education are the reasons for our existence. Through the instruction and guidance offered at Abbeville Christian Academy, we will strive to develop the following in each child:

- an understanding of our nation's history and development
- oral and written communication skills
- mathematical skills
- a knowledge of the world of science
- appreciation of our social and cultural heritage
- a knowledge of Christian religious values
- the ability to use sound logic in decision making
- appreciation of the arts
- appreciation of health, recreation, and hygiene
- an awareness of domestic and global economics
- a working knowledge of technological skills

ACA seeks to maintain high academic standards that will provide a sound foundation for students who pursue higher education or begin their careers immediately upon graduation.

Part II: PROFILE

Introduction:

The Abbeville Christian Academy school profile provides descriptive information about students and their performance, school effectiveness, and the school and community contexts. Data used reflects information collected during the five-year period of 2005-2009.

1. Students and Their Performance

The SAT 10, PSAT, PLAN, and ACT have provided the student performance data in this report. (Table 1) Based on the five year data for the ACT, Abbeville Christian Academy has seen a very slight decrease from an average composite of 21.93 to 21.85. Composite scores ranked above the state average during this time. During this five year period, approximately 93% of seniors have taken the ACT.

The PLAN average composite score over this same five-year period is 18.19. The mean test score on the PSAT over the five-year period is 45.5 for verbal and 45.5 for mathematics.

Complete battery scores on average for the SAT are: 2nd grade– 69 percentile, 4th grade-70 percentile, 6th grade- 66.8 percentile, and 8th grade 66.2 percentile. All four grades tested scored complete battery percentiles above the national average while the complete battery percentiles remained fairly consistent.

2. School Effectiveness

Abbeville Christian Academy has a high graduation rate, a low dropout rate and a very high percentage of students who go on to institutions of higher learning. (Table 2) The graduation rate is 100% and the dropout rate is 0%. Enrollment in the core curriculum at Abbeville Christian Academy is 100%. Over the past five years, 52.6% of ACA seniors have chosen to enroll in a four-year college or university upon graduation, while 46.2% have chosen to enroll in a two-year community college or technical school. Only 1.2% of our seniors have enlisted in the armed forces. Most of those who choose to start their college career in a two year program later choose to pursue a four year degree. These performance indicators are figured over a five-year period.

Abbeville Christian Academy has been successful in both academic and athletic events. The Math Team won the District IV Math Competition in 2005, 2007, and 2009. The Junior High Math Team won in 2007. The Academic Team won the State Envirobowl in 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2009. The team was also the AISA District Champions in 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 and was the Wallace Scholar Bowl champions in 2006. The Middle School Academic team was the state runner-up in 2007 and won the District Championship in 2007 and 2009. Abbeville Christian Academy has students who consistently place at the district level and participate in state competitions in spelling, art, and drama.

Abbeville Christian Academy students are given many opportunities to participate in competitions and programs which strengthen their spoken and written communication skills. Students from ACA traditionally either win or place in the Alabama Independent School Association's speech competition. Both the winner and the second place winner of this competition attend the state competition. ACA has won and placed in this state event as well. Annually, ACA participates in the Alabama Power Speech Competition. ACA students have won locally and at the state level in this competition also.

In addition, the ACA drama class prepares and presents four dramatic presentations at the AISA Drama Festival: an ensemble skit, a musical ensemble, a duet performance and a monologue, and has won or placed in each of these competitions. Every year one or more ACA students are selected for the AISA Drama Team. Additionally, the ACA drama class annually presents a drama or a comedy to the school and to the community at large. The journalism class has for the past three years attended Troy University's J-Day, winning "Best Overall" in the school newspaper competition for the past two years.

Another project to spotlight student communication skills is the publication of the *General Idea*, a compilation of poems, stories, and drawings of ACA students. This is published every other year by the AP English students. ACA students in grades 3-8 also participate in the annual AISA Writing and AISA Reading Competitions.

The athletic programs at Abbeville Christian Academy have also been outstanding. ACA won the AISA Class A State Baseball Championship in 2004 and 2009 and was in the Final Four in 2007 and 2008. In basketball the ACA varsity boys finished in the AISA Elite Eight in 2007 and the AISA Final Four in 2008. The ACA varsity softball team finished in the AISA Elite Eight in 2007 and 2009, and they competed in the AISA Final Four in 2009.

3. **School and Community Contexts**

Summary of Student Demographics: A summary of the student demographics has been compiled. Student enrollment for the past five years has decreased 29%. Abbeville Christian Academy has an enrollment of 168 students, 78 girls and 90 boys. The racial composition is 97% Caucasian and 3% Asian. Some of the students reside in single-parent households. These homes account for 16.8% of the total student population. This leaves 83.2% living in two-parent homes. All of the homes are considered to be in the middle to upper socio-economic level. The average daily attendance has ranged within a one percent deviation over this five year period. (Table 3)

Summary of Student Behavior Expectations: Rules and procedures for Abbeville Christian Academy students and parents are outlined in the student handbook, which is given to each student at the beginning of each school year. Parents and students are required to sign and return a form indicating that they have read, understand, and agree to follow the rules of Abbeville Christian Academy. Because of the continued effort of faculty and staff and the strong support of parents, Abbeville Christian Academy has few serious discipline problems and a very low dropout rate.

Summary of Community Demographics: Abbeville Christian Academy is a private school established in Abbeville, Alabama in 1970. Abbeville is located in Henry County in the southeastern corner of the state. Abbeville has an estimated population of 2,987 as of the 2000 census. Of those, 22.9% are residents under the age of eighteen. The racial make-up of the city is as follows: Caucasians 55%, African-American 39%, Asian 1%, and Hispanic 5%. (Table 3) The area is served by three public schools. The community has a mix of service industries, manufacturing industries, and retail businesses. Since 2005, the economic climate of Abbeville has changed drastically. The largest employer in Henry County, West Point Home, which employed around 1000 people, closed in 2007. Urrutia, Buster's IGA, and Red Jack's Restaurant have also closed in Abbeville. Several other business, including Herndon Oil Corporation, Great Southern Wood Preserving, and AWA Fabrication have reduced their workforces. No new industries have located in the immediate Abbeville area; therefore, many families have been forced to relocate to find jobs.

4. School Characteristics

Historical Background: In August, 1969, a town meeting was held in the courtroom of the Henry County Court House. A short time later, a meeting of all interested people was held at the First Baptist Church. This was the organizational meeting of the Henry County Private School Foundation.

The first students enrolled for classes before ground was broken on the new school. One new and one used school bus were purchased to transport the students to Dixie Academy in Louisville, AL for the school year 1969-1970. Many names were suggested for the new school. The name, Abbeville Christian Academy, was chosen to emphasize the desire for a school with a Christian environment. Five or six juniors and seniors met to discuss colors and a mascot. Colors chosen were red and gray, and the mascot was "The General".

The school opened in 1970, with an enrollment of about 350 students from first through twelfth grades. The first and smallest senior class of five students graduated in May, 1971. Marvin Tillis donated the land for the construction of the main building and later donated the gym, which he named for his son, Marcus L. Tillis. Kindergarten was added in 1972. This campus now includes the main building, gym, lunchroom, football field, press box, ticket booth, play area, parking area, a regulation size baseball/softball complex, and an early childhood building.

Thirty-nine senior classes have graduated from Abbeville Christian Academy. Graduates include doctors, lawyers, engineers, certified public accountants, nurses, FBI agents, teachers, and military veterans with twenty years of service or more. The largest class of thirty-one seniors graduated in 1997.

The first headmaster was Billy Adkins. The present headmaster Barbara Lindsey, a former teacher, has served for 20 years, the longest of anyone to date. Mrs. Lindsey is actively involved in the AISA. She was inducted into the AISA Hall of Fame class of 2002.

Abbeville Christian Academy has an award winning tradition. Abbeville Christian Academy has received the President's Award of Academic Excellence in 2000-2001, 2006-2007, and 2008-2009. The prestigious award is given to the school selected best in the state in its classification. In 2002, Abbeville Christian Academy won the Chairman's Award for the best overall athletic program in AISA Class A. The school also was recognized as a Blue Ribbon school in 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. This award is given by the AISA to schools that maintain a high level of

excellence in the areas of student and teacher performance, facilities, student life, and community involvement.

Facilities: Abbeville Christian Academy has excellent facilities. The school is located on an attractive, well-designed 25-acre campus. A new Early Childhood wing houses K4-2nd grade. Grades 3-12 and administrative offices are contained in the main building. The main building, including science and computer labs, was renovated in 2003.

The gymnasium is a large multi-purpose facility. In addition to the basketball court, it has a stage and serves as an auditorium for plays, pageants, and assemblies. It has dressing rooms, a coach's office, and areas for extracurricular club meetings. The gymnasium was renovated and expanded in 2003. New additions include a weight room, concession area, bathrooms, and a large foyer/trophy room.

The stand-alone cafeteria building is centrally located. All buildings have adequate bathrooms and are connected by covered walkways. There are three age-restricted playgrounds. The well-maintained football stadium, softball field, and baseball field are located behind the school. Abbeville Christian Academy has excellent facilities to handle growth and provide high quality education in a safe, controlled environment.

Student and Community Demographics: Abbeville Christian Academy is a private school in Abbeville (population 2,987). This is a rural community. The average household income of the community is below the state average and the average home price is \$58,900 by the 2000 Census. The racial makeup of the community is 55% Caucasian, 39% African-American, 5% Hispanic, and 1% Asian.

The 2009-2010 enrollment (K4 thru 12th grade) is 168, which is about 33 % lower than four years ago. There are 46% percent girls and 54% boys. The elementary class size averages 11 students per class and the high school averages 13.5 students per class. The attendance rate has ranged from 96% to 99.5% over the last four years. As mentioned earlier in this report, the Abbeville area has suffered tremendous economic setbacks in the past five years. The loss of jobs and the relocation of families have led to a drop in enrollment at ACA.

The 2009-2010 teaching staff on average is 49 years old and has an average of 19 years experience. They are 91% female and 9% male.

The operating expenditures per student were: ACA \$4140 vs. State average \$8398. (State expenditures are for 2008-2009) (Table 3)

Curriculum Offerings: Abbeville Christian Academy provides a variety of educational opportunities for its students. In keeping with the school mission, Abbeville Christian Academy uses the Bible-based ABEKA curriculum in most elementary classes and offers Bible classes in 8th and 10th grades. All students in grades 7-12 are required to take English, Math, Science, and Social Studies each year, along with 3 electives. Enrichment classes are offered at each grade level, including Study Skills, Bible, Speech, Drama, Humanities, Life Skills, Current Events, Health, and Music and Art Appreciation. Elementary students in grades K-6 have music thirty minutes per week, library time with librarian thirty minutes each week, P.E. daily with a P.E. instructor and aide, and an additional Bible class once a month. High school students must have 26 units for graduation. Abbeville Christian Academy offers two tracks, college prep and a general curriculum, but only one diploma. Students may earn ½ unit credit by completing 75 hours of community service.

Admission Requirements: Abbeville Christian Academy admits students regardless of race, religion, ethnic, or national origin. An application for admission must be completed, followed by a conference with the Headmaster. After a review of academic and discipline records, applications are presented to the Board of Directors for approval. All students must apply for admission annually.

Extra-curricular Programs: The extra-curricular activities of Abbeville Christian Academy are one of the distinguishing characteristics of the school. Students have the opportunity to participate in both academic competitions and recreational activities. Clubs which are a part of Abbeville Christian Academy include Junior and Senior Beta Clubs, Key Club, Fellowship of Christian Students, Junior High Choral, Academic Team, Drama Team, and a prize winning SGA. The SGA was voted “Best in State” in 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2009. The SGA and other clubs provide extra activities for both elementary and high school classes as well as sponsoring many projects during the school year, giving students opportunities to reach out and help others.

Instructional Resources/Learning Environment/Safety Conditions: Abbeville Christian Academy has a wide variety of instructional resources. Instructional materials are purchased through the general fund budget from tuition and fees, and are also purchased by the PTA and General’s Army. Both of these support organizations provide many needed resources by sponsoring annual fund raising projects.

Through projects, fees, and donations, improvements in the library and media facilities and in the technology systems have been made and are continuing. The PTA is in the process of adding additional playground equipment, while the General’s Army continually upgrades the athletic facilities.

Parental Participation and Support: Parents are tremendous assets of Abbeville Christian Academy. Parents work at all sporting events selling tickets and manning the concession areas. Parents act as chaperones at school functions, coordinate various activities, chair many projects, volunteer to coach athletic teams, and work to keep our campus clean and beautiful. Parents are welcomed and appreciated at Abbeville Christian Academy. They are a vital and integral part of our school program.

Parents also make up the governing body of the school. The ACA Board of Directors is an elected body which is responsible for ensuring that Abbeville Christian Academy is a school with a student-centered philosophy which seeks to maintain high academic standards that will provide a sound foundation for students who pursue higher education or begin their careers immediately upon graduation.

5. Target Areas for Improvement

Abbeville Christian Academy enlisted input from parents, teachers, students, and community members in determining target areas for improvement. Surveys and other descriptive data about the school and its students were used to obtain information about the quality of education offered at ACA. The surveys and other sources revealed information that has been helpful in identifying areas of strengths and areas to be targeted for improvement.

Following are the results of a few items surveyed.

- 94% of parents, 92% of students, 95% of teachers, and 100% of stakeholders feel that the education offered by ACA is of high quality.
- 82% of parents, 56% of students, 71% of teachers, and 100% of stakeholders feel that teachers use a variety of teaching methods and learning activities to facilitate in student learning.
- 82% of parents, 68% of students, 81% of teachers, and 83% of stakeholders feel that ACA recognizes student achievements of all kinds.
- 94% of parents, 76% of students, 90% of teachers, and 100% of stakeholders feel that ACA's facilities are adequate to support students' learning needs.

- 94% of parents, 80% of students, 90% of teachers, and 66% of stakeholders feel that all staff and students at ACA are treated with respect regardless of race, religion, or gender.
- 94% of parents, 84% of students, 86% of teachers, and 75% of stakeholders feel that ACA provides a safe and orderly environment.

After studying all information collected, the following were determined to be strengths of Abbeville Christian Academy:

1. High graduation rate/low dropout rate
2. Large percentage of students who pursue higher education
3. Success in academic and athletic competitions
4. Adequate facilities to support student learning needs
5. Variety of educational offerings for students
6. Bible-based curriculum with strong emphasis on Christian character development
7. Strong parent and community support
8. Safe and orderly environment
9. Variety of opportunities for students to participate in outreach programs in the community

The following were identified as target areas for improvement for Abbeville Christian Academy:

1. Need for improvement in standardized test scores in basic math skills, math and science applications, and reasoning skills.
2. Need for instructional programs which relate curriculum to real life issues.
3. Need for various methods and learning activities to facilitate student learning at all levels
4. Need for instructional activities that promote learning across the curriculum.

Part III: PLANS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

Introduction:

The purpose of the Abbeville Christian Academy Plan and Implementation component of the School Improvement Plan is to identify gaps between current and expected student performances, to set improvement goals, to determine interventions, and to develop action plans to address each goal.

In an attempt to identify gaps between current and expected student performance, and to determine improvement goals, the ACA Plan and Implementation committee analyzed student performance on the SAT 10, the PSAT, and the PLAN. The committee also reviewed the results of the Goals for Student Learning Survey which was given to teachers in grades K-12, and the Parent, Teacher, Student, and Stakeholder surveys. The purpose of analyzing the test data and survey results was to identify trends, to determine interventions, and to decide upon strategies for improvement.

Abbeville Christian Academy's student performance on the SAT 10 for grades, 2, 4, 6, and 8 from 2005-2009 has consistently met or exceeded state norms. The ACT composite scores, as well as the composite scores on the PLAN and PSAT also have met or exceeded the state average. ACA attributes these achievements to having a qualified, dedicated administrative and teaching staff, community and parental support, and high educational standards.

Moreover, teachers were asked to assess the extent of student achievement of essential goals in the Goals for Student Learning survey. The need for improvement in several skill areas was noted. Those skill areas were as follows: Thinking and Reasoning Skills, Expanding and Integrating Knowledge, and Learning-to-Learn Skills. Summaries of the parent, student, teacher, and stakeholder surveys also indicated areas which warrant attention. Many of those surveyed indicated the need for instructional programs which help students relate studies to everyday life and which enable students to deal with issues or problems in the future. The surveys also noted the need for students to use a variety of learning strategies, personal skills, and time management skills to enhance learning.

Also, in tracking class performance on the SAT 10 for grades 2-8, an inconsistency in achievement in critical thinking and reasoning skills and in problem solving skills was noted. Inconsistent scores in the mathematics section of the SAT 10 and in the science sections of the tests were also noted. Some of these same tendencies were noted in the ACT, PSAT, and PLAN tests given to students in the upper grade levels.

Based on the information gathered in the ACA Profile, and on the data gathered from standardized test scores, from student, parent, teacher, and stakeholder surveys, and from in-put from faculty members, students, and stakeholders, the ACA Plan and

Implementation Committee determined the goals and implementations for the ACA School Improvement Plan.

Improvement Goal 1: The Plan and Implementation committee determined that one of the goals should deal with mathematics:

Students in grades K-8 will improve their mastery of basic mathematical skills, mathematical application skills, and mathematical procedures skills.

Improvement Goal 2: The second goal is a continuation of one of the SIP goals from the previous self study:

Student in all grades will improve their critical thinking and reasoning skills, using what they know in order to gain knowledge and understanding and to develop skills.

Improvement Goal 3: The third SIP goal deals with student learning and the instructional program:

Students in all grades will improve their ability to expand and integrate knowledge, to connect experiences and information, and to apply multi-disciplinary approaches to learning.

Plan and Implementation

Goal 1: Abbeville Christian Academy K-8 students will improve their mastery of basic mathematical skills, application skills, and procedures skills.

Interventions and Actions:

- *Utilize all resources of the ABeka math program
- *Engage in daily reinforcement of basic math skills to show improvement in speed and accuracy of basic math facts
- *Continue to monitor SAT 10 scores
- *Utilize age appropriate math manipulatives and other hands-on applications
- *Utilize the Glencoe math program resources
- *Utilize the “Mastering Math” math program for supplemental teaching and skill reinforcement
- *Initiate across-the-curriculum activities
- *Utilize computer programs for skill practice
- *Utilize math web sites for practice and reinforcement
- *Utilize peer tutoring

Resources

- *School adopted textbooks
- *Compendium of SAT 10 Objectives
- *ABeka Scope and Sequence for K-8 Math
- *Collaboration and communication among teachers, K-8

- *Computer programs
- *Scoring High materials
- *SAT preparation materials

Methods and Measurement and Timelines

- *ABeka tests-----Weekly
- *McGraw Hill/Glencoe tests----- Weekly
- *Teacher made tests -----Weekly
- *Mathematics sections of SAT 10----- Annually

Responsibilities

- *Teachers in grades K-8
- *Administrators

Goal 2: Students in all ACA grades will improve their critical thinking and reasoning skills, using what they know in order to gain knowledge and understanding and to develop skills.

Interventions/Actions

- *Identify opportunities in the language arts, mathematics, science, and social science curricula to reinforce development of problem-solving skills.
- *Incorporate problem-solving skills into classroom assessment
- *Develop grade-level assessments that incorporate knowledge and application of problem-solving skills and that measure students’ effective use of higher thinking skills
- *Identify teaching and assessment methods that promote development of problem-solving skills in language arts, mathematics, social science, and science
- *Incorporate student-centered activities that promote discovery
- *Share information across grade levels about effective teaching and assessment methods for problem-solving and critical thinking and reasoning skills
- *Review current curriculum to develop teaching strategies to improve higher-order thinking and reasoning skills throughout the curriculum

- *Provide students with thinking and reasoning activities and projects using technology
- *Provide students with opportunities and activities across the curriculum to apply thinking and reasoning skills
- *Incorporate technology which focuses on improving higher order thinking skills

Resources:

- *School adopted textbooks
- *Compendium of SAT 10 objectives, PSAT preparation materials and evaluation data, ACT preparation materials and evaluation data, and PLAN preparation materials and evaluation data
- *Collaboration and communication among all faculty
- *Computer programs
- *Staff development workshops
- *Teacher generated activities/projects
- *Supplemental books/videos

Methods for Measurement and Timelines:

- *Teacher made tests, projects, experiments, etc.-----Weekly
- *Standardized tests and evaluation data----- Annually
- *Teacher feedback-----Weekly

Responsibilities:

- *Teachers in grades K-12
- *Librarian
- *Administrators

Goal 3: Students in grades K-12 will improve their ability to expand and integrate knowledge, to connect experiences and information, and to apply multi-disciplinary approaches to learning.

Interventions/Actions:

- *Initiate plans across the curriculum to utilize a variety of learning strategies
- *Plan activities which give students opportunities to connect experiences and information from different subject areas
- *Provide opportunities for students to use a variety of personal skills and talents
- *Initiate a career development program for all grade levels
- *Evaluate curriculum in terms of preparing students from real-life situations

- *Evaluate the instructional programs to determine which programs relate to student interests and needs
- *Evaluate ACA facilities and resources in terms of meeting student learning needs
- *Incorporate technology which provides multi-disciplinary approaches to learning

Resources:

- *Student surveys
- *Parent surveys
- *Career planning guides
- *College/technical school manuals
- *College/technical school representatives
- *Shadowing programs
- *Staff development workshops to illustrate various teaching methods

Methods for Measurement and Timelines:

- *Student assessments by teachers -----Weekly
- *Standardized test results-----Annually
- *Career fair participation----- Bi-annually
- *Student/Parent surveys-----Bi-annually
- *Student participation in elective classes-----Annually

Responsibilities:

- *Teachers in grades K-12
- *Librarian
- *Administration

Part IV: RESULTS

The purpose of the Results section of the SIP is to address the results of the findings from the SACS and AISA Accreditation review of 2005. Because of fluctuating SAT-10 scores in grades 2, 4, 6, and 8, Abbeville Christian Academy's first goal was to demonstrate increased development of higher order thinking skills and problem-solving abilities. Teachers across the curriculum re-evaluated strategies used in problem-solving and critical thinking, finding different ways to implement these skills.

As a result, Math Problem Solving scores on the SAT-10 (one way to track success) rose from 2006-2008 in grades 2 and 8. Scores for Grade 6 in the same content area rose considerably from 2005-2008 and with one slight loss in 2007. Fourth Grade Math Problem Solving scores continued to fluctuate with no real pattern. Math Problem Solving scores for 2009 fell in all grades except 4th where there was a gain. Thinking skills as measured by the SAT-10 fell yearly from 2005-2008 for the 4th grade, rose yearly from 2005-2008 for the 6th grade, and fluctuated from year to year for the 8th grade.

In high school, the Explore Test, which was given only in the even years, resulted in increasing math and science reasoning scores, though neither subtest reached the benchmarks set for ACA. The Plan Test, given to ACA tenth graders, measured math and science reasoning scores above the national average for 4 out of 5 years.

The mean ACT score for all Abbeville Christian Academy seniors on the Mathematics subtest for 2005-2009 is 19.9 with the state average 19.5. However, according to ACT Research, it is the rigor of coursework – rather than the number of core courses – that has the greatest impact on ACT performance and college-readiness. Those ACA college-bound students who took more advanced math courses which include Algebra I, II, III, Pre-Calculus, and Geometry averaged 23.0 for the same 5 year period, while their peers statewide averaged 21.1. The benchmark for math is 22. The mean ACT score for all ACA seniors on the Science Reasoning subtest for 2005-2009 is 20.1, which meets the state mean score. The average score for ACA's college-bound students who took the more advanced courses of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics is 21.7, exceeding the state average of 20.9. The benchmark for Science is 24.

Even though steps have been taken to ensure success in problem-solving and critical thinking, this area continues to be a concern and will continue to be included in one of our goals for continuing school improvement.

The second goal was to demonstrate the effective use of communication skills across the curriculum. Teachers have made effective communication a priority in working to improve student abilities in this area. The focus of their efforts has been on written and oral communications. Elementary students present oral book reports and science projects to their peers. They work math problems on the board before their peers. In high school,

students present oral book reports, history projects, math projects, science experiments, and English PowerPoint presentations. Students in grades 4-8 participate in the AISA Spelling Bee Competition. Several students have placed in the top three at State, including first place in the eighth grade in 2008. Students are given the opportunity to enter the AISA Speech Contest. ACA has had several winners at the local level over the last few years.

Students are given many opportunities to express themselves through written communications. Students at ACA participate in the AISA Writing Contest and the VFW Writing Contest. All students are given the opportunity to write poems and stories throughout the year. The Journalism Class at ACA sponsors a school newspaper, which has won several awards for excellence throughout the last 5 years. These students are also featured writers for the local city newspaper. This class also published The General Idea, which is a collection of stories, poems, and thoughts of ACA students. This is a means of encouraging the creative writing spirit of those in attendance at ACA.

Many high school students are eager to perform. Students are willing to take part in assemblies and in club activities that encourage them to communicate with others. The Drama Club has had several students over the last 5 years to make the AISA All-State Drama Cast. The Drama Club has presented a play in the spring for four of the last five years. The Student Government Association is involved in many community service projects throughout the year. These projects allow students to actively communicate with others outside the school (Make-A-Difference Day, September 11 remembrance). The faculty and administration continue to promote effective communication abilities at ACA.

The third goal was to provide a personal and social responsibility in which students will demonstrate honest and ethical behavior and act with integrity. The faculty led daily routines and presented research-based strategies to promote character building skills at various levels. The school participates in many "helping others" programs, thus instilling the awareness to help others. ACA has a plan of action in effect should a student cheat or plagiarize. Students know the consequences and are confident that they will be punished. Students are always encouraged to demonstrate self-control by having good sportsmanship at PE and sporting events. ACA has also adopted a Character Education Handbook which includes a school motto which emphasizes personal integrity, school programs used to promote character training, and ways to recognize honest and ethical behavior.

Goal One:

Demonstrate increased development of higher order thinking skills and problem-solving abilities

Actions: Teachers across the curriculum re-evaluated, researched, developed, and implemented strategies to be used to develop both skills. Lower-elementary teachers used open-ended stories and daily journals to answer questions or describe situations on a

different level. Students used imagination exercises to develop an understanding for other living things, people, or objects.

In upper elementary school, teachers use real-life applications in math problems, the scientific method and trial and error in science, and essay questions that involve “how” and “why” questions. *Daily Critical Thinking Warm-ups* are used in language.

In high school English classes, students use creative writing to encourage critical thinking skills. Teachers use literature selections that deal with problem-solving situations, and students are grouped to develop ways to solve the character’s problems or to decide what they (the students) would do in similar situations.

Math and science teachers use application problems daily. More open-ended questions are used in class. Strategies have been incorporated that require students to compare and contrast, infer, and judge scientific principles. Students must draw conclusions, predict, or form hypotheses based on what they have learned.

In history, students must analyze secondary sources, evaluating the reliability of the source. Students are required to evaluate, compare and contrast, and analyze historical materials. AP US History is taught.

Results: There have been some positive results as evidenced by recent SAT and ACT scores. Problem solving skills in math for the 8th grade were 17% higher than the previous year. ACT scores for those students who took upper level math classes exceeded the ACT benchmark for math. Several students scored well above-average on the science reasoning part of the ACT test. On the 2009 SAT-10 test, 33% of the 4th and 8th grade students scored above average on Thinking Skills, while 50% of the 6th graders scored above average on the same content area. This area continues to be a concern for ACA, and will continue to be a part of the new School Improvement Plan.

Goal Two:

Demonstrate effective use of communication skills across the curriculum

Actions: ACA teachers have made effective communication skills across the curriculum a priority.

Teachers have increased the opportunities for students to express themselves in the classroom and outside the classroom. Students are making presentations before their classmates in the form of oral book reports, working math problems on the board, science project reports, history project reports and PowerPoint presentations. Students also participate in several writing contests throughout the year. Student writers sponsor the school newspaper and write for the local newspaper, which helps our students communicate not only with the student body but also with the local community.

Teachers have encouraged students to participate in assemblies and other programs, which allow them to practice their communication skills. Parents and guests on campus have complimented the students on their abilities to speak and perform before others.

Results: Improvement in communication skills is evident as students have been given more opportunities to practice these skills. Parents, campus visitors and the local community have commented on the abilities of ACA students to communicate through written or oral communications.

Goal Three:

Demonstrate honest and ethical behavior and act with integrity

Actions: Students at ACA begin each day with devotion, prayer, pledge to the American flag and recitation of the school motto. Students are given the opportunity to voice prayer requests and memorize Bible verses.

For character building, students participate in character building programs on various levels. The A-Beka curriculum, used in many elementary classes, uses character building as a primary component. Good manners are encouraged and expected at all times. Manner classes have been taught to students to provide proper knowledge of table manners and formal social settings. The Laugh and learn Life Bible Skill series is used in the second grade, providing the opportunity to stimulate imagination, sense of humor and character development. Life skills include sharing, kindness, honest, gratitude, obeying, and caring. The Chick-fil-A Character Education program has been implemented with using the word of the month to help remind students to develop that character trait. High school English teachers look for literature with moral dilemmas. This creates opportunities for classroom discussions about proper actions, morals, and decision-making techniques.

The school participates in various “helping others” programs, thus instilling the awareness to help others. Grades 9-12 may earn ½ unit of credit by earning at least 75 hours of volunteer hours. All students are encouraged to participate in food drives, contribute to needy families, to support the March of Dimes and Relay for Life programs, and to collect pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. Students are encouraged by the staff of doing good deeds, helping others, individual recognition, and Good Citizenship Awards.

ACA has a plan of action in effect should a student practice dishonesty (cheating, plagiarizing) in their schoolwork. Students are aware of the consequences of this type of inappropriate behavior.

Results: Visitors and parents who visit our school routinely compliment our students on their behavior, their politeness, and their attentiveness. Students who go off campus for various events are also complimented for their behavior and demeanor. Students are well

prepared with the knowledge to demonstrate honest and ethical behavior and act with integrity.

Recommendations from the Review Team

The purpose of this division is to address the recommendations made by the 2005 Accreditation team:

1. The School Improvement Plan should be implemented in adherence with the plan's timetable.
Result: Efforts have been made to implement all phases of the 2005 School Improvement Plan. Annual SACS and AISA reports were filed as requested. End of year faculty progress reports were required for each SIP goal.
2. The Abbeville Christian Academy is strongly encouraged to continue the process of teacher and student evaluation presented in the self-study.
Result: Efforts have been made to continue the process of teacher and student evaluation as presented in the self-study.
3. The ABEKA curriculum should be supplemented with materials and books correlated to the SAT-10 and Alabama Course of Study.
Result: Efforts are ongoing to supplement the ABeka curriculum. Web sites and other technology systems have been employed.
4. Staff development activities focused on effective use of student performance data should be scheduled.
Result: Staff development activities have been scheduled to focus on effective use of student performance data. Faculty members have participated in these activities during orientations sessions, faculty meetings, AISA Professional Development Day, Troy University In-Service sessions, and many other staff improvement events.
5. A broad-based search for effective learning strategies and programs for lower achieving students should be a continuing administrative priority.
Result: Providing effective learning strategies and programs for lower achieving students continues to be an area of concern at ACA. Technology programs, teacher directed activities, student tutors, various evaluation methods, staff development activities, faculty sessions, library programs, and extra-curricular programs have all been used to reach the needs of lower achieving students.