

Baxter Academy for Technology & Science

90-Day Visit – November 7, 2013

Summary of visit

School Social and Academic Climate: The school atmosphere was described as “good as it gets”. Teachers and students appeared to be highly motivated. Students reiterated often how glad they were to be at Baxter. There is obvious strong connection of respect between teachers and students. There did not appear to be a wall of separation of we and us. It was very clear that the teachers are fully invested in the institution and are passionate about its success. When problems arise, they are handled immediately and with all concerned involved. The students have written a code of conduct called “Baxtitation”. They have also developed a judiciary board and disciplinary policy. A parent shared how the discipline of a student was monitored, tracked, and corrected via engagement of their mentor which was very persuasive and compelling, especially to the parent.

The current student population is 126 students, residing in 11 communities.

The Department of Special Education indicated they are satisfied with the services being provided to the students. One recommendation is to hire a temporary office assistant to organize a system for maintaining timelines and paperwork in compliance with the regulations.

Parent and Community Engagement: Parents seem fully engaged with Baxter. The night of our visit there was an open house with the 9th grade students first “Community Project” Presentation. Over 90% of parents were in attendance. Parents indicated a high-level of understanding of the school’s activities and its challenges. Interviews reveal strong support for the school. Parents appreciated the direct communications from school, are pleased that their children are anxious to go to school and that Baxter is a safe environment for their children. The board indicated that they will catalogue time and create a plan to develop an IT-based product to track involvement and volunteer work.

Financial Performance and Sustainability: The financial picture of the school has greatly improved with the \$500,000 sale of the donated land. The loan from a local foundation has been repaid and \$100,000 matching grant accomplished. The school is on strong financial position for the remainder of year one. A company has been hired to develop grant writing options.

Governance Board Performance and Stewardship: The board appears cohesive and with planning for expansion and succession in a thoughtful manner. The board is in the process of interviewing candidates with special needed talents to join them. They are working on a strategic plan to be adopted by end of year. At the moment they feel they have been in repair and rebuilding mode. They need to be sure their minutes and board meetings are posted in a timely manner.

Student Academic Proficiency & Growth: Testing is just beginning to get underway with NEWA and PSAT's testing scheduled for November. Internal assessment are underway and have identified the pathway for ensuring that students who came with uneven backgrounds are moved forward. "Infinite Campus" is not up and running yet but is expected to be completed in December.

Adequacy of Facilities Maintenance in support of Program: Facilities are excellent. Our only concern is the monthly lease fee which is high.

Review Team:

Jana Lapoint, John Bird, Ande Smith