

Executive Summary

Roy J. Wasson High School was established in 1960 and named after one of the longtime superintendents of Colorado Springs School District 11. Dr. Roy J. Wasson was selected as Superintendent in 1942. He was a trained educator and a graduate of Cornell University. His intelligence, training, wisdom and foresight served the district exceptionally for nearly 40 years. The challenges that faced Dr. Wasson were to navigate the district through extreme growth when the student population doubled in a 10-year period, and stay within the fiscal restraint of school financing.

During Wasson's grand opening, Dr. Wasson stated "What reputation Wasson High School earns in the future can in no way be assured by its name, even if it were the most illustrious name in history. The opportunity is yours to create a tradition and make a reputation for your school; it is yours to write on the blank pages of the future."

Now, 49 years later District 11 is again experiencing change. The students are more diverse with different needs, and many students have chosen to attend newer schools. One thing that has not changed over the years is the balance of fiscal restraint and meeting the needs of our students.

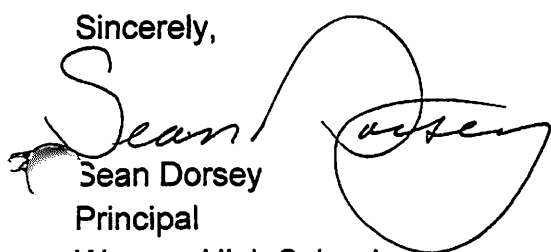
Dr. Wasson's statement about reputation and opportunity is still valid today and District 11 designed this plan to embrace and refresh the Wasson tradition and expand the prospect of opportunity. This plan includes five bold goals:


1. To become a Colorado School of Innovation
2. To offer a strong Freshman Innovation Academy
3. To offer an Art Academy that includes Culinary and Communications Arts
4. To offer a Law Academy
5. To offer a Science Academy

In this plan, you will see evidence of plans and research on student achievement. You will also see a curriculum that will incorporate environmental courses across the subjects, a strong AVID program, professional development, partnerships, and career pathways.

We are motivated, excited, and will provide the leadership required to see that the needs of our Wasson students will be met and that we will become a Colorado School to be watched and modeled after.

Sincerely,


Sean Dorsey
Principal
Wasson High School


Nicholas M. Gledich Ed. D.
Superintendent
Colorado Springs School District 11

January 27, 2010

Dear Members of the Colorado Springs School District Eleven School Board:

My name is Brett M. Derickson and I am a proud veteran social studies teacher at Wasson High School. It is with great confidence and conviction that I write this letter of endorsement for Wasson High School's Innovation Plan Proposal for 2010. This remarkable concept, legitimized by the Innovation Schools Act of 2008, is not conceived out of desperation, but through the hard work of visionary, passionate, and dedicated education professionals. It goes without saying that Wasson needs creative, research-based, and responsible structures if we are to become a school of choice in district eleven. The important structures detailed in our innovation plan will meet the unique needs of our stakeholders.

As the innovation plan was introduced, I asked myself three critical questions. Why is an innovation plan necessary? What does this innovation plan allow Wasson to do differently, and therefore, better? How do I know that the plan is sustainable?

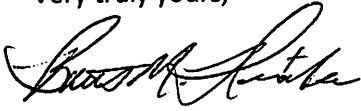
An innovation plan is necessary because Wasson has the staff, facilities, leadership, and dynamic student body to be an explosive institution; yet we struggle in comparison to other schools in our region. Therefore, our principal, Sean Dorsey, in conjunction with internal and external consultants researched, studied, deliberated, debated, and forged a means by which the Wasson community can take control of its own academic culture to the maximum benefit of the staff and students they are pledged to educate. An innovation plan is necessary for two basic reasons – 1) our students deserve to have their unique academic and social needs fully met, and 2) we need the freedom to hold ourselves to heightened accountability standards while creating the staffing that specifically addresses the needs of our students. Our innovation plan will meet both of these lofty objectives.

I anticipate that the school board must be assured that our innovation plan will use research-based and proven structures to truly move Wasson forward while remaining sustainable over time. Our innovation plan details how Wasson will operate efficiently, and most importantly, more effectively in every aspect. Our teachers will be evaluated more rigorously, receive unique supports to improve instruction, and have voice in the development of school policies incomparable to any high functioning school community I have ever studied. Our administration will be able to re-design the job descriptions of critical staff positions to meet our students' needs. Furthermore, our administration can fill those positions with highly effective, innovative personal that can truly make a difference. Most importantly, Wasson can take the lead in the entire region by designing an authentic 21st century skills educational programs featuring career pathways that foster relevant education experiences for students, service learning opportunities and requirements enabling all academic interests to apply their knowledge and skills with civics projects that are life changing and community altering, and, most importantly, all Wasson students will have multiple opportunities to do career exploration and internships that fuse their academic studies with real-world experiences most college graduates never get to experience. A high school education must be a catalyst to a happy, fulfilled, and effective life. This is the lens by which Sean Dorsey and his consultants have designed the Wasson Innovation Plan. Wasson graduates of the next decade will be leaders, and their education will be the cornerstone of their success.

It is with sincere belief that our innovation plan, in combination with our motivated, quality teaching and support staff, can begin to bring our dynamic student body to the forefront of the region's most energized school district. Additionally, this innovation plan was guided by our district's seven goals and the ACHIEVE model. Three years ago the school board authorized the Wasson staff's recommendation for to hire Sean Dorsey as our principal of the future. In his second year, our community and Wasson staff fought hard to maintain our school under the auspice

that we would reinvent our school. We recognize that we cannot return to business as usual, and our confident staff stands by this bold innovation proposal. Please give your blessing to Sean Dorsey, his forward thinking and support staff, and the eager students that comprise the Wasson community by supporting the Wasson Innovation Plan.

Very truly yours,



Brett M. Derickson
Social Studies Department
Wasson High School

January 20, 2010

To Whom It May Concern and the D-11 School Board:

As not only a alumnus of Wasson High School, but also parent of a 2005 graduate and a current Junior at Wasson, I am pleased to be writing in support of the proposal for Wasson High School to be designated as a School of Innovation.

I have witnessed first-hand the evolution of not only Wasson, but of D-11. As we face budget cuts one after another, school closures and boundary changes, Wasson's staff and community have held strong searching for ways to support the future of our students. Under the auspices of Principal Sean Dorsey, the Wasson administration has formulated a comprehensive plan ready to implement for Wasson's School of Innovation designation.

I strongly believe that the staff at Wasson as a whole, support personnel, administration and teaching staff, are the ideal candidates in D-11 to implement this plan. Despite having no feeder schools currently designated, our Math and Science programs continue to draw in students. The Arts Programs have city-wide name recognition. The business plan being proposed is one of great thought and after reviewing the plan, I cannot imagine a high school in Colorado Springs better positioned to prove the efficacy of becoming an innovation school and thereby not only serving the Wasson community, but also serving the needs of our District and the City of Colorado Springs well into the future.

I strongly urge you to support this plan, Principal Dorsey and the Wasson staff and community.

Sincerely,



Lisa Clagett
Alumnus 1979
Current Parent & Supporter
BAAC Chair and Member 2005-2010

6771 Cabin Creek Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80923
January 24, 2010

District 11 Board of Education
1115 N El Paso Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Dear Board,

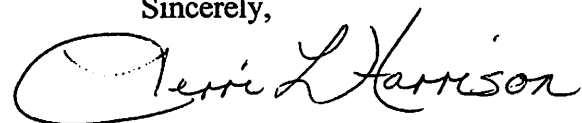
Over the past four years, I have been one of the most vocal critics of Wasson High School, but also one of its strongest supporters. I have always believed in the school and have only expressed dissatisfaction with the intent of making it a better place for the students within its walls. With this in mind, I would like to offer my support for Wasson High School's application to be a Colorado School of Innovation.

I have always felt that Wasson was a school with a great deal of potential. I believe that the proposal, that I have seen, will allow Wasson to again achieve positive academic notoriety. I believe it will also allow the arts program to finally reach its full potential. This is an area that I have a great deal of interest in, as it is the reason that we utilized a choice permit to allow our daughter to attend Wasson. My daughter is a senior this year and will not be there to experience the changes that this proposal could bring about, but I hope that others will be able to as it will enhance their educational opportunities.

My family believes that volunteerism is a very important part of being part of and growing in a community. I am encouraged by the Service Learning aspect presented in the proposal. I believe that it will enhance the life of every student that participates.

I whole-heartedly encourage the board to provide the necessary staffing and financial support to allow the School of Innovation proposal to succeed. I believe that the staffing exceptions and site specific requests made in the proposal will allow Wasson High School to achieve excellence in the classroom. I also believe that without the financial support it will only be a plan on paper and never reach fruition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Terri L. Harrison". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Terri L. Harrison
Wasson Parent

March 11, 2010

Board of Education
Colorado Springs School District 11
1115 N. El Paso St
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Dear Members of the Board,

The purpose of this letter is to endorse the proposal being submitted by Roy J. Wasson High School to be considered as a school of innovation. I have been a teacher at Wasson for 11 years, and I understand the unique climate and diverse clientele of the school.

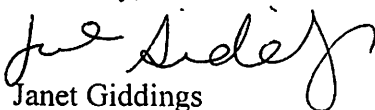
We have great students who want to be successful at college or in a career, but need additional support. Administration and staff at Wasson have been researching, developing, providing, and revising the required support. We implemented a Freshmen Academy concept that transitions students to high school, innovative RtI programs to address both academic and behavioral barriers to achievement, and tutoring that is available after school and Saturdays to provide additional opportunities to succeed academically. But our student failure rate remains higher and our student graduation rate remains lower than I find acceptable.

We also have really bright students who need no additional support to be successful at college or in a career, but who need additional enrichment to keep them challenged, focused, and engaged in their education. We offer honors, Advanced Placement, and college credit classes, as well as mentorships, partnerships, and certifications. Some of our graduates are phenomenal successes. But overall our students' ACT and AP scores, college enrollment, and college scholarships are all lower than I find acceptable. Minority student enrollment and success in our upper level classes is also lower than I find acceptable.

We have many dedicated, enthusiastic, and highly qualified staff who keep student success in the forefront of all they do. While I take great joy in my work and tremendous satisfaction in Wasson's successful students, it is heartbreaking for me that so many of our students, both low-performing and high-performing, aren't attaining their full potential.

It is obvious to me that we need to make major changes to successfully serve all of our students. The proposed innovation plan will allow Wasson administration and staff to make the changes needed for our unique and diverse population. The flexibility offered through the innovation plan will allow academic differentiation so that more students can get the support, challenges, and enrichment needed for post-secondary success. I firmly believe that the innovation plan will allow me to better serve my students. For all these reasons, I support and endorse Roy J. Wasson High School's application for designation as a school of innovation.

Sincerely,


Janet Giddings



El Paso County Sheriff's Office

Terry Maketa, Sheriff



February 17, 2010

Ms. Mary Ley
Project Director
Colorado Springs School District 11
1115 North El Paso Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Dear Ms. Ley,

I have reviewed the innovative school information you submitted as it pertains to Wasson High School and was quite impressed with the magnitude and scope of the project. The fact that your project will afford students the opportunity to obtain a high school education, while simultaneously paving a career pathway and connection to the community, is a tremendous asset for students.

I am also intrigued by the law and leadership academy, which will afford students the opportunity to obtain knowledge in a specialized elective curriculum and impart that knowledge by requiring community service. I truly believe citizens, regardless of age, are more concerned with the quality of life indicators in their community when they are actively involved. This, coupled with the Civil & Criminal Law tract, should provide a strong foundation from which to build upon for careers within the criminal justice arena.

Therefore, please accept this letter as my support and endorsement of your project. If the El Paso County Sheriff's Office can offer any further assistance in your endeavor, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Terry Maketa'.

Terry Maketa
Sheriff

Commitment to Excellence

Support Services Bureau

210 S. Tejon St. • Colorado Springs, CO 80903
719-520-7100

Office of the Sheriff

Law Enforcement Bureau

101 W. Costilla • Colorado Springs, CO 80903
719-520-7155
shr.elpasoco.com

Criminal Justice Center

2739 E. Las Vegas St. • Colorado Springs, CO 80906
719-390-2106