

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Building Partnerships for Improving
Educational Performance for Weipat High
School Students

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INTRODUCTION

Our Islands, Our School, Our Responsibility

Weipat High School is located on the island of Onoun (formerly, Ulul), one of the five islands in the Namonweito Atoll in the Northwest region of Chuuk State, Micronesia. The school was named after two of the island groups that make up the Northwest region; namely, Weito and Pattiw. Wei is short for Weito, and Pat signifies Pattiw. Hence, the name "WeiPat."

The major goal for Weipat High School is to prepare each student, academically, culturally, spiritually, and physically, for the hope to bring them to advanced learning and success in colleges and beyond.

The people from the Northwest Region have considered Weipat High School as truly "ours". We have assumed responsibility for her care and growth; we have received it and made it our own. We feel a sense of attachment to the school. It is truly Northwestese, truly "ours". That is why Weipat High School is still standing strong today. With the help of this Student Improvement Plan we look forward to seeing more success.

Furthermore, the people of the Northwest region have chosen "student first" as the theme for the school. It communicates our common desire and responsibility to keep the focus on the growth of our students and their success while at Weipat High School and in the future.

Weipat High School is very proud of her own success. Since the founding of the school 48 years ago many of her graduates have taken active roles in many different fields in our government in Chuuk and abroad. Some have died with the seal of success on their graves. Many others have been taken some other responsibilities in other prominent areas with great achievements.. With the guidance of the school board, administration, faculty and staff, we are confident that Weipat High School will continue to produce more competent students.

We stand united as a community to reaffirm our support for this our community school. We seek the help of the State in the improvement of our school. We extend the invitation to the sons and daughters of Weipat living beyond the horizon of our nation to join our efforts to review our pride in our school. We invite global partners from around the world to help us meet the needs of our children. We will never rest until every student that graduates from Weipat is able to successfully navigate their own canoe through life. This is our destiny to, as our motto says, "Sail Beyond Our Horizon" to help our graduates become active members of society and live successful lives as the founders of this school envisioned for their descendants. After all, these are our islands, this is our school, and our responsibility!

SCHOOL HISTORY

The Early Years

The concept of a school for the outer islands began when Chuuk was still part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. In those early years in the fifties and sixties elementary education was from the first to six grades and Intermediate level was from seventh up to ninth grade. There was only one intermediate school in Chuuk called Truk Intermediate School located on the main island of Weno. If they qualify, graduates from the Truk Intermediate School would go on to attend the Pacific Islands Teachers Training School (PITTS) which trained the top students from the other intermediate schools within the Trust Territory. Graduates from PITTS could either find employment in the government's central offices in their district or go on to continue their education in college. Xavier High School was the only other college preparatory school at the time, but was highly selective.

To enter into the Truk Intermediate School, students had to pass an entrance test that was administered at the end of the sixth grade. It was not unusual for students who did not pass the entrance exam to drop out of school altogether. It soon became obvious that outer island students from the Northwest regions were at a disadvantaged because of the lack of educational resources; very few sixth graders from the Northwest region passed the entrance examination. Consequently, the drop out rates among outer island students was alarmingly high in those days as there were no other alternative to further their education beyond the already limited opportunities.

In 1964 Mr. Ermes Smith, the area supervisor of Weito and Pattiw, shared this problem with the director of education, an American named Mr. Frank and his Chuukese assistant Mr. Chutomu Nimwes. Together they began to discuss the prospects of a post-elementary education in the outer islands to prepare students for the entrance exam. This was a radically new solution to the problem which had never been attempted before in Chuuk, nor in any part of the Trust Territory. This idea of a post-elementary education excited Mr. Smith so much that he could not rest unless he put the idea into action. Fortunately that summer of 1964, a leadership conference was held on Weno which brought all the chief-magistrates and traditional chiefs together. Mr. Smith presented to the leaders on the idea to start a post-elementary school for Weito and Pattiw on Onoun Island. The leaders liked the idea so much that they set a date later that summer to hold a meeting on Onoun for further discussions.

The Vision

Later that summer traditional sailing canoes were launched from all the islands of Weito and Pattiw bringing the traditional chiefs and other elders (repien fanu) to Onoun for their own leadership summit. This was the largest gathering of traditional leaders from the outer island

regions of Weito and Pattiw. Their main focus and agenda was to discuss how best to serve the needs of the children of those islands.

At this meeting they unanimously agreed to start a post-elementary school on Onoun for the students from these two regions. Onoun was the ideal host for the campus because of its central location to these outer islands. The traditional chiefs then requested the Truk Education Department for the approval to start the school.

The admission policy for the school was also decided in that meeting. The leaders agreed to let each island community to select whom to enroll and they were to bring them by traditional outrigger canoes which was the only reliable means of transportation. The people of Onoun agreed to host the school, provide local house for classroom space, uuts for sleeping quarters for the male students, and to serve as “sponsors” or host families for the female students. The leaders also drafted a set of school rules and policies and agreed to open the school with a class of twenty five with one teacher. The boys were to sleep at a canoe house, and the elders of Onoun were made responsible to watch over them, and girls were to reside with sponsor families.

At this meeting they formed a delegation headed by Mr. Smith to get approval of the school from the Truk Department of Education and the district administration office. Other members were Chief Magistrate Leon Episom and Traditional Chief Raymond Opich both were from Onoun. Other leaders who could be on Weno were also invited to join the delegation.

Ulul Post Elementary School

The request to the Department of Education was successful. Permission was granted to open the school on a trial basis. The Department agreed to hire a teacher for school, and also help with chalk, paper and pencils. Results of the Truk Intermediate School test would determine the future of the school. The school was called Ulul Post Elementary at that time

Ulul Post Elementary was first opened Fall of 1965. As agreed each island selected their best and brought them to Onoun by canoe. Mr. Basilio Saipwerik, a graduate of Xavier High School from the island of Houk (Pulusuk) was hired as the first teacher. School opened that first year as planned.

Community support from throughout the region was extremely high. Canoes from all the islands visited so often bringing food and other necessities. Parents were involved by giving advise and encouragements to the students. The chiefs and (repian fanu) elders provided the words of wisdom to the students.

The moment of truth came at the conclusion of that first year with the annual entrance test for Truk Intermediate School. Eighteen out of the twenty students successfully passed the entrance examination. This was especially successfully considering that all eighteen students had not passed the examination at their elementary schools and would have joined the dropout statistics. Ulul Post Elementary became a model school in Chuuk overnight. The Department readily granted a permanent charter for the school. News about the success travelled fast from Truk District and throughout the Trust Territory. The following year in 1966 other post-elementary schools were opened replicating the Ulul Post-Elementary school

model. The school continued to receive very strong community support and successfully admitted more of its students to the Truk Intermediate School.

Weipat Junior High School

The success of the Ulul Post-Elementary School brought much pride and joy to the people in the outer islands of Weito and Pattiw. It gave them a very strong sense of ownership especially Mr. Ermes Smith and the traditional chiefs whose visions in the summer of 1964 bore the school.

But the needs of those outer islands and the State continued to evolve precipitating the school to also change and evolve to meet those needs. As the Truk Intermediate School changed into Truk High School, Ulul Post-Elementary School evolved and changed into Weipat Junior High School in 1968 as elementary education throughout the entire Truk District (now Chuuk State) evolved to include 1st to 8th grades.. This same year the school enrollment admitted students from Pafeng in addition to the usual students from Weito and Pattiw. Two years later in 1971 Weipat Junior High School, which had previously admitted 7th to 10th graders, became exclusively for they transitioned to 11th and 12th grades at Truk High School.

Weipat High School

The year 2004 brought yet another evolution in Wei-Pat's history. As a result of sweeping changes across the State, the Chuuk State School System (formerly Department of Education) made the decision to turn Wei-Pat Junior High School into a 4-year high school to exclusively serve the Northwest region. The State's decision, while it has the advantage of keeping the Northwest students closer to their home islands, has brought an entirely new set of service-oriented and educational challenges. As described in the section called "Meeting Our Challenge"

Founders Day: *In 1989, the Weipat community declared November 9th as Founders Day to commemorate and celebrate the visions and accomplishments of all those who contributed to the founding of Weipat. The Founders included Mr. Ermes Smith, the traditional chiefs and elders (repien fanu), Mr. Basilio Saipweirik the first teacher and all subsequent teachers, the staff who are still taking active roles in the school at the present. May Weipat receive back the love and respect it once had from our people. May it once again receive the glory of the olden days.*

OUR CHALLENGES

Statement of Needs

While the decision to turn Wei-Pat Junior High School into a 4-year high school has made secondary education accessible to the outer islands, it comes with an entirely new sets of service-oriented and educational challenges. We dare to state these obvious challenges to seek help from the State and the Nation. But more importantly, we present them below to challenge ourselves as the Northwest community to work together to find solutions for them. The needs and challenges are great, but together with our local, state, municipal, parental, and global partners, we can meet them with resolve and perseverance. We must meet them for the sake of our children and the future generations of Northwest leaders.

Accessibility: The campus is located on the remote outer island of Onoun, located hundreds of miles over open water. While there is a small airfield on the island, the small government-subsidized airline only flies with a full flight. The state-run fieldtrip cargo ships have been sporadic in their services to the outer islands.

Operational Budget: The operational budget for the school has not adequately reflected the growth of the enrollment.

Shortage of Qualified Teachers:

Communal Apathy: While the school has enjoyed the support of the people of Onoun, the same cannot be said for other islands in the Northwest. The traditional chiefs who were part of the support system for the school have long since died and their successors have not afforded the same moral support to the school.

Alumni: There has never been any formal attempt to engage the alumni of Weipat to help support the needs of the school. That is a large base of support that has never been formally organized and mobilized.

Food Security: Recent environmental impacts have negatively affected food security in the outer islands. Resources are already scarce in those remote islands, but without a reliable and economical transportation system, much needed resources cannot reach the campus in a timely fashion. On Onoun where global warming has affected the taro plantations and other stable food source, it is becoming more challenging for the local sponsor families to provide food for their children and their Weipat students.

Digital Divide: In today's modern world, students need access to the limitless educational resources on the internet. Greater efforts must be made to provide operational internet access computers using available satellite technology. This must be done to help prepare the high graduates for college.

Professional Development: The distance of the school from the main commercial and governmental center on Weno makes it a real challenge for teachers and administrators to

access the professional development opportunities that occur at the College of Micronesia and other state-sponsored conferences, trainings, leadership summits.

Interscholastic Disengagement: Outer island students simply do not have access to the educational, athletic, leadership development opportunities that are readily available to their peers from the private and public schools located within the Chuuk lagoon. Weipat has no system of advocacy on the main island of Weno to bring Weipat's needs to the forefront of program planning and implementation among the schools.

Health Care: The distance of the campus from the center and the lack of the fieldtrip ships has made it nearly impossible for students to access health services from the state-run hospital, dental clinics, public health clinic, and other privately-operated pharmacies.

Library Resources: What is formal education at a high school level without adequate library resources? Wei-Pat has no functional library for its students.

Facilities Improvement: The facilities before Weipat was forcibly made into a 4-year high school had been in a dire state of disrepair. There is no plan for any new classroom buildings to accommodate the increasing enrollment.

WEIPAT HIGH SCHOOL TODAY

Our Mission

We, the Weipat High School Community, pledge to share our gifts, our heritage, and principles of our knowledge with one another as we continue our pilgrimage toward a “successful journey.” From our rich cultures and talents, to UNITY, we commit ourselves to respond to the needs of all the students from Weipat High School. As a culture-based school we are committed to cultural literacy and the perpetuation of our tradition, as we promote the ability of our students to think critically on all aspect of our curriculum.

We seek to provide all students with significant life experiences and the tools to make informed decisions. We are committed to maintaining a strong relationship between the school program the island’s activities. We are also committed to promote a strong community and parental involvement in the education of our students.

We are committed to the academic enterprise within a wholistic educational and formative approach. We bring to this task the island tradition in education reaching back to our early years, and lived out here at Weipat High School over these last forty years and onward.

Our Vision

Weipat High School strives to be a School Community that promotes the development of our human resources (youths) in obtaining knowledge, skills, wisdom, and the proper attitudes and behaviors needed to succeed in college and the modern world life while perpetuating the traditional skills in our island cultures.

Goals & Objectives

At Weipat High School, we aspire to educate our students with these goals in mind:

- To prepare each student **academically** to succeed in college and be equipped with the tools to be successful members of their communities in a modern world.
- To deepen each student **culturally** to strengthen their respect and deepen their understanding of the traditions of our islands.
- To form each student **spiritually** to heighten their sense of self-worth and to become men and women who strive to serve the needs of their island communities.
- To train each student **physically** to advance healthy attitudes, habits, and practices in life.

CONCLUSION

Weipat is a community school that has not reached its full potential. What began as a way to address the real needs of the children in the Namonweito and Pattiw regions has evolved into an academic institution that we can call truly ours. The community must now carry forward the vision of our founding fathers, the chiefs and elders for a school that serves the needs of future leaders of the Northwest region.

It is clear and obvious that the decision of the State to turn Weipat into a 4-year high school must include the necessary financial, moral, and technological support. Classrooms must be upgraded, libraries built and stocked with books, computer labs hooked up to the internet, water catchment systems installed, teachers trained, and educational supplies expanded to meet the larger enrollment. That is a responsibility of the Chuuk State School System for which we will continue to seek.

Ours is a school born out of the love, generosity, and wisdom of our founders. Over the years, Weipat has educated young men and women and sent them forth as active members of society both locally and globally. It is time for those daughters and sons of Weipat to give back to the rebuilding of our school.

Lastly, in this modern and globalized world, we seek help from all people of goodwill. We aspire to build a better future for our children so that they can become leaders of our communities and contributing members of the global community.

APPENDICES - DATA

Per required format, attached please find our reports and data for Weipat High School.