

Report of the
External Review
for
Grace Community School

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US

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Date: September 29, 2013 - October 1, 2013



North Central Association on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

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Introduction to the External Review

Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance developed more than 100 years ago by American universities and secondary schools and designed primarily to distinguish schools adhering to a set of educational standards. Today the accreditation process is used at all levels of education and is recognized for its ability to effectively drive student performance and continuous improvement in education.

Institutions seeking to gain or retain accreditation must meet AdvancED standards specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of student performance or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution to achieve higher levels of performance and address those areas that may be hindering efforts to reach desired performance levels. External Review is a rigorous process that includes examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Part I: Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, as well as evaluations of Student Performance, the Learning Environment, Stakeholder Feedback and Assurances.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

Standards help to delineate what matters. They provide a common language through which an education community can engage in conversations about educational improvement, system effectiveness, and achievement. They serve as a foundation for planning and implementing improvement strategies and activities and for measuring success. AdvancED's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective educators and leaders from the fields of practice, research, and policy who applied professional wisdom, deep knowledge of effective practice, and the best available research to craft a set of robust standards that ensure excellence and continuous improvement. Before implementation, the standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains a detailed evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, identification of Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards (if appropriate), and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review team.

The AdvancED Standards and Indicators are the first of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Using indicator-specific performance levels, the External Review Team evaluates the degree to which the institution meets each indicator on a scale of 1 to 4. The scores assigned to the indicators are averaged to arrive at a single score. This score, along with scores from evaluations of student performance and stakeholder feedback, will be used to determine the accreditation status of the institution.

Average Indicator Score for this Institution	3.45
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Standard 1: The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Purpose and direction are critical to successful institutions. A study conducted in 2010 by the London-based Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) reported that "in addition to improving performance, the research indicates that having a sense of shared purpose also improves employee engagement" and that "lack of understanding around purpose can lead to demotivation and emotional detachment, which in turn lead to a disengaged and dissatisfied workforce."

AdvancED has found through its evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning that are aligned with the institutions' vision and supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

Standard 1			
The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Examples of communications to stakeholders about the school's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) • Observations • Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the school's purpose • Interviews • Documentation or description of the process for creating the school's purpose including the role of stakeholders • Purpose statements - past and present 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.2	The school's leadership and staff commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the school's statement of purpose • Interviews • Observations • Survey results • The school's statement of purpose • Accreditation Report • Statement of Mission ("Teaching Jesus") and core values ("Educational Sanctification," "Redemptive Community," and "Life as Worship") Teacher Induction Manual Leadership "Playbook" GCS Expected Student Goals 	4.0
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • The school data profile • Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders • Interviews • Accreditation Report • The school continuous improvement plan • "Brown Bag" lunches with the head of school Dashboard of Significant Indicators 	3.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The school has a well-defined and clearly-articulated process for defining, communicating, reviewing, and revising the school's purpose.

1.1

The process for review, revision, and communication of the school's purpose is clearly documented, and a record of the use and results of the process is maintained. The process is formalized and implemented with fidelity on a regular schedule. The process includes participation by representatives selected at random from all stakeholder groups. The purpose statement clearly focuses on student success.

Because the school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success, all stakeholders clearly understand the mission of the school and are devoted to each student's ability to influence the world for Christ.

2. Stakeholders understand, articulate, and actively embrace the school's mission and share a fervent commitment to its values and beliefs. (ACSI Assurance 8)

1.2

Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is clearly evident in documentation and decision-making. This commitment is consistently reflected in communication among leaders and staff. Challenging educational programs and equitable learning experiences are implemented in a measurable way so that all students achieve learning, thinking, and life skills necessary for success. Evidence indicates a strong commitment to instructional practices that include active student engagement, a focus on depth of understanding, and the application of knowledge and skills. School leadership and staff hold one another accountable to high expectations for professional practice.

Commitment to shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning is vital for student success at Grace in terms of accomplishing their mission to influence the world for Christ and to meet their core values of educational sanctification, redemptive community, and life as worship.

Standard 2: The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.

Governance and leadership are key factors in raising institutional quality. Leaders, both local administrators and governing boards/authorities, are responsible for ensuring all learners achieve while also managing many other facets of an institution. Institutions that function effectively do so without tension between the governing board/authority, administrators, and educators and have established relationships of mutual respect and a shared vision (Feuerstein & Opfer, 1998). In a meta-analysis of educational institution leadership research, Leithwood and Sun (2012) found that leaders (school and governing boards/authority) can significantly "influence school conditions through their achievement of a shared vision and agreed-on goals for the organization, their high expectations and support of organizational members, and their practices that strengthen school culture and foster collaboration within the organization." With the increasing demands of accountability placed on institutional leaders, leaders who empower others need considerable autonomy and involve their communities to attain continuous improvement goals. Leaders who engage in such practices experience a greater level of success (Fink & Brayman, 2006). Similarly, governing boards/authorities that focus on policy-making are more likely to allow institutional leaders the autonomy to make decisions that impact teachers and students and are less responsive to politicization than boards/authorities that respond to vocal citizens (Greene, 1992).

AdvancED's experience gained through evaluation of best practices has indicated that a successful institution has leaders who are advocates for the institution's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The institution's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Standard 2			
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Student handbooks • Governing body policies, procedures, and practices • Staff handbooks • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions • School handbooks • Leadership "Playbook" Dashboard of Significant Indicators 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Governing body minutes relating to training • Assurances, certifications • Interviews • Governing body training plan • Observations • Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest • Governing code of ethics • Leadership "Playbook" 	4.0
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities of school leadership • School improvement plan developed by the school • Accreditation Report • Stakeholder input and feedback • Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation • Survey results regarding functions of the governing body • Observations • Agendas and minutes of meetings • Interviews 	3.0
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of collaboration and shared leadership • Survey results • Observations • Interviews • Examples of decisions aligned with the school's statement of purpose • Accreditation Report • Examples of decisions in support of the school's continuous improvement plan 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes from meetings with stakeholders • Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys • Survey responses • Communication plan • Accreditation Report • Observations • Interviews 	4.0
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation • Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation • Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice and student success noted • Observations • Representative supervision and evaluation reports • Interviews 	4.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

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| 1. | School policy and practices are well articulated in the various school publications and the school does a superior job of presenting a clear and concise description the school's organizational structure, its culture, goals, and programs. (ACSI Assurance 9) | 2.1 |
| | Stakeholders communicated an understanding of the school's organizational structure and operation on both the governance and the operational levels. The Christ-centeredness of the school's leadership philosophy is highlighted in virtually each piece of literature. | |
| | The clarity and understanding of leadership structure, policies, and practices fosters harmony between trustees, executive leadership, and other stakeholders resulting in a strong, unified school leadership team. | |
| 2. | The school board has adopted a governance model of leadership and established policies carefully defining its role in relationship to the headmaster and his administrative responsibilities. | 2.2 |
| | The board communicated an understanding of the governance role and responsibility of the board and its commitment to operate within those bounds. Lines of responsibility are delineated carefully with well-conceived policies calling for periodic meaningful self-evaluation and assessments for both board members and administrative personnel. | |
| | This understanding and commitment has resulted in the board's support of the head of school, a high level of trust between the headmaster and the board, and a leadership team that inspires confidence and a positive environment among the various stakeholders. | |
| 3. | The leadership and staff have fostered a culture that embodies the academic and spiritual goals of the school program in a meaningful way. | 2.4 |
| | The whole of the team's experience showed clear evidence that the leadership and staff have worked hard to create a warm and welcoming community that has been established through meaningful and excellent teacher-student and parent-faculty relationships, generating a place where students are encouraged to learn, are known by their teachers, and in which parents are supportive and involved. | |
| | This has clearly had an impact not only environmentally, but also academically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally. | |

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

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| 1. | Devise a process to more effectively communicate to the constituency major initiatives regarding school strategic planning. | 2.5 |
| | There did not seem to be any evidence of a formalized on-going plan or process of regular communication with the various stakeholders concerning the major initiatives within the school's strategic plan. Parents and students did not seem to have specific awareness or knowledge of those initiatives. | |
| | Faculty, students and parents can be advantaged by purposeful, timely communication from school leadership in important areas of school vision and planning. Improved communication to stakeholders will provide even more opportunities for buy-in and investment from those who are most essential to the success of any plans conceived by school leadership. | |

Standard 3: The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

A high-quality and effective educational system has services, practices, and curriculum that ensure teacher effectiveness. Research has shown that an effective teacher is a key factor for learners to achieve to their highest potential and be prepared for a successful future. The positive influence an effective educator has on learning is a combination of "student motivation, parental involvement" and the "quality of leadership" (Ding & Sherman, 2006). Research also suggests that quality educators must have a variety of quantifiable and intangible characteristics that include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The institution's curriculum and instructional program should develop learners' skills that lead them to think about the world in complex ways (Conley, 2007) and prepare them to have knowledge that extends beyond the academic areas. In order to achieve these goals, teachers must have pedagogical skills as well as content knowledge (Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voxx, T., Jordan, A., Klusmann, U., Krauss, S., Nuebrand, M., & Tsai, Y., 2010). The acquisition and refinement of teachers' pedagogical skills occur most effectively through collaboration and professional development. These are a "necessary approach to improving teacher quality" (Colbert, J., Brown, R., Choi, S., & Thomas, S., 2008). According to Marks, Louis, and Printy (2002), staff members who engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective institutions "supports teachers by creating collaborative work environments." Institutional leaders have a responsibility to provide experiences, resources, and time for educators to engage in meaningful professional learning that promotes student learning and educator quality.

AdvancED has found that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning. The curriculum provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

Standard 3
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The school's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results • Lesson plans • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Learning expectations for different courses • Posted learning objectives • Representative samples of student work across courses • Course schedules • Course descriptions • Observations • Descriptions of instructional techniques • Curriculum guide Alternative assessments Professional development opportunities 	3.0
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum guides • A description of the systematic review process for curriculum, instruction, and assessment • Observations • Common assessments • Surveys results • Interviews • Curriculum writing process • Accreditation Report • Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps • Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum • Test results Professional development meetings 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher evaluation criteria • Professional development focused on these strategies • Authentic assessments • Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource • Interviews • Observations • Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool • Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge • Findings from supervisor walk-thrus and observations • Surveys results • Accreditation Report • Curriculum guide 	3.0
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum maps • Documentation of collection of lesson plans and grade books • Supervision and evaluation procedures • Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions • Observations • Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices • Surveys results • Interviews • Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process • Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs • Accreditation Report 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Common language, protocols and reporting tools • Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees • Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings • Survey results • Observations • Interviews • Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration • Weekly grade level meetings Regular vertical team meetings 	4.0
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Interviews • Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning • Rubrics Professional development opportunities 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Records of meetings and walk thrus/feedback sessions • Observations • Survey results • Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff • Descriptions and schedules of mentoring, coaching, and induction programs with references to school beliefs and values about teaching and learning • Personnel manuals with information related to new hires including mentoring, coaching, and induction practices • Interviews • New Teacher Induction Manual 	4.0
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Volunteer program with variety of options for participation • Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress • Accreditation Report • Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process • Newsletters • Email updates • Parent/school agreement 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of students matched to adult advocate • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Interviews • Observations • Master schedule with time for formal adult advocate structure • Description of formal adult advocate structures 	3.0
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Observations • Survey results • Sample report cards for each grade level and for all courses • Interviews • Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting • Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting • Workload task force materials/communications 	3.0
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of evaluation of professional learning program. • Evaluation tools for professional learning • Interviews • Survey results • Accreditation Report • Crosswalk between professional learning and school purpose and direction • Observations • Professional development descriptions and calendar 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Interviews • Survey results • List of learning support services and student population served by such services • Accreditation Report • Training and professional learning related to research on unique characteristics of learning • Data used to identify unique learning needs of students 	3.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

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| <p>1. The elementary campus has implemented a systematic reading comprehension program called “Foundations and Frameworks.” This innovative and engaging program uses children’s literature to focus and enhance specific reading comprehension skills and challenge students to think critically.</p> <p>“Foundations and Frameworks” is incorporated into the daily instructional time. Lessons were observed using visual tools to help students organize and connect information from the text.</p> <p>Implementing this program enhances the students’ appreciation for literature and challenges them to think critically about what they are reading.</p> | 3.1 |
| <p>2. The history and English departments have synthesized their two curriculums in order to create one overarching humanities curriculum that combines history and English through era, content and theme.</p> <p>The humanities instructors skillfully coordinated their coverage of history and English in order to create a comprehensive understanding of Western Civilization for their students. The curriculum guide complemented by the Humanities Framework chart gives a clear picture of the integrated instruction occurring in the classroom.</p> <p>The history and English curriculums have been interwoven to create a hybrid curriculum that provides reinforcement of knowledge and creates deeper levels of understanding centered on literary works, historical events, philosophical ideas and political/artistic movements.</p> | 3.1 |
| <p>3. The students have access to instruction through an iPad pilot program to enhance learning and interaction between students and teachers and support the educational mission of GCS.</p> <p>Upon meeting specific requirements and attending an orientation, students are assigned an iPad to use at home and school. This tool offers students convenient access at all times to learn anywhere at home or at school.</p> <p>The school believes they have a responsibility to provide technology tools and resources to equip students in the 21st century to impact the world for Christ. GCS also believes they have an obligation to provide training and education for students and their families in order to maximize the benefit of technological devices for learning.</p> | 3.3 |
| <p>4. The teachers at each grade level in the upper school conduct weekly grade level meeting to discuss strategies to assist struggling students and to create and adjust the workload calendars for the grade level.</p> <p>Teachers attest to the benefits of these brief meeting in order to create optimal scenarios for student success by not creating an overload of tests and projects in multiple classes on one day. These meetings are also used to identify students who are struggling in multiple classes and discuss strategies to intervene and provide support and encouragement for these students.</p> <p>These weekly meeting make teachers aware of struggling students and assist and encourage them with ideas about how best to gain success with struggling students. These collaborative meetings also ensure that the homework load, particularly those assignments involving tests and projects, is challenging but not too onerous as to be counterproductive.</p> | 3.5 |

5. The secondary administration formed a task force in response to parent and student concerns over the homework load in the upper school. The task force examined, evaluated and made recommendations concerning the workload, both curricular and extra-curricular. 3.6
- The response letter to parents reflecting the findings of the Workload Task Force delineates the actions taken to address the scheduling, efficacy and policies regarding all assessment practices, including homework, tests and projects.
- The students and parents expressed appreciation for the response of the administration and faculty to their concerns about the student workload and feel that positive changes have been made in this area. Beyond the specific issues addressed, the attentive response of the administration, faculty and staff also enhanced the level of trust between upper school families and school personnel.
6. The school administration has designed and implemented a thorough and effective multi-year new teacher orientation schedule and mentoring program. 3.7
- Administrators and teachers—both new and veteran—attest to the effectiveness of the orientation plan, which is clearly laid out in the Teacher Induction Manual and the Grace Community School Mentoring Program Manual.
- The new teacher orientation schedule and mentoring program demonstrate a purposefulness and intentionality in acclimating new teachers to the procedures, expectations, and culture of GCS in order to assure their success as a classroom teacher and positive contribution to the GCS community.

Opportunities for Improvement

Indicator

1. Continue to review, edit and develop the curriculum guide to create a document that is consistent, cohesive and comprehensive. 3.1
- Some components of specific disciplines in the curriculum guide are created in a format that is inconsistent with the majority of the document.
- The readability of the document and clarity of the academic practices and priorities will be improved by this process, ensuring usability for faculty and accessibility for all stakeholders.
2. Take into account the individual wants and needs of instructional staff in order to differentiate when designing, scheduling and implementing professional development activities. 3.11
- Both teachers and administration have expressed a desire for differentiated professional development activities in order to improve the curriculum, instruction and daily practices of the school.
- Teachers exhibit a spectrum of strengths and weaknesses in carrying out their varied responsibilities in and out of the classroom; therefore, the wants and needs of teachers in regard to professional development vary as well. Tailoring a professional development strategy for each teacher will improve the effectiveness of such a program by addressing individual strengths and weaknesses and accessing the effectiveness of each professional development activity.

Standard 4: The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Institutions, regardless of their size, need access to sufficient resources and systems of support to be able to engage in sustained and meaningful efforts that result in a continuous improvement cycle. Indeed, a study conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Pan, D., Rudo, Z., Schneider, C., & Smith-Hansen, L., 2003) "demonstrated a strong relationship between resources and student success... both the level of resources and their explicit allocation seem to affect educational outcomes."

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in the 30,000 institutions in the AdvancED network that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, meets special needs, and complies with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The institution provides a safe learning environment for students and staff. The institution provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff members to improve their effectiveness. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4			
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • School budgets for the last three years • Survey results • Interviews • Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff • Accreditation Report • Documentation of highly qualified staff 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources • Survey results • School schedule • Interviews • Alignment of budget with school purpose and direction • Observations • School calendar 	4.0
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Survey results • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures. • System for maintenance requests • Maintenance schedules 	3.0
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Budget related to media and information resource acquisition • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Observations • Data on media and information resources available to students and staff • Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure • Assessments to inform development of technology plan • Survey results • Policies relative to technology use 	4.0
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student assessment system for identifying student needs • Survey results • Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education • List of support services available to students • Observations 	3.0
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning • Description of IEP process • Description of referral process 	3.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The administration and faculty have incorporated current technology, including a one-to-one initiative in the high school, to supplement the curriculum and support instruction to meet learning needs. 4.5
- The use of technology across the curriculum is emerging as an integral aspect of instructional delivery. Parents express appreciation for the willingness of the teachers to integrate new technology in the classroom with a focus on coaching students in its redemptive use.
- The growing use of technology is enhancing the instructional program, promoting student engagement in learning, and helping equip students with 21st century skills.
2. The school has cultivated and continues to maintain the delicate balance among strong academics, award-winning fine arts, and a successful athletic program. 4.6
- It is uncommon to find a school that has achieved a balance of school-wide attention to academics and co-curricular activities. Through the use of interviews, artifacts provided and observations, it was evident that Grace has cultivated a climate of faculty and student support that sustains the purpose and direction of the school.
- Incorporating and balancing all three areas of academics, arts, and athletics allows students to have a well-rounded schooling experiencing, promoting healthy development of the whole person and school spirit and pride.
3. The junior high and high school students have access to academic support outside of their regular classroom instruction through the school's Academic Support Center. 4.7
- The school has implemented an Academic Support Center that provides students with four different levels of assistance. The levels have been established to help address individual student learning needs. The services range from free assistance with simple intervention to requesting a period in the Academic Support Center replace a study hall to paid services for a hired tutor.
- The Academic Support Center provides an important resource for students who need additional instruction on a variety of levels. Students will benefit from extra help to gain a better understanding for academic achievement.

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

1. Measure and evaluate the guidance counseling services to better serve students with post-high school planning. 4.6
- Interviews and identified school goals reflect the need for the school to expand the current guidance services.
- Serving high school students with post-high school planning is an important resource that supports the school's purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Standard 5: The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Systems with strong improvement processes move beyond anxiety about the current reality and focus on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, i.e., data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, and Wohlstetter (2007) from the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California indicated that data can shed light on existing areas of strength and weakness and also guide improvement strategies in a systematic and strategic manner (Dembosky, J., Pane, J., Barney, H., & Christina, R., 2005). The study also identified six key strategies that performance-driven systems use: (1) building a foundation for data-driven decision making, (2) establishing a culture of data use and continuous improvement, (3) investing in an information management system, (4) selecting the right data, (5) building institutional capacity for data-driven decision making, and (6) analyzing and acting on data to improve performance. Other research studies, though largely without comparison groups, suggested that data-driven decision making has the potential to increase student performance (Alwin, 2002; Doyle, 2003; Lafee, 2002; McIntire, 2002).

Through ongoing evaluation of educational institutions, AdvancED has found that a successful institution uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine strategies to improve student performance. The institution implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained, and the institution demonstrates progress in improving student performance and institution effectiveness.

Standard 5			
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local assessments on student learning and school performance • Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze, and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results • Interviews • Written protocols and procedures for data collection and analysis • Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning • Observations • List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning • Accreditation Report 	2.0
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Survey results • Observations • Accreditation Report • Training materials specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data 	2.0
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student surveys • Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning • Accreditation Report • Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans • Evidence of student readiness for the next level • Evidence of student growth • Observations • Evidence of student success at the next level • Interviews 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Minutes of board meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals • Communication plan regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders • Survey results • Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals • Accreditation Report • School quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, conditions that support learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals • Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups • Interviews • Headmaster's annual state of the school report Monthly dashboard updates Weekly emails to parents 	4.0

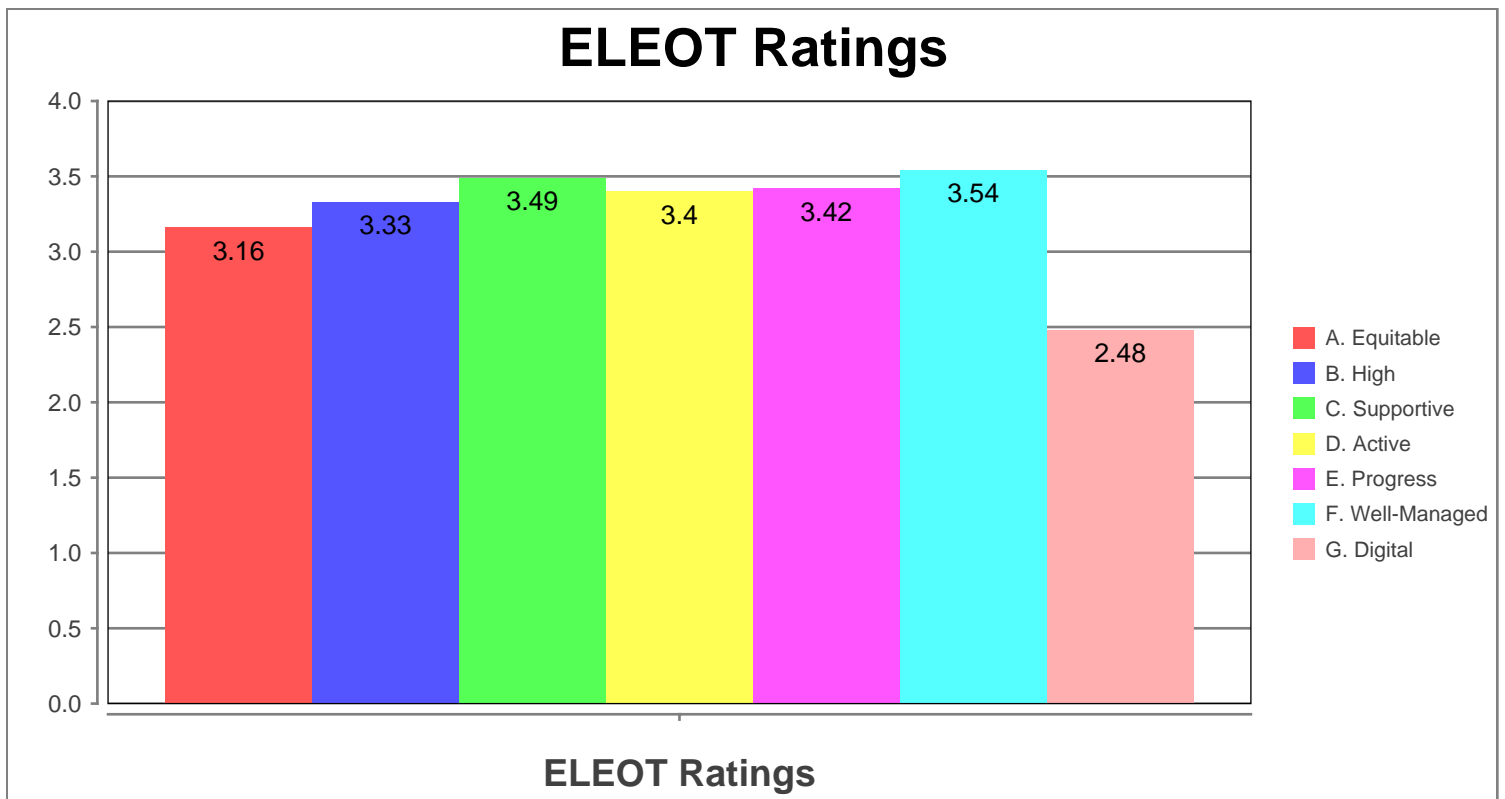
Powerful Practices**Indicator**

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 1. | The school leadership identified and hired a curriculum director to oversee data organization, analysis, and dissemination. | 5.1 |
| | With the desire to further a comprehensive assessment system, hiring a curriculum director allows the school leadership to partner with and depend on this position to oversee a critical component of school improvement. The curriculum director can keep forward momentum in this aspect for further accountability. | |
| 2. | The school leadership utilizes a statistician to consult with standardized tests data analysis. | 5.1 |
| | The decision to contract a qualified statistician was seen by administration and faculty as a significant help in the effective analysis and utilization of standardized test data. | |
| | Recognizing the importance of the available data within standardized testing, hiring a statistician ensures the necessary and significant data are recognized and interpreted for implementation. | |
| 3. | Using individualized student data, administration and teachers meet regularly in grade level groups to communicate about failing students or struggling students and make decisions about student improvement and program effectiveness. | 5.2 |
| | In interviewing teachers, it was evident that the regular meetings provided significant opportunity to identify and address individual student needs. | |
| | This practice allows teachers to serve families and students more effectively in the academic realm. This practice is a pro-active approach to increasing student success. | |

Learning Environment

Every learner should have access to an effective learning environment in which she/he has multiple opportunities to be successful. The Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT) measures the extent to which learners are in an environment that is equitable, supportive, and well-managed. An environment where high expectations are the norm and active learning takes place. It measures whether learners' progress is monitored and feedback is provided and the extent to which technology is leveraged for learning.

Observations of classrooms or other learning venues are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes per observation. External Review Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in ELEOT.



Student Performance

Student Performance on assessments is the second of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Institutions are asked to collect and analyze student performance data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the assessments used by the institution, the degree to which the institution properly administered the assessments, analyzed and acted on the results, and the overall performance of students using a set of rubrics. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Student Performance Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Assessment Quality	4.0
Test Administration	4.0
Quality of Learning	3.0
Equity of Learning	3.0

Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys are directly correlated to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators; they provide not only direct information about stakeholder satisfaction but also become a source of data for triangulation by the External Review Team as it evaluates indicators.

Institutions are asked to collect and analyze stakeholder feedback data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the administration of the surveys by institution and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Stakeholder Feedback Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Questionnaire Administration	4.0
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.0

Part II: Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

Grace Community School, located in Tyler, Texas, hosted the External Review Team (ERT) representing ACSI, AdvancED on September 29 - October 1, 2013. The school administration and leadership team was well prepared for the visit and was among the first ACSI schools in the South-Central Region to use the fully online ASSIST accreditation instrument in this partnership.

Artifacts and evidence were available electronically for the evaluators to review about three weeks before the visit. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations of the school's overall programming and classroom instruction using the Effective Learning Environment Observation Tool (ELEOT).

The school was well prepared for the ER team visit. The school community understood the value of the team visit and worked hard to present a very positive and appealing school environment for the benefit of the team members. Attitudes of all those the team interacted with were positive, warm, and hospitable. It was quite evident that this process has involved the school community and engaged all the stakeholders in their preparation for the visit.

During the visit the ERT found the school community to be welcoming and inviting, as well as open and honest in its self-appraisal. All key stakeholders were made available for the team to interview. Board, leadership, faculty, staff, students and parents communicated passion for and commitment to the school's mission of "teaching Jesus."

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which Grace Community School met the ACSI/AdvancED Partnership Protocol Standards, Indicators, and Assurances. The ERT found the school to be in compliance with all of the AdvancED Standards and all applicable ACSI Assurances. AdvancED Standard Indicators collectively were rated at level 3.42.

The External Review Team evaluated the evidence; observed in classrooms; interviewed or met with school administration, faculty, and staff onsite; and analyzed material in comparison with each of the AdvancED standards. The final scores of the External Review Team were very close to the scores of the school on its Self-Assessment in most areas.

STANDARD 1

One of Grace Community School's (Grace) greatest strengths is its clear mission and philosophy, coupled with a commitment to follow that statement and philosophy wholeheartedly. Grace collectively and intentionally executes

every decision in light of its mission and philosophy.

School leadership continues to strive to bring as many dedicated stakeholders as feasible to the table of decision-making, pursuing God's direction and vision for their school. School leadership re-evaluates the school's purpose frequently, always coming back to the standard of the Lord Jesus Christ. The school works to communicate this purpose and direction to the school family through various mediums.

STANDARD 2

Grace Community School operates under the sponsorship and ministry of Grace Community Church of Tyler, Texas. The Grace Community School Board is comprised of a membership of nine to fifteen individuals, the Executive Pastor and two Grace Community Elder Council members included in that number. Other board members include school parents or individuals with a significant attachment or interest in the school. A majority of school board members are members of Grace Community Church.

The guidelines and practices as articulated in the school's Board Policy Manual bring clarity and distinctiveness to the leadership organization of the school. Board policy and administrative leadership practices bring a clear sense of direction and purpose. The school's well-written philosophy statement, mission statement, core values and student outcomes goals are embedded into the entire operation of the school. The school board is organized and conceived in such a way as to define its role clearly in relation to the headmaster as chief administrator of school operations. School policies and practices, as articulated in the various school publications, present a clear and concise description of the intent of the institution's culture, operation, and goals.

Relational community is both a goal and product of a well-conceived Christian leadership model. Grace Community School leadership has created a climate that values each individual as one created in the image of God and who is worthy of respect and love. While rules and regulations are certainly present and employed as appropriate, they are not preeminent in the school culture. Conflict resolution and student discipline are approached in a way that does not devalue the individual, but exalts Christ. Strong community relationships also engender strong employee and student retention. Further by-products of a vibrant relational community include a strong fund raising involvement among the school families, stronger prayer ministry, and a robust camaraderie among staff and faculty.

The board and administration of Grace Community School have engineered a program and culture which is Christ-honoring and attractive to the Tyler community. Its success is demonstrated by its positive presence in the community and large student enrollment. Faculty and staff are loyal and are blessed to be a part of an organization which is led so ably.

STANDARD 3

It is evident that the faculty embraces and practices the school's goal to teach Jesus. This is observed not only through their instructional practices, but also relationally in the way the administration, faculty and staff model Christ to their students and parents. The curriculum is biblically based with lessons that reflect biblical integration and are taught by teachers whose heart's desire is to help their students grow spiritually and achieve academically. As the school continues to grow and encompass students of diverse academic backgrounds and abilities, the leadership of GCS has committed to using resources and personnel to assess and address the needs of these students and enable them to integrate into the rigorous instructional program of GCS in a successful manner.

STANDARD 4

Grace Community School supports a fully-qualified, highly-relational, and professional faculty and staff that are unified in their desire to ensure spiritual and academic success for all students. Programs, instructional time, resources and continuous improvement of instruction are focused solely on supporting the purpose and direction of the school. While Grace offers a variety of media and technology services, they are committed to continually exploring new technology for both students and teachers based on a biblical philosophy. Grace recently opened the Academic Support Center to service students with learning differences and enhance their guidance services.

Grace's leadership maximizes the use and stewardship of its facilities. The physical campuses of Grace are aesthetically pleasing and clean and classrooms are designed to facilitate student learning. A well-developed crisis plan is in place, and regular drills and practices occur to assist in preparation for crisis events.

STANDARD 5

Grace Community School supports multiple methods of student assessments in the form of standardized testing. For admission to the school, Kindergarten students take the Missouri KIDS, and other grade levels use an abbreviated form of the Stanford, Tenth Edition. Through ERB, standardized assessments throughout the year include the CPAA for early elementary, and grades 3-9 take the CTP-4. Secondary testing consists of the PSAT, PLAN, and the college entrance exams.

Evidence of using data to drive instruction and curriculum is present, but there is a need for written procedures on how it is used and/or interpreted and the role of the curriculum director, administration, and faculty. Continued professional development and collaboration in practice and analysis of data assessment will encourage ownership and confidence among faculty.

The leadership and school participate in a continuous process for improvement, which utilizes input from varying school constituents to develop goals for their continuous improvement plan.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

The team found the school to be one where learning takes place every day; where the needs of the whole child are being addressed: academically, spiritually, socially, and physically; and where rigorous academic standards are emphasized at every grade level. The school provides supportive and well-managed learning environments in which students demonstrate a positive attitude toward learning. They show respect for others and work cooperatively together. Students know the classroom rules and routines and behave accordingly. Students are actively engaged in learning throughout the school.

Observable learning was taking place throughout the school from the youngest child to those in the upper grades. The data from standardized testing confirmed the observations of the evaluating team. Parents and faculty also expressed their high expectations for performance and outcomes in the learning environment, and were quite satisfied with the evidences of the same in their children.

The External Review Team, representing the Association of Christian Schools International and AdvancED, wishes to express our deep appreciation for the family of Grace Community School and their commitment to school improvement. The work of the school is done by its people and GCS is what it is--a very fine Christian educational institution--because of its people. It is evident that the school community is grateful for the work of the administration and staff.

- * We commend the Grace Community School School Board, and the entire GCS team, for the commitment to seeking, achieving, and maintaining GCS's status as a school that is accredited by two organizations and ensuring that high academic and spiritual standards are maintained.
- * We commend the administration and steering committee for its skill and dedication in motivating the staff and leading them through the rigors of internal review, self assessment, and preparation for our visit. With the new ASSIST protocol and training on-the-go, this was no small task. Your thorough work in assessing yourself is what sets the stage for a good accreditation experience and the basis for the ongoing school improvement that will come from this process.
- * We commend the faculty and staff for the time that they have spent in above and beyond activities to evaluate every aspect of the school and develop a picture of what the school is today in order to prepare it for its tomorrow. We thank the faculty for opening their classrooms and making us feel welcome, for praying for us, and for being transparent in sharing what they do and see at GCS. It is obvious that they, also, are committed to excellence and continuous improvement.
- * We commend the parents who have committed themselves to supporting the school by entrusting it with their children, accepting the financial burden of support for this commitment, and working hard to sustain the quality of education at GCS with their involvement and volunteer labor.
- * We commend the students for their participation in a process that has both educational and spiritual implications for their future. We also appreciate them welcoming us into their classrooms and being open as we conversed with them about how much they enjoy their school.

It has been a distinct personal, spiritual, and professional pleasure to be a part of this experience in the life of the school, and we are most grateful for the opportunity that you have provided for us to serve in this way.

We trust that our report will be a blessing and service to the school as it pursues its preferred future.

That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born
That they may arise and tell them to their children.
That they should put their confidence in God,

And not forget the works of God,
But keep His commandments.
Psalm 78:6-7

The External Review Team was welcomed with hospitality and cordiality throughout the three-day visit. Board, leadership, faculty, staff, students and parents made the ERT feel welcomed and appreciated. The team expresses its sincere gratitude to the school leadership, especially Jay Ferguson, Karla Foreman, Ann Brown, Wanda Schaeffer, Joe Dirksen, Jennifer Dozier, Tim Conner, and the full Grace Community staff for the dinners, lunches, fine accommodations, meeting rooms, and attention to detail that made the visit a great experience

It is the ERT's recommendation that Grace Community School be granted the full five-year reaccreditation term for its K-12 program by the accreditation commissions of ACSI South-Central and of AdvancED.

Respectfully,
The Accreditation Visiting Team
October 1, 2013

Required Action

1. Study and assess the safety of the open campus regarding the common practice of all building doors at the upper school being unlocked during the instructional day.

Related Indicator or Assurance: 4.3

Description:

Observations made by the team at the Upper campus revealed unlocked perimeter doors allowing easy access for both welcomed and unwelcomed visitors.

School safety is an important aspect of the healthy and nurturing environment for teaching and learning.

2. Develop and implement a system to train and equip all faculty in the evaluation, interpretation, and application of data results to improve student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and organizational conditions.

Related Indicator or Assurance: 5.2

Description:

The faculty expressed a sole dependence on the curriculum director for the analysis, evaluation, and application of assessment data and did not seem to see a need for their own facility in these areas. This was a self-identified need in the school's accreditation report.

Through the hiring of the curriculum director, teachers tend to plan on fully depending on this position/person for any and all direction on data analysis to improve instruction and curriculum. However, the classroom teachers have the greatest knowledge and understanding of their curriculum and for greater long-term buy-in, teachers need to be trained to identify and address deficits in their curriculum and instruction, particularly on the individual student level.

Part III: Addenda

The External Review Team

Lead Evaluator:

Mr. John S Craig

Associate Lead Evaluator:

Mr. Thomas J Clarke

Team Members:

Mrs. Pam Merryman

Dr. Diane Helms Bunker

Mrs. Linda H Yeilding

Dr. Kory Hicks

Mr. Mike Skaggs

Ms. Marci Martinez

Mr. Jim McCormick

Next Steps

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the Powerful Practices section to maximize their impact on the institution.
3. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward addressing the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. The report will be reviewed at the appropriate state, national, and/or international levels to monitor and ensure that the system has implemented the necessary actions to complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that confers accreditation upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

In 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), both founded in 1895, and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form AdvancED: one strong, unified organization dedicated to education quality. In 2011, the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) that was founded in 1917 joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, these divisions share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.

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