

Report of the
External Review
for
The International School of Port of Spain

1 International Drive
Westmoorings
Trinidad and Tobago, West
Indies

Port of Spain, 33166
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Dr. Mark W Lee, Director

Date: November 4, 2013 - November 7, 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	2.93
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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"> • Minutes from meetings related to development of the school's purpose • Survey results • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Documentation or description of the process for creating the school's purpose including the role of stakeholders • Observations • Purpose statements - past and present 	2.0
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"> • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Observations • The school's statement of purpose • MYP Implementation Plan • PYP Authorization 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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"> • Interviews • Observations • Survey results • The school data profile • Accreditation Report • Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings • The school continuous improvement plan 	2.0

Opportunities for Improvement

Indicator

1. Develop and implement a formal process for the regular review and revision of the school's guiding documents.

1.1

Interviews with the school improvement team confirmed that while the vision and mission had been revised in 2010 with participation from all stakeholders, no systematic, formal process existed to ensure that this process was implemented on a regular basis. Regular review of the mission and vision, together with discussion of the school's beliefs about teaching and learning, will ensure not only that all stakeholders remain focused and committed to the purpose of the school, but will also increase ownership and participation in the initiatives and strategies identified as essential towards reaching the agreed goals. This is of particular importance considering the transient nature of the ISPS school community.

2. Consolidate the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning by ensuring a shared commitment to the culture of continuous improvement and the means by which that can be achieved.

1.2

Interviews with teachers, leaders, parents, students and board members confirmed that there is a caring and nurturing culture throughout the entire school community, and a clear focus on the key concepts of "confidence, excellence and integrity". The school's guiding documents are posted throughout the school buildings and are also used to good effect as drivers of the school improvement plan and related goals. However, there is an opportunity for improvement regarding the establishment of agreements and commitment, at the level of school and section leadership, towards the best way in which those goals can be achieved. While all stakeholders agree upon the importance of "confidence, excellence and integrity", ongoing efforts to ensure there is clarity and consensus upon how these can be operationalized on a daily basis would help drive the necessary changes and ensure buy-in and ownership throughout the school. It is important that all stakeholders within an educational community not only commit to a shared set of values and beliefs about teaching and learning but also on the ways in which that can be achieved. By modeling that commitment and consensus, a school's leadership team can promote a culture of continuous improvement and professional learning among all stakeholders and help reap the benefits of even more challenging and equitable learning opportunities.

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"> • Student handbooks • Governing body policies, procedures, and practices • Staff handbooks • Accreditation Report • Observations • Interviews • School handbooks 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Governing body minutes relating to training • Assurances, certifications • Governing body training plan • Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest • Governing code of ethics 	3.0
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 • Observations • Accreditation Report • Stakeholder input and feedback • Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation • Interviews • Communications regarding board actions • Survey results regarding functions of the governing body 	4.0
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Examples of collaboration and shared leadership • Survey results • 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 • Accreditation Report • Survey responses • Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan • Interviews 	3.0
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation • Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Representative supervision and evaluation reports 	3.0

Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. The Board of Directors empowers the lead administrator to bring new energy to the entire school community and to implement continuous improvement efforts which will promote success for all learners.

2.3

In meetings with the External Review Team, both the Board of Directors and lead administrator confirmed that clearly delineated responsibilities ensure the Board focuses on strategic decisions while leaving the day to day management of the school to its leadership. A shared commitment to a unified vision was also expressed, as was agreement upon the initiatives needed to promote increased success for all learners. A sense of trust, transparency, and effective communication was apparent between board members and the lead administrator, resulting in a strong, effective working relationship focused on student success.

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"> • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Lesson plans • Interviews • Observations • Course descriptions 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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"> • Interviews • Observations • A description of the systematic review process for curriculum, instruction, and assessment • Accreditation Report • Surveys results • Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps • Individual standard debriefing sessions 	2.0
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda items addressing these strategies • Authentic assessments • Surveys results • Observations • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Interdisciplinary projects • Individual standard debriefing sessions 	2.0
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of collection of lesson plans and grade books • Observations • Interviews • Surveys results • Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs • Accreditation Report • Individual standard debriefing sessions 	2.0
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees • Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings • Survey results • Interviews • Accreditation Report 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance • Interviews • Observations • Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction • Accreditation Report 	3.0
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"> • Records of meetings and walk thrus/feedback sessions • Survey results • Interviews • Individual standard debriefing sessions 	2.0
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"> • Volunteer program with variety of options for participation • List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days • Interviews • Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process 	4.0
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"> • Interviews • Observations • Accreditation Report • Curriculum and activities of formal adult advocate structure 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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 • Interviews • Sample report cards for each grade level and for all courses • Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting • Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting 	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. • Observations • Evaluation tools for professional learning • Interviews 	2.0
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results • List of learning support services and student population served by such services • Accreditation Report • Data used to identify unique learning needs of students • Interviews 	3.0

Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. ISPS families are highly satisfied with their level of engagement in students' learning processes due to regular communication from the school as well as a variety of opportunities to participate within the school's dynamic community.

3.8

Parent group interviews and survey results demonstrate high levels of satisfaction with the school's commitment to communicating more effectively about student learning and community events. The implementation of Power School has resulted in Middle and High School parents having greater ease of access to student progress. Elementary parents report that regular newsletters and rapid email responses from teachers enable them to be kept informed of school life and student learning. Additionally, parents reported the numerous ways they are invited to participate in the school community such as volunteering on the PTO, in classrooms as guest readers or speakers, as well as participating in the community-building events such as the Back to School Barbeque and International Food Festival. ISPS has demonstrated a clear effort to ensure that parents are regularly engaged in the school life of its children.

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

1. Develop a formalized system of reviewing data in a purposeful manner that focuses on a wide variety of formative, summative and external assessments to improve professional practices. 3.2

Interviews with teachers and results of teacher surveys evidenced the need to provide more training in the analysis of data and the establishment of a formal, systematic process for data review. The absence of processes and protocols for analyzing data means that although data analysis exercises have been undertaken, they are not yet established on a systematic level and internalized within a culture of professional learning. Reference was frequently made to the turnover of staff as being an obstacle to improvement in this area, further emphasizing the need for the school to establish and formalize the system. As the school continues to evolve with the implementation and development of the IB Primary Years and Middle Years Program (PYP and MYP) together with Advanced Placement (AP) at High School level, data-driven dialogue can be a catalyst for promoting change and identifying successful strategies. Implementing the regular practice of looking at data in a systematic, purposeful manner will increase the opportunities for teachers to discuss instruction and make adjustments to documents including pacing guides, long range plans and unit plans. Established protocols for analysis will guide teachers throughout this process and help to ensure success in the long term by minimizing the impact of teacher change.

2. Build on the current formalized teacher evaluation process by implementing regular classroom visits, feedback and reflection on instructional practices to ensure student growth. 3.4

Across all grade levels, teachers engage in a formal supervision and evaluation process that allows for conversations to occur between staff members and their supervisors. Documentation of observation protocols, logs, lesson plans and reflection sheets note that this takes place systematically. With a clearly defined evaluation system, the chances for teacher growth are evident and this framework is a quality first step but there is now a need to complement this formal system with ongoing conversations about planning, instruction, and the assessment of and for learning. Interviews with teachers evidenced the need and desire for this type of regular feedback on professional performance from the school leadership team. Complementing the formal supervision and evaluation system with regular instructional coaching from supervisors can help to elevate the quality of instructional practices for all teachers and ensure that learner-centered practices are implemented consistently throughout.

3. Formalize collaborative learning communities throughout the school to enrich the culture of professional learning and increase the use of research-based instructional practices for student learning. 3.5

Learning environment observations and interviews with leadership and instructional staff indicate a clear need for ISPS to create regularly scheduled opportunities for teachers to collaborate about student learning. Although some teachers are currently engaged in periodic book studies or occasional grade level/departmental meetings, it is essential for all instructional staff to participate in professional learning communities centered upon student growth so that greater continuity of equitable learning experiences can be established.

Establishing a clear and specific focus on student growth in professional learning community meetings will enable instructional staff to determine the specific needs of their individual learners as well as identify trends within classes and throughout the school. Deepening the culture of collaboration at ISPS will allow for all instructional staff to explore effective practices, reflect, receive feedback from students, peers and school leaders, and delve deeper into how to strategically improve the process of teaching and learning for everyone.

4. Develop a program of induction, mentoring and coaching that supports faculty member partnerships in the consistent implementation of instructional practices linked to the school's mission and vision. 3.7

Within a professional learning community, each member needs the resources and support to successfully deliver the programs and follow the policies adopted by the school. ISPS has clearly defined these programs and policies for staff members in handbooks for all sections of the school. Documents provided by the school support the fact that ISPS has a staff that is reflective following the observation process and professional growth plans note the importance of continuous improvement on the part of all staff members. However, survey results and interviews with teachers note that there is a need to better support teachers in the successful and consistent implementation of curriculum programs and school policies through more formal systems of induction, mentoring and coaching. Teachers noted how co-teaching models, and support from other colleagues might bring a greater sense of assuredness to new teachers as well as returning teaching staff at ISPS and may also contribute to a greater coherence of approach throughout the school. For ISPS to evolve, a culture of ongoing support with more frequent visits by both peers and school leaders would be beneficial to the professional learning community. Opportunities to give and receive feedback can bring ownership to programs and empower teachers to be more proactive in their implementation. Supporting these models throughout the year can also bolster a school community and promote the well-being of staff.

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 • Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff • Accreditation Report • Assessments of staffing needs • Interviews • 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 • School calendar • Observations 	3.0
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 • Records of depreciation of equipment • Interviews • Survey results • 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"> • Accreditation Report • Budget related to media and information resource acquisition • Survey results • Interviews • 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 	3.0

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"> • Interviews • Technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure • Survey results • Policies relative to technology use • Observations • Accreditation Report 	3.0
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"> • Interviews • Student assessment system for identifying student needs • Accreditation Report • Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support • Survey results • Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills • Observations • Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education • List of support services available to students 	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"> • Accreditation Report • List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning • Survey results • Interviews • Description of IEP process • Observations • Description of referral process 	3.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The ISPS community is committed to ensuring that abundant fiscal, human and material resources are in place in order to provide students with a wide variety of educational and co-curricular experiences.

4.1

The ISPS budget delineates ample funding in support of its human resources on campus. Class sizes are small, and a wide variety of course offerings are provided for ISPS students. The school has significantly increased its allocation for professional development funding to allow for more opportunities for staff to engage in continuing education. Classrooms and learning spaces are well maintained and are supplied with a variety of materials to support student learning. The maintenance and security teams work diligently to ensure that the facility is safe, secure and well maintained so that learning can occur.

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"> • Interviews • Accreditation Report • 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 	3.0

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"> • Accreditation Report • Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning • Interviews 	2.0
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of attendance and training related to data use • Interviews • Accreditation Report 	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"> • Observations • Interviews • Evidence of student growth • Accreditation Report • Evidence of student success at the next level 	2.0
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"> • Minutes of board meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Interviews • Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals • Observations 	3.0

Opportunities for Improvement

Indicator

1. Ensure that staff collect, analyze and apply learning from a wide range of formative and summative data sources to make improvements and adjustments to curriculum programs, and instructional and assessment practices.

5.2

The school improvement plan identified as a priority the use of data to inform and improve instruction. Based on interviews with teachers and leaders and information provided in the Accreditation Report and Student Performance Diagnostic, many instructional staff have undergone training on data use. However, as a result of teacher turnover, there are a number of staff who have not yet received training in this area (see Required Action 5.3 that follows). Leaders and staff acknowledge that not everyone has reached a level of comfort in analyzing and using data to improve and adapt instruction. Therefore, establishing a culture in which data use is an integral and routine part of the teaching and learning process serves to ensure that changes and adjustments to curriculum, programs, and instructional and assessment practices are based on data evaluation and analysis.

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

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 program has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all children.			
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"> • Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement, and retention of professional and support staff • Interviews • Observations • Accreditation Report • School budgets for the last three years • Staff License/certification/qualifications • Assessments of staff needs • Staff compensations/benefits • Professional and support staff/child ratios 	3.0
4.2	The school employs qualified Administrators/Directors for each administrative position to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Staff License/certification/qualifications • Interviews 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.3	The school employs qualified teachers for each professional teaching position to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement, and retention of professional and support staff • Interviews • Stakeholder results • Observations • Staff License/certification/qualifications • Accreditation Report 	4.0
4.4	The school employs qualified assistant teachers for each position to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement, and retention of professional and support staff • Interviews • Stakeholder results • Staff License/certification/qualifications • Observations • Accreditation Report 	4.0
4.5	The school maintains a class-size and ratio of young children to teachers that support the care and developmentally appropriate learning, growth, and development of young children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Observations • Accreditation Report • Staff to student ratio records 	2.0
4.6	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the early learning school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment purchasing and maintenance • Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources • School schedule • Interviews • School calendar • Observations • Budget for authorized expenses and activities • Accreditation Report 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.7	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all young children and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written health and safety policies • Interviews • Facilities and equipment maintenance records and schedules • Building inspections record • Accreditation Report • CPR/1st Aid Certification/ health safety trainings • Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills and evacuation routes • System for maintenance requests • Observations 	3.0
4.8	The school regularly assesses and maintains all indoor spaces to be accessible to all young children and adults; ventilated, lighted, and temperature-controlled; and the spaces that primarily serve each age-group of young children have direct access to bathroom/washing facilities, sinks, and drinking water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written health and safety policies • Interviews • Observations • Accreditation Report • System for maintenance requests 	4.0
4.9	Each classroom/learning space has sufficient usable floor space and size to support the creativity and developmentally appropriate learning, growth, and development of young children; is highly functional for program delivery; and encourages positive staff-to-child relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder results • Observations • Interviews • Accreditation Report 	3.0
4.10	Each classroom/learning space has furniture, equipment, and resources that are safe, clean, well maintained, adaptive, accessible, and developmentally appropriate for the age-group of young children they directly serve; are sufficient in number; and are organized in ways to support appropriate and effective implementation of the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Observations • Interviews • Stakeholder results • Facilities and equipment maintenance records and schedules • System for maintenance requests 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.11	Indoor and outdoor equipment are safe, available to all young children, are developmentally appropriate for the age-group, have appropriate surfaces to support a variety of types of learning and play, and have impact material under all climbing equipment and swings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written health and safety policies • Stakeholder results • Facility and equipment specifications • Facilities and equipment maintenance records and schedules • Observations • Accreditation Report • System for maintenance requests • Interviews 	3.0
4.12	Each classroom/learning space has multiple learning/interest centers that are organized for independent use by young children, that support the learning activities of the instructional program and the creativity of young children, and that are well equipped with materials supportive of the purpose of each learning/interest center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Stakeholder results • Observations • Interviews • System for ordering/maintaining sufficient supplies 	3.0
4.13	Each classroom/learning space provides all children with safe and comfortable/cozy areas to relax, rest, or sleep that are continuously supervised by adults at all times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Interviews • Accreditation Report 	3.0
4.14	Children and school personnel use a range of interactive media and information resources that support the educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology plan • Observations • Assessment and evaluation of technology and media literacy • Survey results • Technology and interactive media inventory • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Data on media and information resources available to staff and children 	3.0

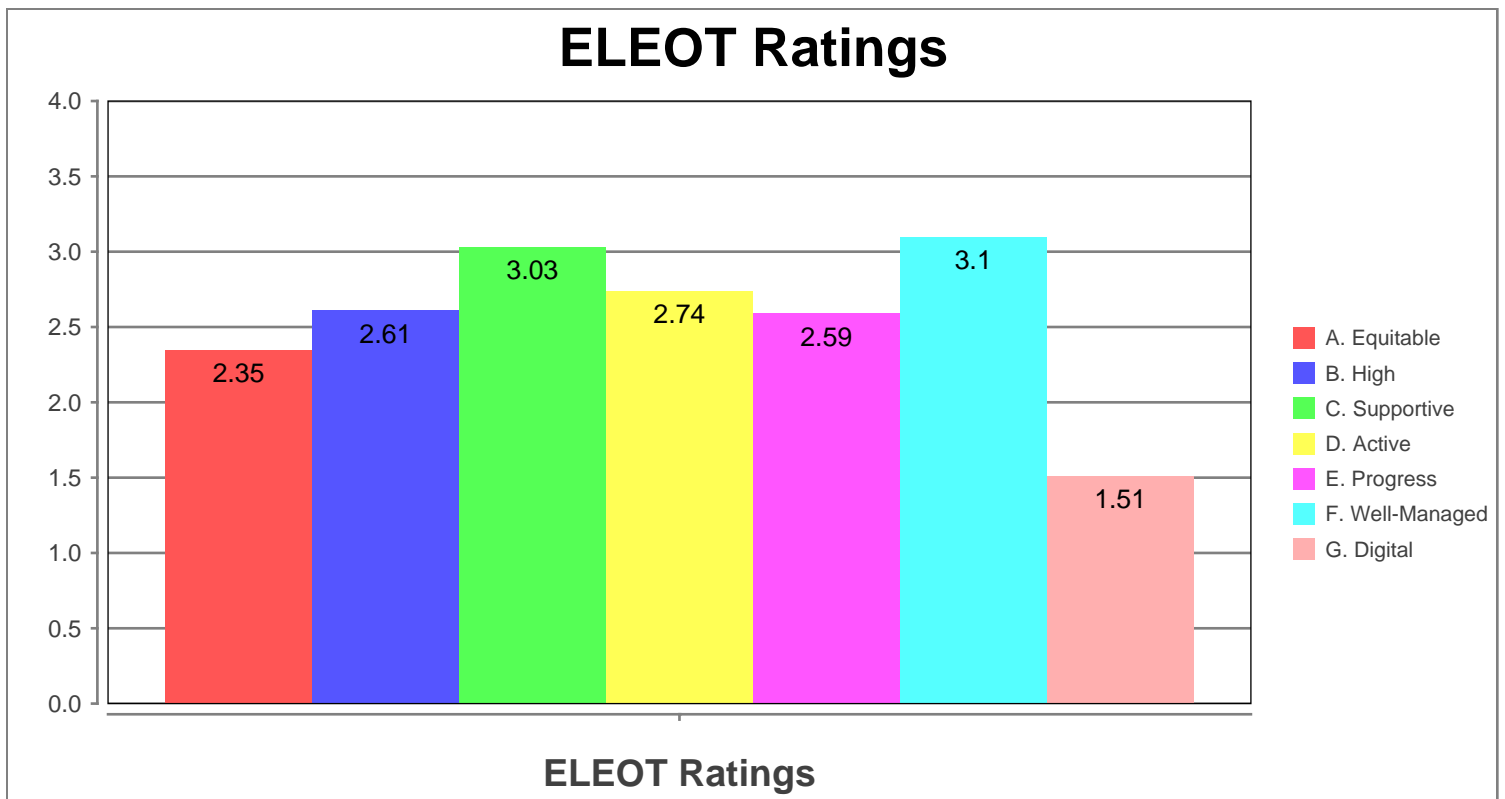
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.15	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of central depository and data back-up mechanism • Cyber-safety plan; policies and procedures • Technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Hardware and software inventory • Interviews • Observations • Policies relative to technology use • Security of information policies 	3.0
4.16	Each classroom/learning space has displays that are used effectively as a learning tool, are developmentally appropriate for the age-group, attractively presented, appropriate in content, portray the current learning activities, and showcase children's work and creativity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Observations • Displays pictures/photos 	4.0
4.17	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of young children that are integral to the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results • Accreditation Report • Intervention services referral • Observations • Interviews • Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education • Lists of support services available to students 	2.0
4.18	Each child receives individual personal care by staff members who consistently promote the child's general well-being, nutrition, health, and safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handbooks, procedures • Observations • Stakeholder results • Parent/Staff communications procedures and expectations • Facility/classroom design for storage space of personal items • Stakeholder communication forms • Accreditation Report • Interviews 	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.19	Arrival and departure routines focus on the care and well-being of each child and encourage a daily exchange of family and school communications regarding the care, well-being, and educational progress of the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handbooks, procedures • Interviews • Stakeholder results • Parent/Staff communications procedures and expectations • Accreditation Report • Observations 	3.0
4.20	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, and educational referral needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning • Accreditation Report • Demographics • Observations • Parent opportunity information sheets • Interviews • Description of referral process 	3.0
4.21	All children, parents, and staff experience an environment of reciprocal respect, trust, and open communication in a fair and just way, respecting the needs and characteristics of each individual, and promoting a sense of community, belonging, ownership, and pride.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handbooks, procedures • Observations • Interviews • Parent/Staff communications procedures and expectations • Accreditation Report • Stakeholder feedback results 	3.0
4.22	All indoor and outdoor spaces are free from hazards and dangerous circumstances for young children and adults, and adults actively remove and resolve hazardous conditions as they may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations • Facility and equipment specifications • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Safety handbooks, guidelines, procedures, expectations • Observations of student and adult behaviors concerning safety practices • Stakeholder feedback results 	3.0

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	3.0
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.

The External Review Team was provided with all the necessary documentation and information well in advance of the visit with the quality of the self-assessment indicative of the fact that it had been approached in a thorough and thoughtful manner. Substantive evidence was provided on-line in anticipation of the visit, enabling the team to subsequently make the best use of their time at school and the team congratulates the school on what was clearly an exemplary preparation process. During the visit, the team had access to all areas of campus as well as any further documents that were necessary. There were also multiple opportunities to interview stakeholder groups with all meetings being well-attended and participants willing to contribute in a positive yet candid manner. During the visit, the External Review Team met with a total of 50 teachers, 13 support staff, 10 parents and 8 members of the Board of Directors. They were also able to speak to 109 students both in meetings and during the 43 learning environments observations. The External Review Report is therefore the result of careful, considered deliberation of artifacts, evidence and observations together with shared reflection on stakeholder perceptions and opinions and an analysis of student performance results.

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.

The External Review Team has encountered numerous ways in which ISPS is a resource rich environment, and this powerful practice is reflected throughout the entire school. Staff are abundant in number, highly qualified, and fully dedicated to their roles at school. Due to the support of the ISPS governance and leadership to maintain such a low student to teacher ratio, ISPS is able to offer its students a wide variety of learning opportunities, both inside and outside the classroom, while still maintaining low class sizes in all areas. Necessary educational materials are easily obtained through the school's procurement system, and an increase of funding for professional development and technology has been allocated for in the budget. ISPS is clearly committed to ensuring the necessary fiscal, human and material resources are provided so that student learning can occur.

One of the evident strengths of the ISPS community is the sense of community that exists among stakeholders. A caring and nurturing environment was observed throughout the visit, as well as reported through interviews, observations and stakeholder surveys. Students and parents consistently shared how warmly children are cared for, and that ISPS students are supported not only as scholars, but also in the development of the whole child. ISPS demonstrates a clear commitment to developing the whole child through its well established and diverse after school program, multidisciplinary trips and community service projects as well as the wide range of learning opportunities provided to students during the school day. The school's walls showcase student artwork and its classrooms highlight the work of ISPS dancers, actors, musicians, athletes, writers, poets, filmmakers, and philanthropists. There is a high level of respect between and among stakeholder groups at ISPS, and based on interaction with students, most indicated there are very few instances of bullying. A character education framework was implemented to support the learning environment and help broaden a shared value set for stakeholders.

The major theme which emerged from the opportunities for improvement was the need for consolidation of initiatives. A number of projects and programs have been implemented in recent years with a view to improving student learning and the conditions which support student learning. However, interviews with school personnel, the revision of artifacts and observations of classroom practice indicate there is a need to consolidate the actions taken thus far so as to enable staff to move beyond compliance with change, towards a situation in which those changes have been internalized as part of the school's culture.

Firstly, the school has adopted the IB PYP and MYP programs as a means by which to promote curriculum alignment and coherence in instructional practice and there is wide acceptance that these programs contribute positively to student learning. However, while support and guidance have been given in terms of planning, there is a need to strengthen the practical application of these plans in the classroom so as to truly benefit from the constructivist approach they espouse. A wide range of teaching styles was observed, from teacher-centered to student-focused and, while some teachers are more proficient than others in these more innovative learner-centric approaches, it was clear that the school has capacity to improve as many staff are willing to share and learn from one another if given the opportunity to do so. Fostering collaboration and teamwork through coordinated and focused activities such as peer observation will serve to consolidate best practice and have a significant impact on the achievement of desired student outcomes.

Many references were made, during the visit, to the transient nature of the school community and teacher turnover was a factor frequently referenced as an obstacle to progress. However, it was also noted that there is a solid core of staff that has been part of ISPS for a considerable amount of time. The challenge is to take advantage of both of these populations, recognizing that the purpose of a solid foundation is to allow for greater growth but also that growth must be scaffolded, consolidated and given support if it is to be sustained.

Secondly, the school has implemented a Bring Your Own Device policy, which is currently in the pilot stage. All stakeholders recognize the importance of promoting a technology-enhanced learning environment; however, observations of classroom practice indicated the need to ensure technology is used consistently as a learning tool in the hands of the students. The process of integrating technology is particularly challenging and to ensure the successful implementation of this initiative, the school must look, not only to replace old technologies with new ones, but to explore ways in which those new technologies can be used to strengthen and support commitment towards a 21st century model of teaching and learning with its focus on higher order thinking skills.

Finally, the External Review Team noted that although the school collects and analyzes a significant amount of data, there remains a need to further develop a culture of inquiry regarding what can be learned from both standardized and non-standardized test data as well as other data about teaching and learning. To date, discussions about assessment seem to have focused on reaching agreements regarding grading policies as opposed to the development of common assessments within subject areas and authentic assessments in general. More focus on authentic assessments together with an analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data will enrich the information available to teachers and enable them to better address the individual needs of their students. Similarly, if data gathering efforts were bolstered by the use of a robust system of analysis and feedback, teachers would be better placed to cater to the individual student and to analyze trends, focusing on areas of strength and needs to improve performance. Building capacity in this area will empower staff and thus consolidate and strengthen the school's ability for achieving present and future improvement goals.

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 highest scoring areas within the data gathered by the team using the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT) were related to the supportive learning environment and the well-managed learning environment. Students are respectful, respond appropriately to peers and to teachers and have a positive attitude towards the school and learning in general. Students seem to be comfortable answering questions with many of them confident and willing to share their work in public. In terms of the active learning environment, a significant amount of student engagement was witnessed, with students being on-task and willing to follow teacher directions. However, there is an opportunity for improvement in terms of moving from general compliance to more authentic engagement in which students are inspired and self-motivated. Similarly, the results indicated there is a greater need for personalization as the team did not witness many students receiving differentiated tasks or alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for their individual needs. More evident links to real-life situations would also increase student motivation. In particular, the team noticed that there were few opportunities for students to learn about their own and others backgrounds and cultures. In a school such as ISPS with its rich mix of cultures and traditions, this seems to be a missed opportunity through which to develop international-mindedness. Although activities such as International Week are well-established and appreciated, teachers could better draw upon this aspect of the ISPS culture to enrich learning on a day to day basis. The team witnessed a significant variation between classes in terms of the establishment of high expectations. Although the team observed that most students were fulfilling tasks to the established level of expectation, it was felt that there were missed opportunities to push students beyond these boundaries. More emphasis on higher-level thinking skills such as applying, evaluating and synthesizing would help to achieve that elusive increase in what is already a high performing school. There were few examples of students being provided with exemplars of high quality work and it is important that teachers begin to build a bank of such items so as to better inform their students of what high quality work looks like. Although most students were able to verbalize their understanding of the lesson and its content, there were fewer positive responses when asked about how their work was to be assessed. This was indicative of the fact that although students were generally aware of what they had to do, they were not so aware of what they were expected to learn as a result of doing the task. There were a few notable exceptions in all these areas and the school is encouraged to build upon this best practice and ensure it is shared with all staff.

As is the case with many schools at this point in time, the lowest scoring item on the ELEOT observations was the digital learning environment. The Bring Your Own Device program, as noted earlier in the report, is at the pilot stage of implementation and, as such, technology is not yet being used consistently to support and improve student learning.

In the past, accreditation reviews resulted in an accreditation recommendation on status. Labels such as advised, warned, probation, or all clear were used to describe the status of a school relative to the criteria. Beginning with school year, 2013-14, AdvancED has implemented a new framework to describe the result of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED has introduced an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ). The IEQ is comprised of three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern;

and 3) use of resources to support and optimize learning. Therefore, your institution will no longer receive an accreditation status but will be accredited with an IEQ score. In the case where an institution does not meet established criteria, the accreditation will be under review thereby requiring frequent monitoring.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and Indicators; the Analysis of Student Performance; and the Engagement and Involvement of Stakeholders. Within each domain, institutions will be able to make connections to the individual performance levels that are applied in support of the AdvancED Standards and evaluative criteria. Within these performance levels are detailed descriptors that can be a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Required Action as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected indicator. The IEQ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. Your institution's IEQ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Your actions for improvement that have a positive impact will be reflected in your IEQ score.

IEQ Institutional Score For International School of Port of Spain : 282

Teaching and Learning Impact: 267

(Standards 3 and 5; Student Performance Criteria)

Leadership Capacity: 291

(Standards 1 and 2; Stakeholder Engagement Criteria)

Resource Utilization: 314

(Standard 4)

The External Review Team extends their appreciation to the Director Dr Mark Lee, Board, faculty, students and parents for the hospitality and warmth with which they were received. The school improvement team is to be commended for their professional approach to the self-assessment and for ensuring that all stakeholders were well-prepared and willing to respond with transparency and openness. It was these factors which enabled the team to conduct a high quality review, resulting in a report which it is hoped will provide the school with direction and support in their continuing journey towards excellence. In the words of your own Debbie Jacob: "We wish you wings!"

Required Action

1. Strengthen the current school improvement plan through a focus on measurable student performance targets and the development of a detailed plan of action including specific time frames and responsibilities.

Related Indicator or Assurance: 1.3

Description:

The current school improvement plan, although aligned with the school's mission and vision does not provide sufficient guidance for the successful implementation and monitoring of strategies aimed at improving student learning. Although targets are identified, these are not expressed in the form of S.M.A.R.T. goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) but are more generally related to the completion of actions or the implementation of strategies. As such, they do not allow for the effective measurement of the impact those actions and strategies may have on student growth or the conditions which support student growth. There is a need to include baseline data and specific targets which can be used for this purpose linked to e.g., % turnover of staff or % student attendance together with student performance results. Discussions with staff indicated that progress in the implementation of school improvement initiatives had been somewhat halting and reception of some chosen strategies was mixed. The ability to clearly identify how any particular strategy may impact positively upon student growth or the conditions that support student growth, through the monitoring of progress towards measurable goals will increase commitment towards its successful implementation and ensure that time and effort is spent on high yield activities.

The absence of a detailed time line and specific responsibilities also means that while the current plan maps out the general direction and time-scale for improvement, it does not facilitate the effective monitoring of progress. The inclusion of this detail will not only increase accountability but also ensure that improvement efforts are given timely and appropriate support, promoting a culture of participation, shared responsibility and ownership. Enabling the school to better assess progress towards each goal will also make it more possible to celebrate success on a regular basis.

2. Identify and implement instructional strategies that include, among others, the use of technology as a learning tool, to engage all learners in meaningful ways and to ensure the achievement of expected outcomes.

Related Indicator or Assurance: 3.3

Description:

ISPS has adopted specific programs of study including the PYP and MYP to meet the needs of its community of learners and to support growth in skills and understandings. With these programs comes a greater emphasis on student-centered learning as reflected in interdisciplinary projects, inquiry based practices and many authentic assessments. Through interviews with teachers and the use of the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT), the team identified many opportunities for teachers to increase their repertoire of learner-centric instructional strategies in general and the use of technology as a learning tool in particular.

Although students are engaged at all grade levels in activities that provide learning opportunities, the team witnessed a significant amount of teacher-directed learning. The authentic engagement and inspiration which comes from student-centered activities was evident in some areas but is not yet wide-spread throughout the school. Discussions are taking place at the planning stage upon how these student-centered instructional strategies might be used, but there is a need for greater support and guidance in their practical application in the classroom. Developing a toolbox of strategies and the ability of all teachers to implement them effectively will increase institutional capacity to optimize resources and engage learners in meaningful ways.

3. Provide ongoing, measurable, school-wide professional development opportunities for all staff focused on research-based practices that promote student learning and the conditions that support student learning.

Related Indicator or Assurance: 3.11

Description:

The school has made considerable efforts to increase the funding and provision of professional development. Policies exist which indicate that staff must comply with certain professional development requirements and documents indicate that there is recognition of the need to align professional learning and identified needs. A program is also in place to ensure that the school complies with the requirements of the IB PYP and MYP programs. A professional development committee has been formed to revise teacher applications for training but the minutes of the meetings indicate concerns with equity of provision across sections. Also, the absence of a whole-school professional development plan means that it is difficult to ensure all staff are receiving the training they need on a regular, systematic basis. Documents also indicate that teachers reflect upon their professional learning but there is little to indicate that these reflections are then used to evaluate and design subsequent professional development opportunities.

A whole-school professional development plan will enable the school to anticipate needs and ensure equity of provision among staff. Centralizing all the information on professional development in a plan which includes PYP and MYP needs and requirements, together with other research based practices will enable the school to systematically build institutional capacity to support student learning thus anticipating and mitigating the impact of teacher turnover.

4. Develop and implement a plan and set of protocols that anticipate staff turnover so all teachers, teacher assistants, and other staff undergo scaffolded training in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data to improve, adapt and differentiate instruction thus driving increased student success within a constantly changing school community.

Related Indicator or Assurance: 5.3

Description:

Interviews, data, and a variety of documents provided by the school, demonstrate that the school experiences

turnover each year in both teaching staff and students. This is a recurring phenomenon which results in a situation where some staff have received training in the use of data and others have not. Given the school has set its own priority regarding the use of data to improve instruction and better differentiate for students with varying needs, the team requires that the school develop a plan and set of protocols that ensure all staff (leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and other staff) are provided scaffolded and ongoing training in this area. In this way, the school will build the capacity of its staff to evaluate, interpret, and use data to drive increased student success and so ensure that the practice becomes ubiquitous across all levels and content areas.

Part III: Addenda

The External Review Team

Lead Evaluator:

Ms. Ruth M Allen

Team Members:

Dr. Ludwig "Ludy" D van Broekhuizen

Ms. Andrea Pearson

Mr. Joe Stanzione

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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