

Report of the External Review Team for Creighton Community High School

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Introduction

The External Review is an integral component of AdvancED Performance Accreditation and provides the institution with a comprehensive evaluation guided by the results of diagnostic instruments, in-depth review of data and documentation, and the professional judgment of a team of qualified and highly trained evaluators. A series of diagnostic instruments examines the impact of teaching and learning on student performance, the capacity of leadership to effect continuous improvement, and the degree to which the institution optimizes its use of available resources to facilitate and support student success. The results of this evaluation are represented in the Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) and through critical observations, namely, Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

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 specific to their institution type, demonstrate acceptable levels of student performance and the continuous improvement of student performance, and provide evidence of stakeholder engagement and satisfaction. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the conditions, processes, and practices within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness.

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 Standards were developed by a committee comprised of talented 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 define institutional quality and guide continuous improvement. Prior to implementation, an internationally recognized panel of experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research reviewed the standards and provided feedback, guidance and endorsement.

The AdvancED External Review Team uses AdvancED Standards, associated indicators and criteria related to student performance and stakeholder engagement to guide its evaluation. The Team examines adherence to standards as well as how the institution functions as a whole and embodies the practices and characteristics expected of an accredited institution. The Standards, indicators and related criteria are evaluated using indicator-specific performance levels. The Team rates each indicator and criterion on a scale of 1 to 4. The final scores assigned to the indicators and criteria represent the average of the External Review Team members' individual ratings.

The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation. It energizes and equips the institution's leadership and stakeholders 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 the in-depth examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with all stakeholder groups, and extensive observations of learning, instruction, and operations.

Use of Diagnostic Tools

A key to examining the institution is the design and use of diagnostic tools that reveal the effectiveness with which an institution creates conditions and implements processes and practices that impact student performance and success. In preparation for the External Review the institution conducted a Self Assessment that applied the standards and criteria for accreditation. The institution provided evidence to support its conclusions vis a vis organizational effectiveness in ensuring acceptable and improving levels of student performance.

- an indicator-based tool that connects the specific elements of the criteria to evidence gathered by the team;
- a student performance analytic that examines the quality of assessment instruments used by the institution, the integrity of the administration of the assessment to students, the quality of the learning results including the impact of instruction on student learning at all levels of performance, and the equity of learning that examines the results of student learning across all demographics;
- a stakeholder engagement instrument that examines the fidelity of administration and results of perception surveys seeking the perspective of students, parents, and teachers;
- a state-of-the-art, learner-centric observation instrument, the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) that quantifies students' engagement, attitudes and dispositions organized in 7 environments: Equitable Learning, High Expectations, Supportive Learning, Active Learning, Progress Monitoring and Feedback, Well-Managed Learning, and Digital Learning. All evaluators must be trained, reach acceptable levels of inter-rater reliability, and certified to use this research-based and validated instrument.

The External Review Team's findings and critical observations are shared in this report through the IEQ™ results as well as through the identification of Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

Index of Education Quality

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 AdvancED Standards and other evaluative criteria. Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, AdvancED introduced a new framework to describe the results of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduced an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ™). The IEQ™ comprises three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the capacity of leadership to guide the institution toward the achievement of its

vision and strategic priorities; and 3) use of resources to support and optimize learning. Therefore, your institution will no longer receive an accreditation status. Instead, your institution will be accredited with an IEQ™ score. In the case where an institution is failing to meet established criteria, the accreditation will be under review thereby requiring frequent monitoring and demonstrated improvement.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and associated indicators, the analysis of student performance, and the engagement and feedback of stakeholders. Within each domain institutions can connect to the individual performance levels that are applied in support of the AdvancED Standards and evaluative criteria. Within the performance levels are detailed descriptors that serve as a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report and building on their Powerful Practices, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Opportunity for Improvement and Improvement Priority as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected indicator(s).

The IEQ™ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. An institution's IEQ™ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Subsequent actions for improvement and evidence that these have had a positive impact will raise the institution's IEQ™ score.

Benchmark Data

Throughout this report, AdvancED provides benchmark data for each indicator and for each component of the evaluative criteria. These benchmark data represent the overall averages across the entire AdvancED Network for your institution type. Thus, the AdvancED Network average provides an extraordinary opportunity for institutions to understand their context on a global scale rather than simply compared to a state, region, or country.

It is important to understand that the AdvancED Network averages are provided primarily to serve as a tool for continuous improvement and not as a measure of quality in and of itself. Benchmark data, when wisely employed, have a unique capacity to help institutions identify and leverage their strengths and areas of improvement to significantly impact student learning.

Powerful Practices

A key to continuous improvement is the institution's ability to learn from and build upon its most effective and impactful practices. Such practices serve as critical leverage points necessary to guide, support and ensure continuous improvement. A hallmark of the accreditation process is its commitment to identifying with evidence, the conditions, processes and practices that are having the most significant impact on student performance and institutional effectiveness. Throughout this report, the External Review Team has captured and defined Powerful Practices. These noteworthy practices are essential to the institution's effort to continue its journey of improvement.

Opportunities for Improvement

Every institution can and must improve no matter what levels of performance it has achieved in its past. During the process of the review, the External Review Team identified areas of improvement where the institution is meeting the expectations for accreditation but in the professional judgment of the Team these are Opportunities for Improvement that should be considered by the institution. Using the criteria described in the corresponding rubric(s) to the Opportunity for Improvement, the institution can identify what elements of practice must be addressed to guide the improvement.

Improvement Priorities

The expectations for accreditation are clearly defined in a series of the rubric-based AdvancED Standards, indicators and evaluative criteria focused on the impact of teaching and learning on student performance, the capacity of the institution to be guided by effective leadership, and the allocation and use of resources to support student learning. As such, the External Review Team reviewed, analyzed and deliberated over significant bodies of evidence provided by the institution and gathered by the Team during the process. In the professional judgment of the Team as well as the results of the diagnostic process, the Team defined, with rationale, Improvement Priorities. The priorities must be addressed in a timely manner by the institution to retain and improve their accreditation performance as represented by the IEQ™. Improvement Priorities serve as the basis for the follow-up and monitoring process that will begin upon conclusion of the External Review. The institution must complete and submit an Accreditation Progress Report within two years of the External Review. The report must include actions taken by the institution to address the Improvement Priorities along with the corresponding evidence and results. The IEQ™ will be recalculated by AdvancED upon review of the evidence and results associated with the Improvement Priorities.

The Review

Creighton Community High School was visited by External Review Team from February 10-12,2015. The team was comprised of five members and worked intensively over the review period to gather evidence, review artifacts, and interview representatives of all stakeholder groups to effectively assess the school's capacity and progress toward meeting the five standards identified in the AdvancED Standards for School Accreditation. Included in the review process was a systematic observation of the learning environments in a large majority of the school's classroom. The school was well prepared for the review and provided substantial and appropriate artifacts and evidence for the team to review. This included access to an array of internal and external stakeholders that were interviewed by the team. A total of 90 stakeholders, representing all groups were interviewed and engaged by the team.

Throughout the review the staff, students, administration, board members, and parents were helpful, candid, realistic, welcoming, and complimentary. This contributed to the overall feel of high expectations for the school community. The External Review Team was provided with access to digitally prepared data files that included documentation identifying appropriate profile information, school strategic plans and goals, measures of both school performance, as well as other artifacts that supported a thorough insight into operation and function of the school. The team was able to access all of the documents, data, and pertinent information necessary to

conduct a thorough and comprehensive External Review process. The school's approach to completing the Accreditation Report was thorough and comprehensive, showing substantial insight into the operation of the school.

Stakeholders were interviewed by members of the External Review Team to gain their perspectives on topics relevant to the institution's effectiveness and student performance. The feedback gained through the stakeholder interviews was considered with other evidences and data to support the findings of the External Review. The following chart depicts the numbers of persons interviewed representative of various stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Interviewed	Number
Board Members	5
Administrators	2
Instructional Staff	30
Support Staff	9
Students	31
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	13
Total	90

Results

Teaching and Learning Impact

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement is the primary expectation of every institution. The relationship between teacher and learner must be productive and effective for student success. The impact of teaching and learning includes an analysis of student performance results, instructional quality, learner and family engagement, support services for student learning, curriculum quality and efficacy, and college and career readiness data. These are all key indicators of an institution's impact on teaching and 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 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.

Institutions 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 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
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.	3.00	2.88
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.	3.00	2.53
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	3.00	2.67
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	3.00	2.78
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	3.00	2.63
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	3.00	2.66
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	2.00	2.58
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	3.00	3.12

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
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.	4.00	3.07
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.	3.00	2.77
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.00	2.57
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	2.00	2.71

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	3.00	2.72
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.	3.00	2.44
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	3.00	2.09
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.	3.00	2.53
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.	4.00	2.78

Student Performance Diagnostic

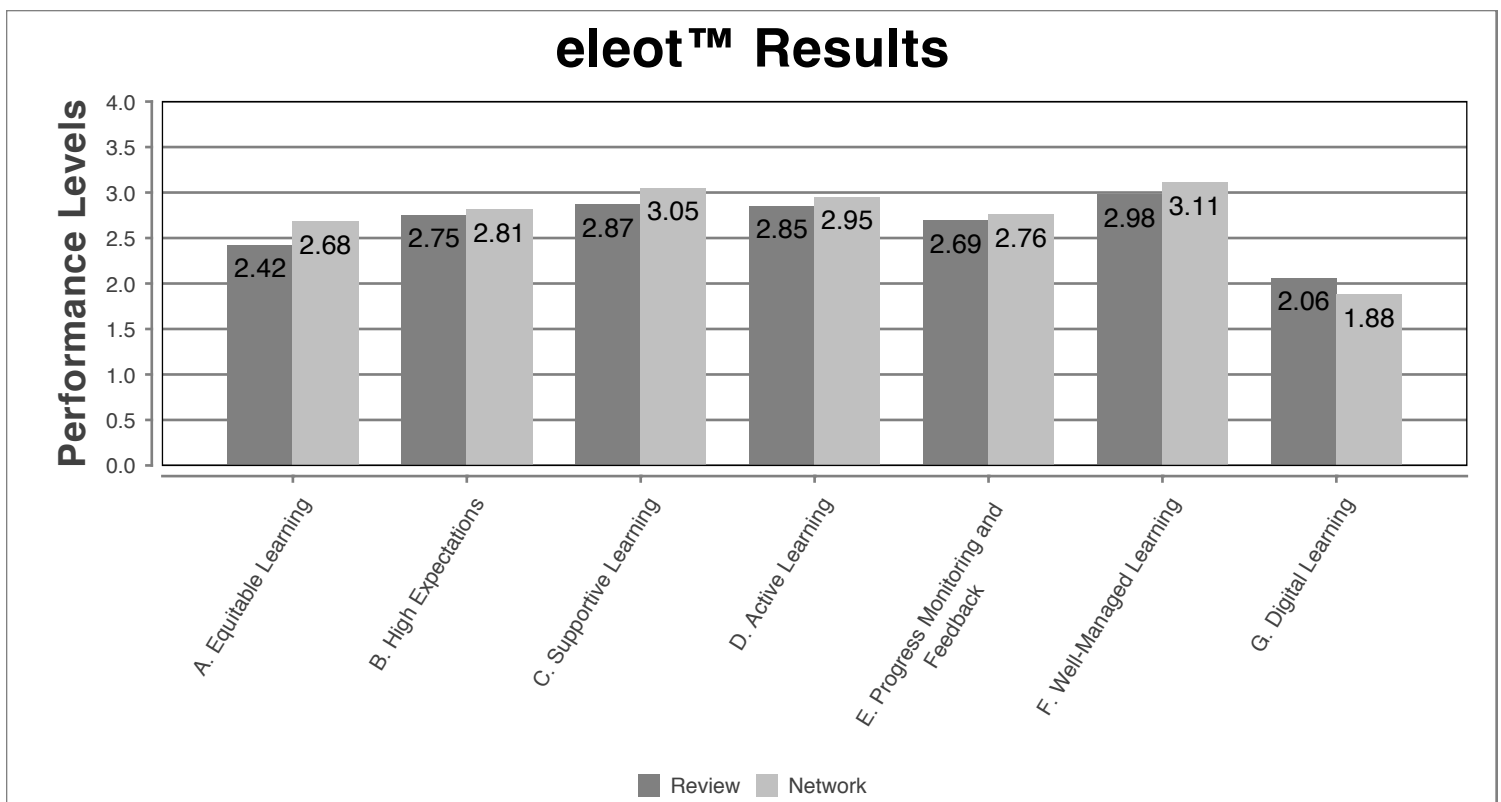
The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	4.00	3.10
Test Administration	4.00	3.47
Equity of Learning	4.00	2.74
Quality of Learning	3.00	2.98

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

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. Every member of the External Review Team is required to be trained and pass a certification exam that establishes inter-rater reliability. Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale (4=very evident; 3=evident; 2=somewhat evident; and 1=not observed). The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in eleot™ as well as benchmark results across the AdvancED Network.



Twenty two observations were completed using the Effective Learning Evaluations Observation Tool (eleot) in grades 7-12. The highest ranked environment was the Well Managed Learning Environment (F) with a score of 2.98. Strengths included respectful interactions between teachers and peers, following classroom rules, and knowing classroom routines and expectations. The average was consistent with the AdvancED Network (AEN) average. Supportive Learning Environment (C) received a 2.87 and was the second highest ranked. Positive

attitudes about the classroom and learning, and positive learning experiences were seen. The lowest ranked indicator in this environment was additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for students' needs. The average was slightly lower than the AEN average. The third highest ranked environment was Active Learning Environment (D) receiving a 2.85. Students were found to be actively engaged in the learning activities. The average was slightly lower than the AdvancED Network average. High Expectations Environment (B) was the fourth highest ranked environment with a 2.75. Activities were challenging yet attainable and coursework was found to be rigorous. The average was consistent with the AEN average. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment (E) scored a 2.69 and was the 5th highest indicator. The strongest indicator in this environment was responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding. Verbalizing an understanding of the lesson/content was also high. The average for this environment was consistent with the AdvancED Network average. The sixth highest environment was the Equitable Learning Environment (A) with a 2.42. Strengths in this area were found in equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support. Students seemed to know that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied. This average was lower than the AEN average. The lowest ranked environment was the Digital Learning Environment with a 2.06. While this was the lowest ranked environment for the school, it should be noted that it was above the AdvancED Network average.

Reviewing the Digital Learning Environment, digital technology primarily focuses on substitution and augmentation in the classroom. However, it fails to meet the classroom transformation goals of technology, which are modification of the classroom and ultimately transformation of the learning environment. The Well Managed Learning Environment showed positive learning experiences through the formal structure that allows all students to be well known by at least one adult advocate. Teachers are able to engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations. Teachers consistently use instructional strategies that require collaboration, self-reflection, and development of critical thinking skills.

Several general observations and themes presented themselves to the External Review Team during the review. Facilities are well maintained and are conducive to a safe and orderly environment which contributes to the inviting atmosphere of the school. The number of quotes, student art, and professional signage throughout the building enhanced this positive atmosphere. Passing periods were orderly and well supervised, which added to the feeling of routine and stability within the district.

The team did notice some discontent between APL practices and student attitudes and behaviors particularly at the middle grades.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.41	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	13.64%	40.91%	18.18%	27.27%
2.	3.00	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	27.27%	54.55%	9.09%	9.09%
3.	2.73	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	22.73%	45.45%	13.64%	18.18%
4.	1.55	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	0.00%	27.27%	0.00%	72.73%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.42						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.68	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	18.18%	45.45%	22.73%	13.64%
2.	3.14	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	22.73%	68.18%	9.09%	0.00%
3.	2.05	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	4.55%	31.82%	27.27%	36.36%
4.	2.95	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	22.73%	54.55%	18.18%	4.55%
5.	2.91	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	22.73%	54.55%	13.64%	9.09%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.75						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.05	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	31.82%	45.45%	18.18%	4.55%
2.	3.32	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	45.45%	40.91%	13.64%	0.00%
3.	2.73	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	36.36%	22.73%	18.18%	22.73%
4.	2.95	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	22.73%	54.55%	18.18%	4.55%
5.	2.32	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	18.18%	31.82%	13.64%	36.36%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.87						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.91	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	27.27%	36.36%	36.36%	0.00%
2.	2.55	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	27.27%	27.27%	18.18%	27.27%
3.	3.09	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	31.82%	45.45%	22.73%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.85						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.50	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	13.64%	50.00%	9.09%	27.27%
2.	3.00	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	27.27%	45.45%	27.27%	0.00%
3.	2.82	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	18.18%	50.00%	27.27%	4.55%
4.	2.36	Understands how her/his work is assessed	13.64%	45.45%	4.55%	36.36%
5.	2.77	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	18.18%	54.55%	13.64%	13.64%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.69						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.00	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	22.73%	59.09%	13.64%	4.55%
2.	3.18	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	40.91%	45.45%	4.55%	9.09%
3.	2.95	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	22.73%	50.00%	27.27%	0.00%
4.	2.55	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	13.64%	50.00%	13.64%	22.73%
5.	3.23	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	45.45%	36.36%	13.64%	4.55%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.98						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.18	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	18.18%	18.18%	27.27%	36.36%
2.	2.00	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	13.64%	22.73%	13.64%	50.00%
3.	2.00	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	18.18%	9.09%	27.27%	45.45%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.06						

Findings

Opportunity for Improvement

Develop and implement a continuous program of professional learning.

(Indicators 3.11)

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews of professional staff revealed that the school has a need for aligning professional learning with identified needs. While some progress was noted in this area, a more focused approach would benefit teaching and learning and continue to build capacity among staff.

Opportunity for Improvement

Develop and implement a more robust mentoring program.

(Indicators 3.7)

Evidence and Rationale

Given potential staff retirements, a strong mentoring program would ultimately improve student achievement through aiding in the transition process for new teachers. At the same time, mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school’s values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Powerful Practice

The leadership monitors and communicates student learning in a comprehensive, effective manner.

(Indicators 5.5)

Evidence and Rationale

Because the leaders regularly communicate results and celebrate successes using multiple delivery methods, the student learning and teacher effectiveness are showcased. This process supports student learning and achievement of school improvement goals.

Powerful Practice

The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by a least one adult advocate in the school.

(Indicators 3.9)

Evidence and Rationale

School personnel participate in “Bulldog time” which allows staff to interact with individual students and build strong relationships. All students participate in this structure.

Leadership Capacity

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress towards its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its institutional purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to enact strategies to improve results of student 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 more than 32,000 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.

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 1 - Purpose and Direction

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	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	3.00	2.75
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.	4.00	3.04
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	3.00	2.61

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	3.00	2.98
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	3.00	2.96
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.	3.00	3.18
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	4.00	3.13
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	3.00	2.82
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	2.00	2.82

Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys (student, parent, and teacher) are directly correlated to the AdvancED 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, survey results, and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Questionnaire Administration	4.00	3.38
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.00	3.08

Findings

Opportunity for Improvement

Implement APL instructional strategy with fidelity.
(Indicators 2.6)

Evidence and Rationale

The External Review Team noted that while APL was one of the school's instructional strategies, little evidence existed that it was implemented consistently throughout the system.

Powerful Practice

The leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.
(Indicators 2.4)

Evidence and Rationale

The team noted that the staff and administration align their decisions and actions toward continuous improvement to achieve the school's purpose. All students are held to high standards. Leader and staff are collectively accountable for student learning.

Resource Utilization

The use and distribution of resources must be aligned and supportive of the needs of an institution and the students served. Institutions must ensure that resources are aligned with the stated mission and are distributed equitably so that the needs of students are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes an examination of the allocation and use of resources, the equity of resource distribution to need, the ability of the institution to ensure appropriate levels of funding and sustainability of resources, as well as evidence of long-range capital and resource planning effectiveness.

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 more than 32,000 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 and ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
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.	4.00	2.95
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	3.00	3.00
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	4.00	3.11
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	4.00	2.83
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	2.00	2.56

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	2.00	2.89
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	3.00	2.80

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop and initiate a technology plan that will more effectively utilize the school’s technology resources.
(Indicators 4.5)

Evidence and Rationale

The technology infrastructure supports the school’s teaching, learning, and operational needs. The district has invested in technology by keeping updated equipment for staff and students as well as a one-to-one iPad initiative for grades 9-12. Currently the school is on a substitution/augmentation side of technology implementation continuum. The school lacks a comprehensive technology plan. With a well-defined plan, the system would be able to move from the substitution/augmentation process to a transformational model that would enhance teaching and learning to increase students’ abilities, varied learning techniques, and awareness of educational activities to increase achievement. The logical progression would be for teachers to be trained towards a transformation model as referenced in the SAMR model. This model or like model outlines a system for professional development support to fully utilize the current technology resources within the district. An effective technology plan would assure the educational enhancement of student opportunities and achievement for success for every student throughout the district.

Opportunity for Improvement

Provide a more focused approach for students needing support to bring them up to the cultural expectations of the school.
(Indicators 4.6)

Evidence and Rationale

The parent and student surveys evidenced that this is a perceived area where improvement can be made. The classroom observations also revealed that a more differentiated approach to instruction would enhance teacher practices and student achievement.

Powerful Practice

The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment.
(Indicators 4.3)

Evidence and Rationale

All stakeholders and students take great pride in the maintenance, upkeep, and enhancement of the district facilities. The cleanliness and superb maintenance of the facilities contribute to the overall sense of school pride.

Conclusion

Overall the school's Self Assessment was collaborative in design and reflected an approach involving input from all internal stakeholder groups. The team found in most ratings that the evidence provided by the school aligned with the Self Assessment rating. However, there were some that did not. It should be noted that these anomalies were isolated and did not detract from the team's efforts to arrive at their findings. Based on the results of the review of artifacts and evidence, the team determined that the Self Assessment process indicated a conscientious and well-intentioned representation of the status of the system's performance, student achievement, and the capacity for continuous improvement.

The most significant challenge that the team found throughout the review was a lack of a comprehensive technology plan that supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs. Currently the school appears to have a technological infrastructure that is utilized for only substitution/augmentation of educational procedures and processes. The team would encourage the district to utilize their technology resources and develop a technology plan. This plan should be designed to move from a system of substitution/augmentation to a transformational model that enhances teaching and learning to increase students' abilities, varied learning techniques, and awareness of educational activities to increase achievement.

Creighton Community High School has made a commitment to providing technological resources throughout the PK-12 system. That commitment features a one-to-one program for 9-12 students. The model used to date is a substitution/augmentation model used by most teachers. The logical progression would be to design a technology plan for all instructors to be trained and follow the movement from the current enhancement model of substitution/augmentation towards a transformation model as referenced in the SAMR model. This model or like model outlines a system for professional development support to fully utilize the current technology resources within the district. By development of a revised district wide technology plan, the modified instruction presentations and techniques would assure the educational enhancement of student opportunities and achievement for success for every student throughout the district.

Improvement Priorities

The institution should use the findings from this review to guide the continuous improvement process. The institution must address the Improvement Priorities listed below:

- Develop and initiate a technology plan that will more effectively utilize the school's technology resources.

Accreditation Recommendation

Index of Education Quality

The Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) provides a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of indicators and evaluative criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus.

The IEQ™ comprises three domains: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; and 3) the use of resources and data to support and optimize learning.

The overall and domain scores can range from 100-400. The domain scores are derived from: the AdvancED Standards and indicators ratings; results of the Analysis of Student Performance; and data from Stakeholder Feedback Surveys (students, parents, and staff).

	External Review IEQ Score	AdvancED Network Average
Overall Score	312.82	282.79
Teaching and Learning Impact	309.52	274.14
Leadership Capacity	318.18	296.08
Resource Utilization	314.29	286.32

The IEQ™ results include information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria as well as to other institutions in the AdvancED Network. The institution should use the information in this report, including the corresponding performance rubrics, to identify specific areas of improvement.

Consequently, the External Review Team recommends to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that the institution earn the distinction of accreditation for a five-year term. AdvancED will review the results of the External Review to make a final determination including the appropriate next steps for the institution in response to these findings.

Addenda

Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Mr. Kent Miller	The current position is a retired educator and a Consultant in Nebraska for AdvancEd. BSE degree from the University of South Dakota. Graduate college included a Masters Degree in Administration from the University of Nebraska Omaha and a Specialist Degree in Administration from the University of Nebraska Lincoln. The Educational experience spans a career of 38 years. This includes 5 years in the classroom, 13 years as a Principal and 20 years as a Superintendent. Have been involved in AdvancEd (North Central) since 1975 and served a two four year term board member of the State of Nebraska committee.
Mrs. Misty Bear	Special Education Director and Distant Assessment Contact for Wayne Community Schools in Wayne, Nebraska. I have worked in education for the past 18 years, specifically in the field of Special Education.
Dr. Dennis McGuire	Dennis is currently in his seventh year working as a Management Consultant in Accreditation and School Improvement at the Nebraska Department of Education. He holds a bachelor's degree from St. Benedict's College, two masters' degrees from the University of Nebraska and Kansas State University respectively, and a doctorate from Kansas State University. His professional experience spans over 45 years serving as a secondary and college instructor and administrator. He has been published by the National Council of Teachers of English and the Kansas Association of Teachers of English. He has served as team member and chair on numerous accreditation reviews in Nebraska as well as Kansas, Wyoming, and South Dakota.
Mr. Dennis Bazata	Currently the 7-12 Principal at Randolph Public Schools, Randolph, NE. Undergraduate degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. All graduate degrees from Wayne State College, Wayne, NE. Have been in education for 36 years, all at Randolph Public Schools. Taught in the classroom for 28 years before entering administration. Have been involved with AdvancED before as part of the Randolph Public School School Improvement Committee. Have been on two previous external visit teams, but not as part of AdvancED.
Mr. Tom Hinrichs	I am currently the superintendent of the Farragut, Iowa Community Schools. Previously, I have served as a superintendent, principal, teacher and coach in schools in Kansas and Nebraska. My wife, Barb, and I have three grown children and five grand children. I enjoy golf, Husker sporting events and family activities.
Mr. Brad Hoelsing	I am currently the K-12 Principal/AD at Wausa Public Schools in Wausa, NE, and have served in that capacity since 2007. Before that I was social studies teacher in both Wausa as well as Bancroft-Rosalie Public Schools. I am also currently the head play production coach at Wausa since 2006. I am married to my wife Sheila (who is also my asst. coach in play production) and we have 4 children.

Next Steps

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with 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. Consider the Opportunities for Improvement identified throughout the report that are provided by the team in the spirit of continuous improvement and the institution's commitment to improving its capacity to improve student learning.
4. Develop action plans to address the Improvement Priorities identified by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward addressing the Improvement Priorities.
5. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
6. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Improvement Priorities. Institutions are required to respond to all Improvement Priorities. 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 address the Improvement Priorities. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the responses to the Improvement Priorities and the resulting improvement.
7. Continue to meet the AdvancED Standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

About AdvancED

AdvancED is the world leader in providing improvement and accreditation services to education providers of all types in their pursuit of excellence in serving students. AdvancED serves as a trusted partner to more than 32,000 public and private schools and school systems – enrolling more than 20 million students - across the United States and 70 countries.

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 became part of AdvancED.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. The Accreditation Divisions of AdvancED share research-based quality standards that cross school system, state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified and consistent process designed to engage educational institutions in continuous improvement.

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