Report of the
External Review
for
Sand Ridge Junior High School

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US

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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	2.76

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.	- Minutes from meetings related to development of the school's purpose - Examples of communications to stakeholders about the school's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) - Observations - Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the school's purpose - Interviews - Purpose statements - past and present	3.0
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.	- Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the school's statement of purpose - Interviews - Observations - Survey results - The school's statement of purpose	3.0

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.	• Survey results • The school data profile • Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings • Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders • Interviews • The school continuous improvement plan • School improvement tools.	3.0

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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.	• Student handbooks • Governing body policies, procedures, and practices • Staff handbooks • Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions • School website, newsletters reflect district information and policies are followed are well.	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	- Governing body minutes relating to training - Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest - List of assigned staff for compliance - Proof of legal counsel - Assurances, certifications - Communications about program regulations - Governing code of ethics - Community Council, faculty meetings, PLC's, School Board policies and procedures.	2.0
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.	- Roles and responsibilities of school leadership - School improvement plan developed by the school - Stakeholder input and feedback - Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation - Communications regarding board actions - Survey results regarding functions of the governing body - Agendas and minutes of meetings - Staff handbook, attendance and grade reporting, master schedule, Educator endorsements and degrees, Trust Lands Documents, Principal Assurance Form.	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	• Examples of collaboration and shared leadership • Survey results • Observations • Interviews • Examples of decisions aligned with the school's statement of purpose • Informational text, sharing website, passing during STING, credit remediation, communication.	3.0
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	• Minutes from meetings with stakeholders • Survey responses • Communication plan • Interviews	3.0
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	• Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation • Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation • Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice and student success noted • Job specific criteria • Representative supervision and evaluation reports • Educators by endorsement, Evaluation tool, Teacher handbook, Common Core Training.	2.0

Powerful Practices	*Indicator*

1. The leadership team and staff have done exemplary work in developing a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.

   Stakeholder interviews made very clear the degree to which the school has been successful in uniting parents, students, and teachers in the culture of the school. From these interviews and reports it is apparent the school's newly found vision and mission has created a positive and healthy environment and culture for the school. Their relatively new school administration should be commended for providing a clear purpose and direction for the school's faculty, staff and students.

2.4

Opportunities for Improvement	*Indicator*

1. The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.

   The visiting team acknowledges the impact that frequent leadership turnover has had on the vision and direction of the school. Students, staff, and parents spoke favorably of the schools current course. While recognizing that school administrative assignments are out of their control, all stakeholders expressed the desire for leadership stability for continued school improvement.

2.2

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.	• Interviews • Learning expectations for different courses • Posted learning objectives • Representative samples of student work across courses • Course descriptions • Observations • Descriptions of instructional techniques	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.	• Curriculum guides • Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps • Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum	2.0
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	• Teacher evaluation criteria • Authentic assessments • Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource • Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool • Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge • Findings from supervisor walk-thrus and observations • Interdisciplinary projects	3.0
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	• Supervision and evaluation procedures • Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions • Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices • Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs	3.0
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	• Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees • Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings • Peer coaching guidelines and procedures	2.0
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	• Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance • Teacher Disclosures, teacher blogs/Moodle.	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	• Records of meetings and walk thrus/feedback sessions • Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff • Personnel manuals with information related to new hires including mentoring, coaching, and induction practices	3.0
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	• 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	3.0
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.	• List of students matched to adult advocate • Curriculum and activities of formal adult advocate structure • Master schedule with time for formal adult advocate structure • Description of formal adult advocate structures	4.0
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	• Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices • Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting • Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting • Course Disclosures.	2.0
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	• Results of evaluation of professional learning program. • Evaluation tools for professional learning • Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	• List of learning support services and student population served by such services • Data used to identify unique learning needs of students	3.0

Powerful Practices   *Indicator*

1. 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.   3.9

   STING time is Sand Ridge Junior High's formal structure to connect each student with an adult advocate. Parents, staff, and students all spoke of the academic, social, and emotional, benefits of STING time. The plan to have students remain with the same STING time teach throughout junior high can enhance these benefits.

Opportunities for Improvement   *Indicator*

1. 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.   3.2

   The school staff and leadership need to further their ongoing efforts by developing and implementing a systematic and sustainable process of aligned curriculum within disciplines (both vertical and horizontal), coupled with effective instruction and assessment practices that are regularly reviewed, revised, and developed through meaningful collaboration.

2. School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.   3.4

   The school staff and leadership must continue their ongoing efforts to collaborate to ensure high quality instructional practices and improved performance for every student. This must be done through effective and meaningful professional development. It is recommended that school leadership continue to monitor collaboration efforts through active guidance and participation.

3. Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.   3.6

   The school staff and leadership must provide regular exemplars of learning expectations and standards of performance in each academic discipline and/or classroom. Continue utilizing multiple measures of assessment that are developed through collaboration, and thoroughly explained to students in order for them to fully understand how they are being assessed, as well as to help them understand their own learning.

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.	• Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff • Assessments of staffing needs • Documentation of highly qualified staff	3.0
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	• Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources • Survey results • School schedule • Alignment of budget with school purpose and direction • School calendar	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	• Records of depreciation of equipment • Survey results • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures. • 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.	• Budget related to media and information resource acquisition • 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
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	• Technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure • Survey results • Policies relative to technology use	3.0
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	• Student assessment system for identifying student needs • Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support • Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills • Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education • List of support services available to students	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	• List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning • Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning • Description of IEP process • Description of referral process	3.0

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.

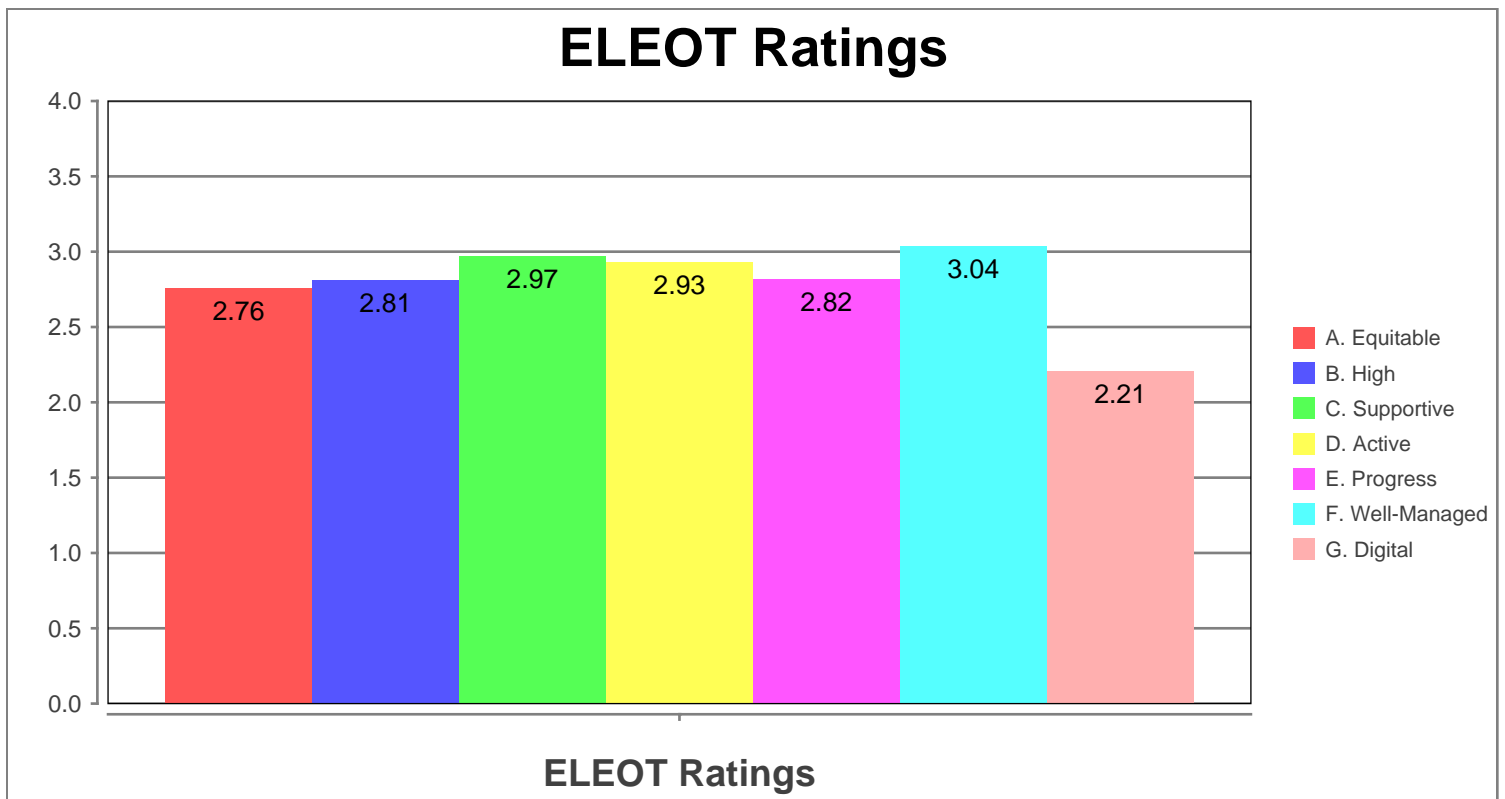| Standard 5			
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.			
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	• Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols • 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.	• Written protocols and procedures for data collection and analysis • Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning • List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning	3.0
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.		1.0
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.	• Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data • Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning • Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans • Evidence of student readiness for the next level • Evidence of student growth • Evidence of student success at the next level	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	• Minutes of board meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals • Communication plan regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders • Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals • School quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, conditions that support learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals • Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups	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.

ELEOT Ratings

Environment	Rating
A. Equitable	2.76
B. High	2.81
C. Supportive	2.97
D. Active	2.93
E. Progress	2.82
F. Well-Managed	3.04
G. Digital	2.21

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	4.0

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 team appreciates Sand Ridge Junior High's sincere and thorough work of internal review in preparation for our two-day visit. On March 25-26, 2014, the school's leadership provided every artifact, document, and opportunity the visiting team requested to conduct the external review. The visiting team found Sand Ridge well established in the work of professional learning communities, thus a culture of collaboration and results orientation was very apparent. The visiting team found the self-assessment, in the internal review, to be very honest and forthcoming. Stakeholders; including parents, students, and staff, were candid and helpful in discussions and interviews. The team was able to interview and interact with a total of 93 individuals during the external review: two administrators, 19 teachers, five support staff, 22 students, and 12 parents. The team conducted 33 Effective Learning Environment Observations in teacher classrooms during our two-day visit.

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 team noted a high degree of commitment, and a school culture centered on collaboration among all stakeholders for student learning. The actions of Sand Ridge stakeholders reflect the purpose and beliefs of the school. Staff, students, and parents all commented that the school is a welcoming and safe place where students are known and cared about. The school has done a commendable job of establishing a student-centered culture, and working to identify struggling students, particularly 9th grade students, and providing interventions for them. The team noted that the school has an opportunity to continue to improve student learning by collaborating to ensure effective, engaging, and aligned instruction in all classrooms and content areas, as well as establishing targeted, timely, and directed interventions for students in all grades. Another opportunity for improvement is to train staff on the collection and effective use of appropriate data for student learning.

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

The team observed an overall welcoming school climate, and an engaging learning environment from the classroom observations. Regarding climate, the team readily noticed the positive demeanor of the school through interviews with students, parents, and faculty members. In essence, there is a shared affection for the school, with the primary focus being on student growth and success. Additionally, despite a number of leadership changes over the course of the past several years, it appears that Sand Ridge Junior High has a clear direction and purpose that is evident in their daily practice.

In regard to the learning environment, learning outcomes are tied to the "what and why" of objectives displayed in

each classroom. It is clear that in most instances students know what is expected both academically and behaviorally, and it is evident that expectations are high for staff and students. The school needs to continue working on effective collaboration to help ensure continuous improvement through meaningful professional development. The team expresses appreciation to the school for the hospitality shown to them.

Sand Ridge Junior High is commended for their hospitality and diligent work in preparing for the external review. All stakeholder groups were very welcoming and comfortable communicating their feelings and knowledge. A positive school culture was very evident as parents and students reported significant approval for the quality and direction of the school.

We would especially like to thank Sand Ridge's administrative team for the exceptional job of preparing for this accreditation visit. They did an excellent job of communicating, compiling artifacts, and making our stay enjoyable. Thank you to the teaching staff and the students for allowing us to be part of your classroom. It is obvious that all stakeholders at Sand Ridge foster a culture of respect and caring for one another.

Index of Education Quality (IEQ) Addition to the External Review Report

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 is introducing 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 introduces 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. 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.

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 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 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: 277

Teaching and Learning Impact: 257
(Standards 3 and 5; Student Performance Criteria)

Leadership Capacity: 300
(Standards 1 and 2; Stakeholder Engagement Criteria)

Resource Utilization: 300
(Standard 4)

The External Review team recommends that Sand Ridge Junior High be granted a new five-year term of accreditation by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

Required Action

1. Develop criteria and processes of supervision and evaluation that include references to professional practice and student success.

   Related Indicator or Assurance: 2.6

   Description:
   While there is some evidence of criteria and processes of supervision there is no formal structure. Specific criteria and processes need to be identified and implemented so results can be monitored to show results that effectively adjust professional practice and improve student learning.

2. Provide training and allocate time for teachers to participate in Collaborative Learning Communities.

   Related Indicator or Assurance: 3.5

   Description:
   The plans for creating PLC's are in place. The school should proceed with training and implementation of PLC's as a tool for improving student performance. Involvement of all professional staff is crucial to success.

3. Revise the current action plan to include training for professional and support staff in evaluation, interpretation and use of data.

   Related Indicator or Assurance: 5.3

   Description:
   When interviewing and in discussion with school staff members, conclusively we felt a need and to understand and use student data to help guide/evaluate curriculum and assessments. Training and professional development in data interpretation would be a beneficial partner to PLC work and can guide curriculum mapping and common assessments. A long term plan for on-going professional development and training in the use of data for teachers and staff members is recommended.

Part III: Addenda

The External Review Team

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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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