

Report of the External Review Team for Battle Creek 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

The Battle Creek High School hosted an AdvancED External Review by an AdvancED External Review Team from February 28 - March 1, 2016. The team was comprised of six members, all from the state of Nebraska including two superintendents, a high school principal, a middle school principal, an elementary principal, and an Education Service Unit (ESU) staff member who specializes in professional development. Prior to the review, each team member reviewed the school's Executive summary, Self Assessment, Improvement Plan, Student Performance Diagnostic, Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic, School Assurances along with other pertinent information found on the school's website. The team began its work on Sunday evening, February 28, and was treated to a dinner provided by the district. The school review concluded with an Exit Report to the board of education, administrative team, teachers, and stakeholders on Tuesday afternoon, March 1st. Over the course of the review, the team gathered evidence, made observations, reviewed artifacts, and interviewed representatives from a variety of stakeholder groups. The school was well-prepared for the review and provided artifacts and evidence for the team to review. These documents included profile information, the school accreditation report, school performance data, stakeholder feedback data, and a host of other documents that aligned to each of the five AdvancED standards. The school's approach to completing the Executive Summary and Self Assessment was thorough and comprehensive which provided insight into the operation of the district.

The team also conducted 19 Effective Learning Environment Observations (eleot) in the high school.

The team found all stakeholders during the review extremely open, honest, friendly, transparent, and willing to assist when necessary. The two and half day review is an intense time and can cause anxiety; however, through the collaboration of the school's personnel and the External Review Team, three Powerful Practices, two Opportunities for Improvement, and one Improvement Priority were identified. All recommendations will have a positive impact when implemented during the next five years.

The team would like to thank all stakeholders who assisted with the preparation of the review along with those that accommodated the team during the review. The leadership and members of the school improvement team were extremely helpful in the review process. The External Review Team thanks the school for the hospitality and for attending to the team's needs. The excellent planning and scheduling helped ensure a smooth review. It was a pleasure working with the school. The team commends the school for its commitment to advancing excellence in education through the accreditation process.

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
Superintendents	1
Administrators	2
Instructional Staff	22
Support Staff	14
Students	80
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	9
Total	128

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	2.81
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	2.49
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.00	2.60
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	3.00	2.70
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	2.00	2.57
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.00	2.57
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	3.00	2.54
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	3.06

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.	3.00	2.98
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	2.75
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	3.00	2.53
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	2.00	2.61

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	2.66
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	2.37
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	3.00	2.06
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	2.46
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	2.71

Student Performance Diagnostic

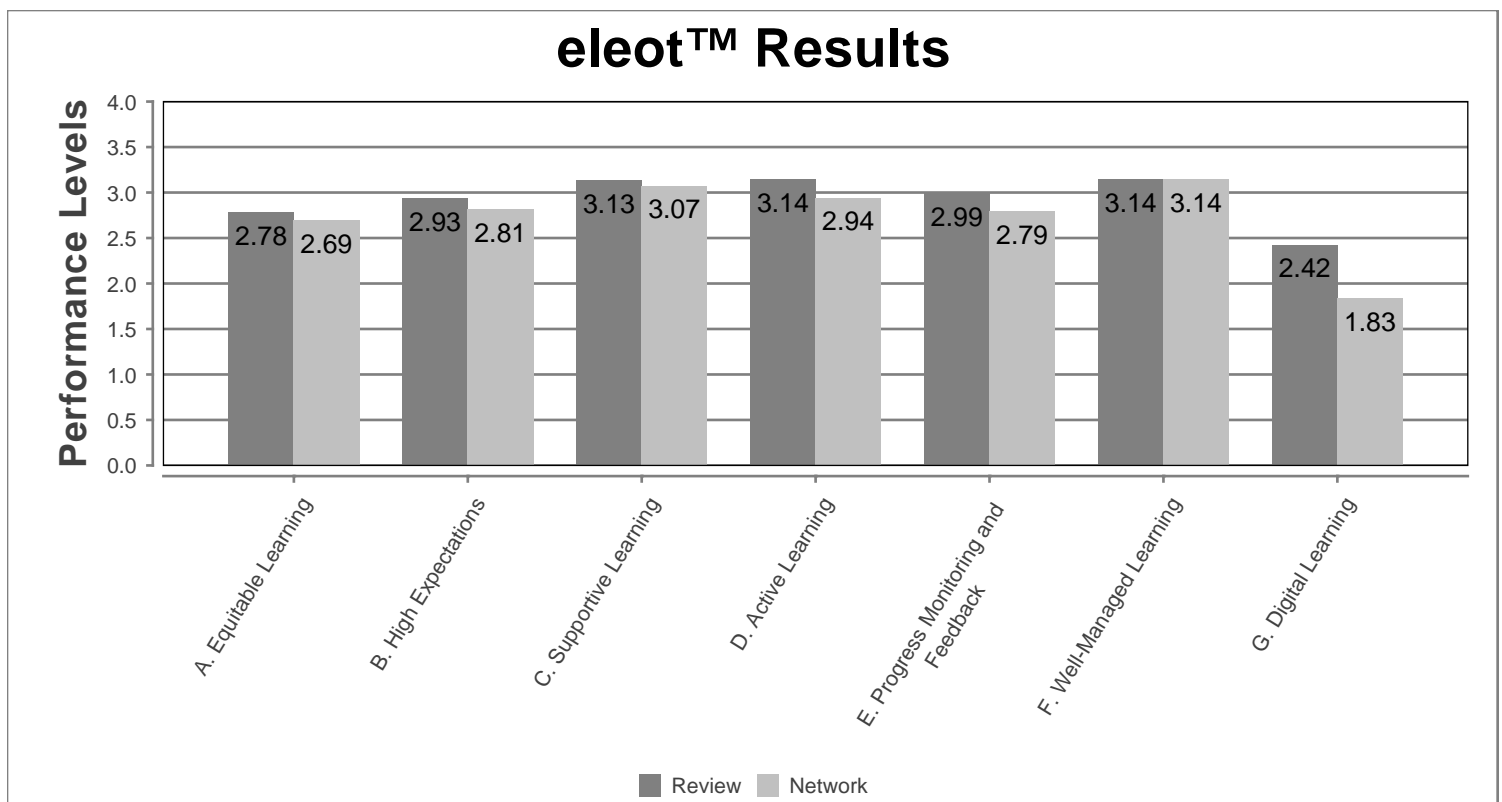
The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important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

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	3.00	3.06
Test Administration	3.00	3.45
Equity of Learning	1.00	2.70
Quality of Learning	3.00	2.92

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.



During the External Review, a total of 19 classroom observations were completed by the team. Through the use of the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot), the team found the strongest rating of a 3.14 on a 4 point scale in "Active Learning Environment" and "Well Managed Learning Environment." Another area of strength that exceeded a rating of 3 on a 4 point scale was the "Supportive Learning Environment." The lowest rating was in "Digital Learning Environment." However in the domain of "Digital Learning

Environment", the difference between the school's average score and the AdvancED network average (AEN) was more than the difference in any other domain.

The purpose of the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool is to identify observable evidence of classroom environments that are conducive to learning. Specially, classroom observations revealed that students of the school had several opportunities to engage in discussions with their teachers. These opportunities lead to student engagement.

The school also offered a well managed learning environment. Observers found students understood and abided by the routines and procedures established by the school. Transitions between classrooms and various activities were smooth and efficient.

In conclusion, the Effective Learning Environment Observation Tools assisted the External Review Team by providing firsthand knowledge of the culture of the Battle Creek High School. As noted in a Powerful Practice concerning the overall culture of the school, the classroom visits validated the existence of the same culture embedding in most classrooms.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.68	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	15.79%	47.37%	26.32%	10.53%
2.	3.32	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	31.58%	68.42%	0.00%	0.00%
3.	3.00	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	31.58%	47.37%	10.53%	10.53%
4.	2.11	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	5.26%	31.58%	31.58%	31.58%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.78						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.95	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	26.32%	47.37%	21.05%	5.26%
2.	3.32	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	42.11%	47.37%	10.53%	0.00%
3.	2.58	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	10.53%	52.63%	21.05%	15.79%
4.	3.05	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	31.58%	47.37%	15.79%	5.26%
5.	2.74	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	10.53%	63.16%	15.79%	10.53%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.93						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.89	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	21.05%	52.63%	21.05%	5.26%
2.	3.11	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	21.05%	68.42%	10.53%	0.00%
3.	3.16	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	31.58%	57.89%	5.26%	5.26%
4.	3.37	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	36.84%	63.16%	0.00%	0.00%
5.	3.11	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	26.32%	57.89%	15.79%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.13						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.32	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	36.84%	57.89%	5.26%	0.00%
2.	2.79	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	31.58%	36.84%	10.53%	21.05%
3.	3.32	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	42.11%	47.37%	10.53%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.14						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.26	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	31.58%	63.16%	5.26%	0.00%
2.	3.21	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	26.32%	68.42%	5.26%	0.00%
3.	3.16	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	31.58%	52.63%	15.79%	0.00%
4.	2.32	Understands how her/his work is assessed	10.53%	42.11%	15.79%	31.58%
5.	3.00	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	21.05%	57.89%	21.05%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.99						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.26	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	42.11%	42.11%	15.79%	0.00%
2.	3.21	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	36.84%	47.37%	15.79%	0.00%
3.	3.21	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	36.84%	52.63%	5.26%	5.26%
4.	2.95	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	36.84%	36.84%	10.53%	15.79%
5.	3.05	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	21.05%	63.16%	15.79%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.14						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.58	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	47.37%	5.26%	5.26%	42.11%
2.	2.32	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	36.84%	5.26%	10.53%	47.37%
3.	2.37	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	42.11%	0.00%	10.53%	47.37%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.42						

Findings

Improvement Priority

Research, select, and implement an instructional model for all teachers.

(Indicator 3.4, Indicator 3.6)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.6

Evidence and Rationale

Little evidence was presented, observed, or communicated that suggested the presence of a consistent instructional model for all teachers. Some teachers used exemplars, formative assessments, guided practice, small group activities, and constructive feedback, but it was not evident across all classrooms observed. The team recognizes that the minimal time spent in classrooms did not allow us to see all of the practices used. The adoption of a consistent instructional model for all teachers is vital to the operation of a great learning environment. Students benefit from the consistency of all teachers having a common language of instruction. Administrators know what to look for in walk-throughs and observations.

With a common, well implemented instructional model, teachers will benefit by improving their understanding of the science of teaching.

Opportunity For Improvement


Develop and implement a process to evaluate current programs of study and to determine if additional/affordable learning opportunities exist to enhance program offerings for students.

(Indicator 3.1, Indicator 3.2)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.2

Evidence and Rationale

Several stakeholders indicated that the school could offer more options for students. Evidence was not provided to indicate how current programs are evaluated and how new programs are considered. Although practice may exist to evaluate programs, written procedures need to be established to ensure a routine evaluation happens for all programs. 

Procedures to evaluate current programs and mechanisms to create new program enables a school to grow towards the current needs of their students. Without such procedures, a school can become stagnant.

Opportunity For Improvement


Research and utilize professional learning communities to enhance the instructional staff's teaching capacity. (Indicator 3.5)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.5

Evidence and Rationale

A lack of professional learning communities was evident during staff interviews. Although professional learning communities once existed in the school, no artifacts were produced to verify any recent activity. Past professional learning communities reflected around the content of a chosen book. Professional learning communities should be driven by the goals of the school improvement plan.

An organized professional learning community can ensure educators work in collaborative teams rather than in isolation, establish common criteria for assessing student work, use data from school assessments to help one another improve, and identify individual students for intervention and enrichment. 

Powerful Practice

The school strives to consistently communicate its purpose, direction, and results with all stakeholders.

(Indicator 1.1, Indicator 3.3, Indicator 5.5)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 5.5

Evidence and Rationale

Teachers, staff and school leadership use various methods of communication with the intent of informing, involving and gathering input from all stakeholders in the district. Specific methods used include: email, newsletters, webpages, and face-to-face meetings. Conversations with stakeholders also provided evidence

of the strong commitment to communication within all Battle Creek School's stakeholders.

Consistent and updated communication is vital to any organization. It is especially important to school systems, with so many changing and moving parts. All stakeholders have a high need to receive pertinent information that pertains to their interests.

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.	4.00	2.73
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.	3.00	2.96
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	3.00	2.56

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	2.96
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	3.00	2.91
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.	4.00	3.15
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	3.00	3.09
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	3.00	2.79
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	3.00	2.74

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	3.35
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.00	3.04

Findings

Powerful Practice

The Battle Creek Public Schools and its greater community exhibit tremendous pride and partnership that creates an outstanding culture for students, staff, and stakeholders.

(Indicator 1.2, Indicator 2.4)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 1.2

Evidence and Rationale

Endeavors associated with this conclusion include the community service requirement, the random drug testing policy, Traiblazer mentoring program, the Pride initiative, and multiple observations throughout the external visitation process.

Schools reflect and represent their communities. When students and staff have confidence and belief in one another and their community, positive results are inevitable.

Powerful Practice

The Battle Creek School Board enables and supports the school leadership in their endeavor to establish and meet goals toward constant improvement in all aspects of the school environment, and in turn, the administrative team provides a level of trust and independence to the school improvement coordinator and teaching staff.

(Indicator 2.3)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 2.3

Evidence and Rationale

The Battle Creek School Board and administration recognizes the expertise in district staff when providing support for appropriate decision-making to occur. Board meetings, committee meetings, professional development, and gathering input from administrators and stakeholders all play a key role in support and continuity throughout the district. Evidence exists in the variety of positive performances coming from the student body across all areas.

School organizations operate within the roles and duties assigned and agreed upon by all parties. When school boards, administration, and teaching staff recognize and embrace their roles and apply those powers with the end result in mind, the organization thrives, and moves forward with positive results. Battle Creek High School should be held as an exemplar for the rest of the state.

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.	3.00	2.95
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	3.00	2.96
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.00	3.11
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	3.00	2.78
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	3.00	2.52

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.	3.00	2.81
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	3.00	2.75

Conclusion

The External Review Team found the existence of excellent communications among all stakeholders. The school used several methods of communication to inform all stakeholder groups. This excellent communication has led to a rich, school pride culture which was validated through many stakeholder interviews. The school's board of education has entrusted its leadership team and have allowed them to manage the school effectively and efficiently. In turn, the leadership team has provided the support and necessary resources to the internal school improvement leader. This support has led to a productive school improvement process.

The Battle Creek Public Schools has excellent programs in place. However, to ensure that program constantly meet the needs of the students, a systemic process needs to be in place to ensure programs are periodically reviewed. This review will lead to removal of outdated programs and the implementation of new ones.

The leadership team also suggests utilizing professional learning communities. Professional learning communities ensure that staff members work collaboratively together for the good of all students.



The school needs to implement a common instructional model for all staff members. However, the school should begin the process by contrasting and comparing the existing instructional models. In order to build ownership amongst all staff members, the staff needs to be part of the research and design processes. As the school's staff works through the processes of research, design and implementation, they will improve their skills of teaching and instruction which will ultimately result in success for every student.



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:

- Research, select, and implement an instructional model for all teachers.



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	294.87	278.34
Teaching and Learning Impact	276.19	268.94
Leadership Capacity	327.27	292.64
Resource Utilization	300.00	283.23



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
<p>Dr. Michael J Sieh</p>	<p>Dr. Michael Sieh is currently in his 15th year as Superintendent for the Stanton Community Schools in Stanton, Nebraska. During July, he serves as an instructor of school law for Wayne State College located in Wayne, Nebraska. Previously Michael was a school principal for the Spencer-Naper Public School in Spencer, Nebraska and the Clearwater Public School in Clearwater, Nebraska.</p> <p>Dr. Sieh earned his Educational Doctoral Degree in Administration from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He also earned the following degrees from Wayne State College - Educational Specialist Degree in Administration, Masters in Secondary Administration and Bachelor of Science Degree in Education.</p> <p>Dr. Sieh serves as chairman of Nebraska State Accreditation Committee, is the President-Elect of the Nebraska Association of School Administrators, is a past Executive Board Director for Nebraska Rural Community School Association and serves on the Advisory Board for Educational Service Unit 8.</p> <p>Dr. Sieh authored the Dissertation "Examining the Relationships Between Nebraska Superintendents' Perceptions of Their Involvement with School Improvement and Factors that may Affect Their Involvement."</p> <p>Dr. Sieh has completed the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement Specialist Program; served as the external team leader for Fort Calhoun, Laurel-Concord, Ord & Wakefield Schools; served as an external school improvement team member for Bennington, Tekamah-Herman & Pierce Schools; participated in the annual Nebraska Department of Education seminar designed for AdvancED accreditation leaders and/or certification; and facilitates the school improvement process for his current school district.</p>
<p>Mr. Mark S. Smith</p>	<p>Mark is originally from Falls City, Nebraska. After graduating from Peru State College in 1987, he started his career in the St. Edward Schools before moving on to the Plattsmouth School District in 1994. Mark Has served in a number of capacities including Physical Education Instructor, Athletic Director, Behavior Interventionist and Principal. Mark also coached a variety of activities including football, wrestling track, basketball and Destination Imagination. Mark received his Masters degree from UNO in 2001 and is currently working on his Eds at Wayne State College.</p>
<p>Dr. Dennis McGuire</p>	<p>Dennis is currently in his eighth 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.</p>

Member	Brief Biography
<p>Dr. Dan Endorf</p>	<p>Dr. Dan Endorf is in his sixth year as Superintendent of North bend Central Public Schools. Previously, Dr. Endorf served as High School Principal of York High School; Assistant Principal of Waverly High School; was a teacher/coach at Waverly High School; and served as a teacher/coach at Omaha Central High School.</p> <p>Dr. Endorf earned his doctoral degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2005. His masters and bachelor's degree were also gained through the University of Nebraska-Lincoln educational system.</p> <p>Dr. Endorf serves in a leadership capacity as President of the Pioneer Lake Homeowners Association, Secretary of the North Bend Chamber of Commerce, is a member of the NSAA Competition Committee, and other state and local organizations.</p> <p>Endorf authored the Dissertation entitled, "STARS: Charting the Course of Teachers, Superintendents and Professional Developers." He is a co-author or cited in a number of other professional journals.</p> <p>Endorf, wife Sharon, and their three children reside in North Bend, Nebraska.</p>
<p>Mrs. Angie Hausmann</p>	<p>Angie began her initial year as a teacher at Sacred Heart Elementary school in Norfolk where she taught second grade for one year. In the fall of 1997 she started working for Norfolk Public Schools as a gifted education teacher and served in that capacity for one year. In the fall of 1998 she transferred to Woodland Park Elementary school, under the direction of Scott Dodson, where she taught for ten years. In 2010 Angie was hired as the principal at Jefferson Elementary school in Norfolk and continues to serve in that role.</p>
<p>Mr. Jake Luhr</p>	<p>Jake Luhr has been in education for 17 years, nine years as a teacher/coach and 8 years as an administrator with Norfolk Public Schools. He started out as the Assistant Principal of Norfolk Junior High, moved to Assistant Principal of Norfolk High School, and is currently the principal of Norfolk High School. Norfolk high school serves just under 1300 students in grades 9-12.</p> <p>Endorsements: K-12 Physical Education MA - Educational Leadership EdS - Doane College</p>

Member	Brief Biography
<p>Mrs. Deborah E Schraeder</p>	<p>Deborah (Debbie) E. Schraeder started at ESU #3 on September 1, 2000. Educated in Wisconsin and Iowa; Debbie choose Central College in Pella, IA for her undergraduate work; and UNO for her graduate work. Debbie was employed by the Bellevue Public Schools from 1986-1996. Debbie taught 3rd grade, 6th grade, and Title I Math while in Bellevue; and also coached 8th grade girls' basketball and track. Her husband was sent to Grand Forks AFB to complete his military career, and a great job opportunity presented itself for Debbie: part-time inservice specialist. The need to keep up on everything cutting edge in education was crucial, but the 80 day contract left a lot of flexibility to spend quality time with her children. The inservice work emphasized peer coaching, standards-based education, performance-based assessments, family involvement, equity issues, cooperative learning, and work with the Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Traveling the tri-state area of North Dakota, Minnesota, and South Dakota; Debbie visited hundreds of classrooms assisting in best practice work for teachers preK-12. Presenting at statewide conferences and workshops sparked an interest to look for such work when her husband retired from the Air Force and they moved back to the Omaha area with their 3 children. Debbie has now been working in staff development for 17 years: 3 years in North Dakota, and since 2000 in Nebraska working for ESU#3 in the Omaha metro area.</p> <p>Debbie has served on numerous external teams and enjoys assisting schools with continuous improvement; because of a strong interest in Math, Debbie works to provide staff development for many of the 18 ESU3 districts in the area of mathematics. Professional development time also includes working with districts on coaching, professional learning communities, grading, NWEA, and many other topics as requested by ESU3 member districts. In her fifteenth year at ESU3, Debbie has spent the last 7 years as the team leader for the CIA team, as well as being a part of the ESU statewide leadership team from 2006-2012. Debbie published an article in the NASCD newsletter in 2007 about PLCs and the journey to becoming an effective team/system. Debbie was also an adjunct professor at UNO from 2008-2013 teaching both a graduate level Learning by Doing (PLC Course) and an undergraduate Math Methods course.</p> <p>Debbie is excited for this opportunity to meet and work with all of you!</p>

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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