

Report of the External Review Team for PACE Correspondence 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 External Review Team first arrived at the PACE Anchorage Learning Center on Sunday evening, March 5th to prepare for their two day visit scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, March 6 & 7, 2017. The Principal provided the External Review Team, which consisted of two members (both with extensive homeschool support experience), with secure work space that allowed the Team to deliberate and write uninterrupted. Prior to that first face-to-face meeting at PACE's location, the Team met once by telephone and corresponded by email several times to set the stage for the onsite work ahead. The External Review Team gained access to the completed Accreditation Report submitted by PACE Correspondence School approximately one month before the onsite visit. Additionally, the team was given access to a Google Docs Folder containing all the evidence and artifacts collected by PACE Correspondence School in support of their AdvancED Standards ratings scores. Upon their first meeting, the External Review Team had already reviewed and established their initial findings individually. Their initial findings were revised throughout the visit and final scores entered into the report along with Improvement Priorities for the school.

The External Review Team would like to say thank you to PACE Correspondence School's wonderful hospitality during the time the review was conducted at their school. The staff made the team feel welcome and were very open and honest when asked about various aspects of their school's educational components. The

External Review Team was appreciative that so many students and parents were willing to answer our questions regarding their educational experience with PACE Correspondence School, as well as share ideas for improving the future of their school. We recognize the administration and staff's efforts to gather written artifacts such as surveys, handbooks, and e-mails to assist the External Review Team in developing their initial findings of PACE Correspondence Schools. The school prepared surveys, reviewed items they felt would be helpful for the Team, and organized them in Google Docs. Finally, the lunch prepared and delivered by a family demonstrating their home economics course was a great addition to the experience and added a welcoming touch that made the day and our visit even more pleasant.

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
Administrators	1
Instructional Staff	3
Support Staff	5
Students	11
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	9
Total	29

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	2.82
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	2.45
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.00	2.63
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	2.50	2.69
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	3.00	2.52
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.00	2.56
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	2.00	2.56
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	3.07

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.	2.00	3.01
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	2.71
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	3.00	2.48
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	3.00	2.63

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.	1.00	2.64
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.	2.00	2.33
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	2.00	2.03
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	2.45
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.	2.00	2.68

Student Performance Diagnostic

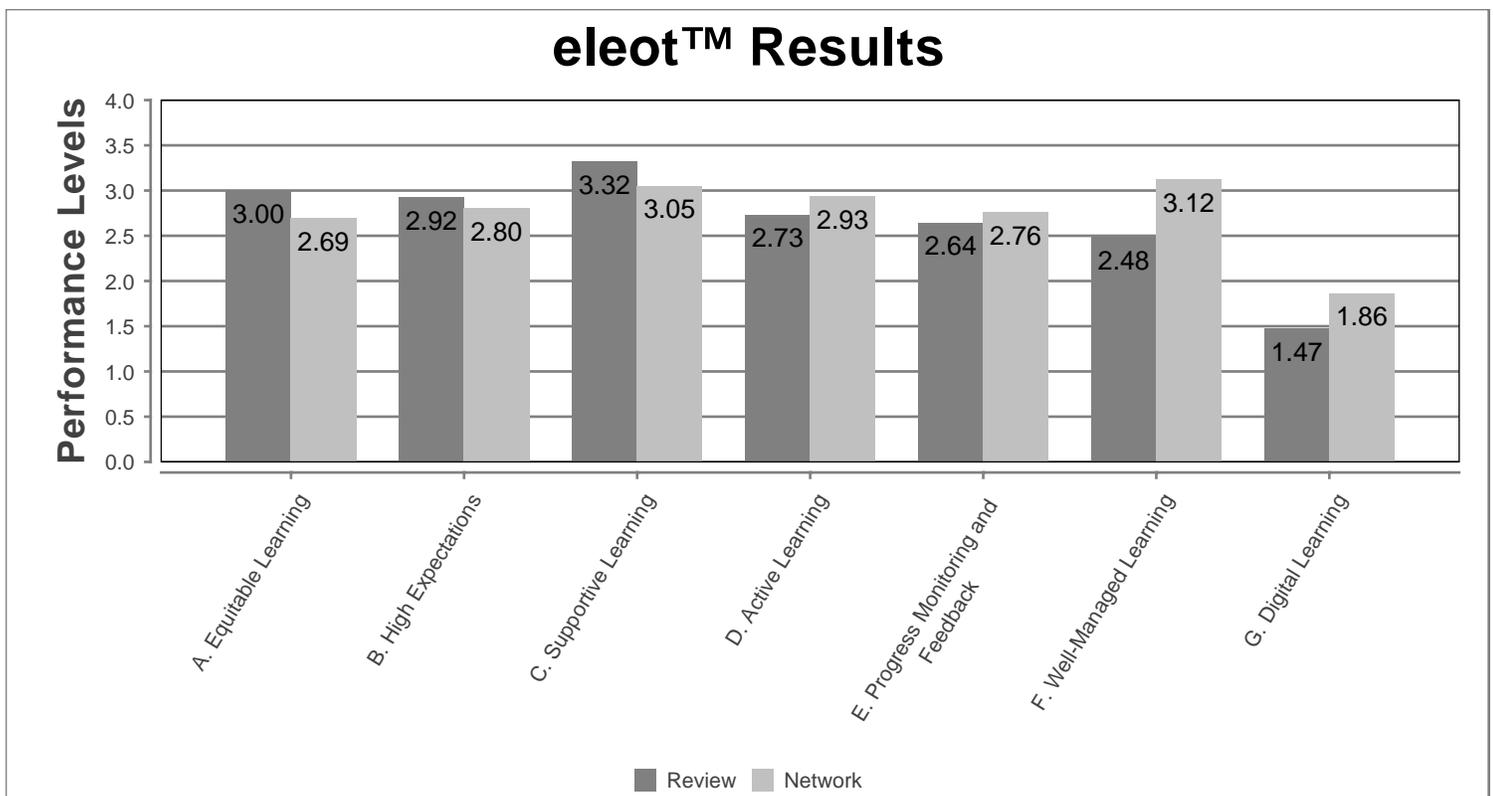
The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important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

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	3.00	3.11
Test Administration	3.00	3.46
Equity of Learning	1.00	2.75
Quality of Learning	3.00	2.93

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.



The External Review Team participated in five (5) observations during the on-site review. Because of the uniqueness of the program where the classroom setting is in the home, the External Review Team felt the five observations was adequate. The Team observed learning in the homeschool setting as well as in a classroom setting. Two of the observations were completed via videoconferencing to locations outside of PACE's Anchorage Learning Center. The environment that received the highest average was supportive learning with a

score of 3.32. Equitable learning and high expectation ratings were also ranked as above the AdvancED averages with ratings of 3.00 and 2.92 respectively. Active learning is an area below the network average with a score of 2.73. In addition, the progress monitoring environment with a score of 2.64 and digital learning environment with a score of 1.47 were below average. The environment that received the score the furthest below the average was the well-managed learning environment with a score of 2.48.

The environment that received the highest average for PACE Correspondence School was supportive learning. Educators developed positive learning experiences and ensured students were supported and encouraged to participate in answering questions. Learners felt comfortable taking risks and were rewarded with encouragement regardless of the answer. Equitable learning was another environment PACE Correspondence School received a rating above the AdvancED Network Average. Students learning experiences are designed around their individual strengths and weaknesses providing them with an effective means of gaining knowledge. Students observed all had the same opportunity to engage with educators, materials, and other students. Digital learning is an environment that requires improvement. Educators were rarely seen using technology-based tools and were reluctant to discuss integrating it into their curriculum. The well-managed environment was rated below average due to observing students not respecting others and struggling with following classroom rules.

PACE Correspondence School does have the opportunity to continue to build on their environmental strengths to raise their scores for future visits by an External Review Team. Students and parents do enjoy working with PACE Correspondence School whether it is at home or at the Learning Centers. Students have the opportunity to work in small settings to feel comfortable with taking risks and exploring new content. It is important to establish set criteria for a successful educational learning environment to enable students to not only exceed educational expectations, but for educators to develop strong learners. Digital learning can be a tool to help engage students more readily and to lessen interruptions. It is important to remember that learning is a process that includes many layers. The weakness of one component can make learning difficult and frustrating.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.40	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	0.00%
2.	3.60	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	80.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%
3.	3.40	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	0.00%
4.	1.60	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	20.00%	0.00%	0.00%	80.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.00						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.40	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	40.00%	60.00%	0.00%	0.00%
2.	3.40	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	0.00%
3.	1.80	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	0.00%	40.00%	0.00%	60.00%
4.	3.80	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	80.00%	20.00%	0.00%	0.00%
5.	2.20	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	0.00%	40.00%	40.00%	20.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.92						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.00	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	20.00%	60.00%	20.00%	0.00%
2.	3.20	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	40.00%	40.00%	20.00%	0.00%
3.	3.20	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	60.00%	0.00%	40.00%	0.00%
4.	3.60	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	80.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%
5.	3.60	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	60.00%	40.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.32						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.00	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	40.00%	20.00%	40.00%	0.00%
2.	1.60	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	20.00%	0.00%	0.00%	80.00%
3.	3.60	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	80.00%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.73						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.60	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	40.00%	20.00%	0.00%	40.00%
2.	3.20	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	40.00%	40.00%	20.00%	0.00%
3.	3.20	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	40.00%	40.00%	20.00%	0.00%
4.	1.40	Understands how her/his work is assessed	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	80.00%
5.	2.80	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	40.00%	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.64						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.40	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	40.00%	60.00%	0.00%	0.00%
2.	3.60	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	60.00%	40.00%	0.00%	0.00%
3.	1.00	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
4.	1.00	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
5.	3.40	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.48						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	1.40	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	80.00%
2.	2.00	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	20.00%	20.00%	0.00%	60.00%
3.	1.00	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 1.47						

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop and implement a defined and comprehensive student assessment system that documents information about student learning, supportive conditions for student learning, and communicates improvement goals to stakeholders.

(Indicator 5.1, Indicator 5.4, SF2. Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 5.1

Evidence and Rationale

The External Review Team was provided with little evidence to support a clearly defined student assessment system or monitoring of information regarding student learning by leadership. No written artifacts were submitted in the evidence folder for Standard 5.1 and outdated and unorganized data was provided for Standard 5.5. The small amount of evidence found was obtained through interviews with stakeholders and probing questions by the Team on materials provided. Survey data was not valid and lacking reliability.

Successful educational institutions provide assessment data for those in charge of student learning in a manner that clearly defines learners’ strengths and areas in need of growth. Information required to maintain and/or improve assessment scores need to be clearly stated and provided to stakeholders.

Improvement Priority

Develop and implement an instructional process that engages students in their learning and guide instructional practices of teachers.

(Indicator 3.3, Indicator 3.4, Indicator 3.6)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.6

Evidence and Rationale

The External Review Team was provided little written evidence necessary to document current practice in engaging students instructional practice. What little evidence was provided was outdated and found only by chance by the Team. Interviews with stakeholders added little to the evidence regarding current practices of engaging students. The Team found the survey data shared to be unreliable and outdated. PACE Correspondence School also self-reported this as an area of needed growth.

Students needs are best served with a well-defined plan that is implemented to actively engage students in their learning. This starts with strong leadership that monitors, supports, and documents the instructional strategies to ensure best practices by teachers in pursuit of quality student learning experiences.

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.	2.00	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.	2.00	3.00
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	2.00	2.52

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.	2.00	2.95
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	2.00	2.90
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.	2.00	3.15
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	3.00	3.11
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.	2.00	2.71

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	1.00	3.43
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	1.00	3.08

Findings

Improvement Priority

Identify and document staff supervision processes that will result in improved professional practices of the staff and an increase in student success.

(Indicator 2.6)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 2.6

Evidence and Rationale

The External Review Team was provided with limited data showing established evaluation practices that will lead to improvements. Data provided was outdated and lacked connection to the school's purpose. PACE staff also deemed this area as one requiring additional time for improvement.

Best school practices require well-established processes to assist in improvement to staff and students. With these components, schools can help learners grow academically and improve the school's proficiency with district and state assessment scores. Consistency and an understanding of evaluation for all those involved with the community will enable the school to grow as a staff and create learners prepared to tackle life outside of the learning environment.

Improvement Priority

Identify and document that the governing body has established policies and practices that allow the leadership to effectively meet goals for achievement and instruction, as well as managing everyday operations.

(Indicator 2.1, Indicator 2.2, Indicator 2.3)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 2.1

Evidence and Rationale

The External Review Team was provided with little proof of a well-defined governing body. Written artifacts were weak and lacking the requirement to document success in this area. Written information was also unrelated to the topic, outdated, and unorganized. Finally, this area was also identified by PACE staff as an area needing improvement. Interviews with stakeholders regarding this area provided no additional evidence.

Effective educational practices require a well-documented governing body structure. This is the entity that guides the staff through the changing world of curriculum, assessment, and student needs. Those in charge must ensure that stakeholders feel supported, confident, and are aware of what they need to do to help students succeed. Leaders must take the time to become aware of how to improve their abilities to lead the school and to be prepared to work hard and overcome challenges with a strong understanding of what will work for their school community.

Improvement Priority

Review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success by engaging all stakeholders (staff, parents, and students) based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students.

(Indicator 1.1, Indicator 1.2, SF1. Questionnaire Administration)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 1.1

Evidence and Rationale

Little documentation was provided that showed the school engages their stakeholders in the process of review and revision of their purpose statement. No evidence was provided that supported that revisions were happening on a regular and ongoing basis. Interviews with stakeholders confirmed that the most recent revisions were developed by the staff and, at best, shared with other stakeholders. Artifacts shared with the External Review Team were either outdated or simply missing.

Best practices in education include schools annually reviewing and communicating their school's purpose (mission) statement with their stakeholders. Effective schools use the school's purpose statement as a point of light to give their school direction and can be found posted prominently throughout their system on their website, in emails, at teacher's desks, in monthly newsletters, and Parent Handbook.

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	2.98
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.00	3.14
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	2.00	2.84
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	3.00	2.63

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	2.00	2.86
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	2.00	2.75

Findings

Improvement Priority

Advance and enable support services that meet the physical, social, emotional, as well as the assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.

(Indicator 4.6, Indicator 4.7)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.6

Evidence and Rationale

The External Review Team was provided with little evidence to support a strong student support system. The surveys used were unreliable, outdated, and invalid. What little supporting evidence that was provided pertained primarily to special education students. PACE employees also rated these areas in need of improvement.

Best practices in education require educators to focus on the needs of each student in developing support systems that will help them succeed in each aspect of their educational career. Impressive schools ensure that students are made aware of opportunities that will enhance not only their knowledge acquisition, but their individual well-being. It is not enough for schools to simply focus on the educational aspect of education, but preparing students to succeed as a citizen should be at the heart of the school as well.

Improvement Priority

Develop and implement a plan to provide support for students and staff to use media and information resources for educational programs.

(Indicator 4.4)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.4

Evidence and Rationale

The External Review Team was provided with written artifacts that did not pertain to this Standard as proof of media and information support. Other information was outdated, oftentimes several years old. During interviews with stakeholders, little mention was made as to how they are provided with these resources by

staff.

Technology is a fundamental aspect of the educational setting. Parents and students must be taught how to use these tools not only as a means to support learning, but as an important aspect of preparing learners for their future beyond K-12 education. Best practices in homeschooling suggest providing direct instruction on where to find resources that will support programs for pupils must also be provided to homeschooling parents to support their instruction.

Conclusion

PACE Correspondence School is a statewide homeschool and correspondence program within the Craig City School District. It has Learning Centers located in Anchorage, Ketchikan, as well as Craig, Alaska. These Learning Centers provide office space for PACE Correspondence School staff, house resources for families that walk through the door and meeting space for various activities that occasionally bring families together.

PACE Correspondence School has been facing a declining enrollment over the past several years and that in turn has impacted staffing and services to families enrolled in the school. The staff is currently discussing strategies to better advertise their program statewide while keeping the cost of doing so at a minimum. The school has implemented group activities intended to engage their students together at the request of their revitalized Parent Advisory Committee. A trip to Homer, Alaska to participate in an outdoor survival training was a big hit for students from the Anchorage Learning Center. Another example observed by the External Review Team was a Lego Robotics gathering in the Ketchikan Learning Center. These activities give students a sense of belonging and an opportunity to interact with other children outside their home.

PACE Correspondence School seems to be well-liked by the families it has enrolled. There is, however, a lack of documentation of processes in place. Additionally, the school needs to better include and document that all stakeholders are engaged in discussions regarding the school's mission. Engagement is critical to stabilizing enrollment and creating a sense of ownership among all stakeholder groups.

The Improvement Priorities outlined in this report should be used as a roadmap and to form a foundation for growth and school improvement. The staff and school leadership are well-positioned to take on these tasks and have shown the commitment necessary to make the required changes. The stakes are high but the External Review Team wants to encourage the PACE leadership and staff to embrace these recommendations. Always remember that your goal is to achieve success for every student everyday.

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:

- Advance and enable support services that meet the physical, social, emotional, as well as the assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.
- Develop and implement a defined and comprehensive student assessment system that documents information about student learning, supportive conditions for student learning, and communicates improvement goals to stakeholders.
- Develop and implement a plan to provide support for students and staff to use media and information resources for educational programs.
- Develop and implement an instructional process that engages students in their learning and guide instructional practices of teachers.
- Identify and document staff supervision processes that will result in improved professional practices of

the staff and an increase in student success.

- Identify and document that the governing body has established policies and practices that allow the leadership to effectively meet goals for achievement and instruction, as well as managing everyday operations.
- Review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success by engaging all stakeholders (staff, parents, and students) based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students.

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	234.62	278.94
Teaching and Learning Impact	245.24	268.48
Leadership Capacity	200.00	293.71
Resource Utilization	257.14	286.27

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

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

Addenda

Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Mr. Tim Cline	<p>Tim Cline has been working in education for over thirty-five years. He retired from his public school career in June 2015 after 15 years with the Galena City School District where he served as a Director for the Interior Distance Education of Alaska (IDEA) Program. Tim has been a teacher, Principal, Director of Instruction, and State Support of Schools Coach at various times during his career. In July 2015, he accepted a position as the Alaska Director with AdvancED.</p> <p>Tim holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education from Pacific Lutheran University, a Master of Arts Degree in Education from University of Alaska-Fairbanks and was a recipient of the Milken National Educator of the Year Award in 1999.</p>
Ms. Denali Q Whiting	<p>Denali Whiting was born and raised in Kotzebue, Alaska. She graduated from Kotzebue High School in 2010 and attended the University of Alaska Fairbanks where she graduated with honors with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Alaska Native Studies and minor in American Sign Language. She currently works transcribing recorded audio interviews from rural communities around Alaska for research led by the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the National Park Service.</p>
Mrs. Carrie J Christenson	<p>Carrie Christenson has been working in the educational field for over fifteen years. She began her school career as a teacher assistant in the middle school setting before becoming an elementary educator. Carrie worked as a fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teacher for twelve years before become an Academic Advisor at Frontier Charter School two years ago. Carrie now currently works with K-12 grade students and their families in creating learning opportunities that best meet the needs of each learner. Carrie holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Western Washington University, a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from UAA, a Master of Arts in Educational Technology from Boise State University, and an Educational Specialist Degree in E-Learning from Northcentral University. She is currently working on her Educational Leadership Graduate Certificate from Northcentral University.</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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