

External Review

Douglas High School

Douglas County School District

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Introduction to the External Review Process

Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance developed more than 100 years ago by American universities and secondary schools, and designed primarily to distinguish schools adhering to a set of educational standards. Today the accreditation process is used at all levels of education, and is recognized for its ability to effectively drive student performance and continuous improvement in education.

Institutions seeking to gain or retain accreditation must meet AdvancED standards specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution to achieve higher levels of performance and address those areas that may be hindering efforts to reach desired performance levels. External Review is a rigorous process that includes examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards, but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

Part I: Findings

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It also includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, observations of the Learning Environment, as well as Required Actions.

Accreditation Standards and Indicators

Standards help to delineate what matters. They provide a common language through which an education community can engage in conversations about educational improvement, system effectiveness, and achievement. They serve as a foundation for planning and implementing improvement strategies and activities and for measuring success. AdvancED's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective educators and leaders from the fields of practice, research, and policy who applied professional wisdom, deep knowledge of effective practice, and the best available research to craft a set of robust standards that ensure excellence and continuous improvement. The standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains an evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, conclusions concerning Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards, and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review Team. Indicators are evaluated and rated individually by the External Review Team using a four-level performance rubric. The Standard Performance Level is the average of indicator scores for the standard.

Standard 1: Purpose and Direction

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 own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the institutions' vision that is supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

Standard	Standard Performance Level
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.	3.33

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Minutes from meetings related to development of the school's purpose •Survey results •Examples of communications to stakeholders about the school's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook) •Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the school's purpose •Interviews •Documentation or description of the process for creating the school's purpose including the role of stakeholders •Purpose statements - past and present •Principal's overview Parent Teacher Student Organization Agendas Newsletters Website 	3
1.2	The school's leadership and staff commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the school's statement of purpose •Interviews •Observations •Survey results •The school's statement of purpose •Accreditation Report •Principal's overview Site walk through data School Improvement Plan Course Catalog 	4

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1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations•Survey results•The school data profile•Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings•Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders•Interviews•Accreditation Report•The school continuous improvement plan•Principal's overview	3
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Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. The school leadership and staff are clearly committed to a culture based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

1.2

The shared commitment to quality teaching and high learning expectations is evidenced in all school communications, such as the web site, emails, purpose statements, and the principal's thorough overview of school programs, achievements, and plans to address school improvement initiatives. All staff participated in a meaningful process to retool the belief statements, as reported in the accreditation report. Interviews with staff, students, and parents, and a review of stakeholder perspectives reveal the strong values shared by all. There is credible evidence that the school's leadership team is proactive in planning to meet a variety of challenges, such as changes in the assessment of learning, the implementation of common core state standards, and planning for a major expansion to accommodate the addition of a ninth grade program in 2015. Such direction has led to an increased commitment to challenge all students more consistently with sound instructional practices.

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

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 school leadership research, Leithwood & 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 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 school communities to attain school 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 school 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 has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world 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			Standard Performance Level
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.			2.83
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observations •Student handbooks •Governing body policies, procedures, and practices •Staff handbooks •Accreditation Report •Interviews •School handbooks •Principal's overview Artifact binder District Strategic Plan 	3

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<p>2.2</p>	<p>The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest •Proof of legal counsel •Assurances, certifications •Interviews •Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies •Communications about program regulations •Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest •Governing code of ethics •Principal's overview Artifact binder 	<p>2</p>
<p>2.3</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Roles and responsibilities of school leadership •School improvement plan developed by the school •Accreditation Report •Stakeholder input and feedback •Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation •Communications regarding board actions •Survey results regarding functions of the governing body •Observations •Agendas and minutes of meetings •Interviews •Principal's overview Artifact binder Chart of administrative responsibilities 	<p>2</p>

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2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Examples of collaboration and shared leadership•Survey results•Observations•Interviews•Examples of decisions aligned with the school's statement of purpose•Accreditation Report•Examples of decisions in support of the school's continuous improvement plan•Principal's overview Artifact binder Examples of changes in curriculum course offerings and assessments	4
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Minutes from meetings with stakeholders•Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys•Survey responses•Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan•Communication plan•Accreditation Report•Observations•Interviews•Principal's overview Artifact binder Examples of policies developed with student input Parent Teacher Student Organization bylaws and meeting minutes	3

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2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Examples of professional development offerings and plans tied specifically to the results from supervision and evaluation •Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation •Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice and student success noted •Observations •Job specific criteria •Representative supervision and evaluation reports •Interviews •Principals overview Artifact binder Site based walk thru data Staff surveys 	3
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Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. School leaders and staff foster a culture that actively supports innovation, collaboration, shared leadership, and professional growth.

2.4

Stakeholder surveys, and interviews with staff in focus groups, provide evidence that school leaders are effective in mobilizing a school community which consistently expends effort and energies toward building an atmosphere that focuses on student achievement. The principal's presentation, artifacts regarding shared decision making, and student achievement data support this factor. Examples of shared decision making include budget planning, the school improvement process, and professional development planning. The level of staff participation in the development of the accreditation report was also high. The principal has established clear open lines of communication with all stakeholders. Student surveys indicate a concern regarding respect at school. Staff are unclear as to the implications of this perception, and interviews with several students countered this perception. However, school leaders, as documented in the school improvement plan, have established plans to meet with students in focus groups to discuss this issue. The climate of the school is safe, positive, respectful, and supportive resulting in a sense of pride and shared ownership that has been facilitated by school leaders.

Opportunities for Improvement

Indicator

1. School leaders and staff need to establish and implement plans to create a positive working relationship with the school board that would lead to a supportive and respectful partnership in accomplishing goals for improvement in student learning and instruction. 2.3

As evident in staff surveys and interviews in focus groups, concerns exist regarding the lack of input staff have in decisions made by the school board affecting the curriculum and instruction at the school level. The accreditation report indicates a perceived "disconnect" and that school board members seem to be unaware of the impact of their decisions on school practices. The school board's arbitrary decision regarding the Springboard Program is one example. School leaders and staff need to develop an ongoing collaborative relationship with the school board that will allow for meaningful input from staff when adopting school programs. To create an opportunity for improvement in this area, the school leadership team, as documented in the school improvement plan, will invite school board members to visit the school to dialogue with staff regarding school needs and to see first hand the curriculum and best practices that are in place. Through increased communication between school staff and the school board, the school board will maintain a more effective distinction between its roles and responsibilities and those of school leadership.

Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning

A high-quality and effective system has services, practices, and curriculum that ensure teacher effectiveness. Research has shown that an effective teacher is a key factor for learners to achieve to their highest potential and be prepared for a successful future. The positive influence an effective educator has on learning is a combination of "student motivation, parental involvement" and the "quality of leadership" (Ding & Sherman, 2006). Research also suggests that quality educators must have a variety of quantifiable and intangible characteristics, which include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The school'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 et al, 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 et al, 2008). According to Marks, Louis, & Printy (2002), school staff that engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, & Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective schools, "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 through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that 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.

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Standard			Standard Performance Level
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.			2.58
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The school's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Lesson plans •Interviews •Accreditation Report •Graduate follow-up surveys •Learning expectations for different courses •Posted learning objectives •Representative samples of student work across courses •Course schedules •Course descriptions •Observations •Descriptions of instructional techniques •Principal's overview Artifact binder 	3
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Curriculum guides •A description of the systematic review process for curriculum, instruction, and assessment •Observations •Common assessments •Surveys results •Interviews •Accreditation Report •Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps •Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum •Principal's overview Artifact binder Staff collaboration meeting agendas School board policies 	3

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3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Teacher evaluation criteria•Authentic assessments•Professional development focused on these strategies•Observations•Interdisciplinary projects•Agenda items addressing these strategies•Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource•Interviews•Surveys results•Findings from supervisor walk-thrus and observations•Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge•Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool•Accreditation Report•Principal's overview Artifact binder	3
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Curriculum maps•Documentation of collection of lesson plans and grade books•Supervision and evaluation procedures•Observations•Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices•Surveys results•Interviews•Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process•Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs•Accreditation Report•Principal's overview Artifact binder Walk through dat Teach for Success data	3

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3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees •Survey results •Observations •Peer coaching guidelines and procedures •Interviews •Principal's overview Artifact binder 	2
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observations •Interviews •Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance •Accreditation Report •Survey results •Examples of assessments that prompted modification in instruction •Principal's overview Artifact binder Common grading rubrics Graduation requirements Thirteen competencies required for graduation 	3
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Records of meetings and walk thrus/feedback sessions •Observations •Survey results •Personnel manuals with information related to new hires including mentoring, coaching, and induction practices •Interviews •Principal's overview Artifact binder District schedule for level one training 	2

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3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Survey results•Interviews•List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days•Calendar outlining when and how families are provided information on child's progress•Accreditation Report•Parental/family/caregiver involvement plan including activities, timeframes, and evaluation process•Principal's overview Artifact binder Parent support groups Parent information nights	3
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•List of students matched to adult advocate•Accreditation Report•Survey results•Interviews•Description of formal adult advocate structures•Principal's overview Artifact binder Senior exit surveys Mentoring program for seventy students Link Crew student to student support program	2

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3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Accreditation Report•Observations•Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices•Survey results•Sample report cards for each grade level and for all courses•Interviews•Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting•Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting•Principal's overview Artifact binder	2
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Results of evaluation of professional learning program.•Evaluation tools for professional learning•Interviews•Survey results•Brief explanation of alignment between professional learning and identified needs•Accreditation Report•Crosswalk between professional learning and school purpose and direction•Observations•Principal's overview Artifact binder Site based walk through data	3

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3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations•Interviews•Survey results•List of learning support services and student population served by such services•Accreditation Report•Data used to identify unique learning needs of students•Principal's overview Artifact binder Assessment data	2
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Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. School leaders formally and consistently monitor instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success in alignment with school wide initiatives.

3.4

As evidenced in observations, artifacts, and staff interviews, E-walk and other monitoring and feedback systems, as well as protocols for supervision and evaluation, are regularly in place to inform teachers about their instruction and the level of student engagement. The emphasis, as reported in the accreditation report, is on complexity of content and learning activities not on the volume of work students produce. Evidence of the implementation of thinking maps, depth of knowledge levels, and differentiated instruction was observed. Teachers are not only monitored on their use of instructional strategies, but opportunities for teachers to observe each other, following the peer 2+2 model, are available. Teachers share ideas related to instructional practices during collaboration also. Additional evidence of these practices were found in examples of lesson plan checks, observation logs, and staff surveys. Effective supervision and evaluation practices, followed consistently, will ensure successful implementation of the common core state standards and the school improvement plan initiatives.

Opportunities for Improvement

Indicator

1. Develop a formal structure for collaboration learning communities focused on improving instruction and student learning. 3.5

An examination of the artifacts shows that teachers do meet for collaboration on a weekly basis. Agendas and meeting minutes are evidence of these meetings. However, school self-assessment ratings for this area were low. Based on interviews with teachers and the site accountability committee, staff feel collaboration time is made available, but that it has been primarily used for professional development. Staff expressed the concern that they miss the time for meaningful collaboration with peers in a department or interdisciplinary format. Some departments are separated between the feeder middle schools and the high school, often making collaboration difficult to schedule. As the school moves to implement common core state standards, thinking maps, and High Quality Sheltered Instruction, and other school-wide initiatives, the development of a structured collaboration model will provide teachers a regular format to discuss these strategies, share best practices, and work together on ways to use assessment data to improve instruction.

2. Develop and implement a formal school wide grading policy with clearly defined criteria that represent each student's attainment of content knowledge and skills. Such policies need to be well communicated to students and parents. 3.10

An examination of artifacts shows examples of some common assessments and competencies that need to be met for various disciplines. Grading policies and procedures exist with which most stakeholders are aware; however, survey results indicate that parents and students do not often know why a specific grade was given. Teachers, through much documented discussion, indicate agreement on the critical content of each course, but grading practices vary according to individual teacher perceptions. Some teachers feel that adopting a formal common grading policy may infringe on their freedom to utilize their individual best instructional practices. Continued discussion on this issue may start by addressing such issues as policies for late work, coming to understand that by establishing such a school wide policy would increase student compliance and decrease late work. As discussion on grading practices begins to focus on whether students have mastered the content and established standards, the process will become clearly defined for all stakeholders to ensure student attainment of content knowledge and skills.

Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems

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, 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 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staffs 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 to improve their effectiveness. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

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Standard			Standard Performance Level
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.			2.57
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Observations •School budgets for the last three years •Survey results •Interviews •Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff •Accreditation Report •Assessments of staffing needs •Documentation of highly qualified staff •Principal's overview Artifact binder Accountability reports 	3
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources •Survey results •School schedule •Interviews •Alignment of budget with school purpose and direction •Observations •School calendar •Principal's overview Artifact binder Policies to protect instructional time 	3

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4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Records of depreciation of equipment•Observations•Survey results•Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements•Interviews•Accreditation Report•Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures.•System for maintenance requests•Maintenance schedules•Safety committee responsibilities, meeting schedules, and minutes•Maintenance methods Principal's overview Inventory lists Artifact binder	3
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Interviews•Budget related to media and information resource acquisition•Accreditation Report•Survey results•Observations•Data on media and information resources available to students and staff•Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information•Principal's overview Artifact binder Online access to instructional resources Schedule for use of computer labs	3

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4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure •Assessments to inform development of technology plan •Survey results •Policies relative to technology use •Principal's overview Artifact binder Inventory list Interviews 	2
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Student assessment system for identifying student needs •Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support •Survey results •Schedule of family services, e.g., parent classes, survival skills •Accreditation Report •Interviews •Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education •List of support services available to students •Principal's overview Artifact binder 	2
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning •Accreditation Report •Survey results •Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning •Description of IEP process •Description of referral process •Principal's overview Artifact binder 	2

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

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| 1. | School leaders have adopted and implemented clear expectations for maintaining safety, cleanliness, and a healthy environment at the school. | 4.3 |
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Safety and cleanliness are a priority at Douglas High School. Stakeholder surveys rate the school high in these areas. Emergency procedures, such as fire drills and evacuations procedures are well documented and followed. The maintenance team has adopted the use of Pro Clean methodology which has made a significant difference in maintaining high standards in cleanliness throughout the campus. Response to maintenance and facility needs is efficient also. The site safety committee meets to assess needs and establishes plans to address areas needing improvement.

Opportunities for Improvement

Indicator

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| 1. | Address the areas he technology infrastructure has identified that support the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs. | 4.5 |
|----|--|-----|

The necessary increased use of technology and instructional media in the classroom require upgrades in the technological infrastructure. Based on the accountability committee's review and student and staff surveys, much discussion highlighted the lack of technology in the classroom. The school's inventory includes three computer labs, two technology instruction labs, and forty-five laptop computers. Some teachers have interactive boards and most have LCD projection systems. However, the need for extensive upgrades has been identified. The upgrades, funded by a future expansion project, will serve to address these needs. The development of a short range and long range technology plan by the site technology committee will provide importance guidance also. It is important to include appropriate staff training in the plan to ensure technology is effectively used in support of teaching and learning.

Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement

Systems with strong improvement processes are moving beyond anxiety about the current reality and focusing on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, that is, data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, & 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 et al., 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 school 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).

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world 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			Standard Performance Level
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.			2.4
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation Report •Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols •Survey results •Interviews •Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local assessments on student learning and school performance •Evidence that assessments are reliable and bias free •Principal's overview Artifacts binder 	3
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze, and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Survey results •Interviews •Written protocols and procedures for data collection and analysis •Examples of use of data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans and apply learning •Observations •List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning •Accreditation Report •Principal's overview Professional Development agendas Artifact binders School improvement plan 	3

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5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Interviews•Survey results•Observations•Accreditation Report•Principal's overview Artifact binder	1
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Student surveys•Agendas, minutes of meetings related to analysis of data•Accreditation Report•Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans•Evidence of student readiness for the next level•Evidence of student growth•Observations•Evidence of student success at the next level•Interviews•Staff surveys Principal's overview Artifact binder SAGE	2

External Review

Douglas High School

5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Observations •Communication plan regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders •Survey results •Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals •Accreditation Report •School quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, conditions that support learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals •Executive summaries of student learning reports to stakeholder groups •Interviews •Principal's overview Artifact binder Walk through data	3
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Powerful Practices

Indicator

1. School personnel maintain and use an assessment system that produces data from multiple assessment measures, including locally developed and standardized assessments about student learning and school performance.

5.1

Students at Douglas High School are required to pass thirteen performance based competencies, the Nevada state high school proficiency exams, and earn 23 credits in order to graduate. Grade 10 - 12 students also participate in Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments of learning three times during the school year. Some common assessments for like courses exist also. Evidence in the form of documentation from Power School shows how the school tracks achievement data for individual students in their progress toward graduation. Such data is used to drive decisions related to student placement in scheduling. Teachers all have access to this data, and interviews indicate a strong awareness of the assessments on student performance. The principal's overview showed how the data is used to make data comparisons between one year and the next, but also how data is used to make cohort comparisons. The trend data shows that tenth grade students may not pass at a high rate of proficiency on the first administration of the math High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE), but by the end of 11th grade, the rate of proficiency for that group of students has increased significantly. The availability of this type of trend data leads to meaningful analysis of student achievement.

Learning Environment

Every learner should have access to an effective learning environment in which she/he has multiple opportunities to be successful. The Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT) measures the extent to which learners are in an environment that is equitable, supportive, and well-managed. An environment where high expectations are the norm and active learning takes place. It measures whether learners' progress is monitored and feedback is provided and the extent to which technology is leveraged for learning.

Observations of classrooms or other learning venues are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes per observation. External review team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a 4 point scale with 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 7 learning environments included in ELEOT.

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT)

<i>Environments</i>	<i>Level</i>
A. Equitable Learning Environment:	2.21
B. High Expectations Environment:	2.43
C. Supportive Learning Environment:	2.38
D. Active Learning Environment:	2.61
E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment:	2.22
F. Well-Managed Learning Environment:	2.98
G. Digital Learning Environment	1.56

Part II: Conclusion

Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

The External Review Team conducted their site visit on May 3rd and 6th, 2013. On May 3, six team members reported to Douglas High School at 6:45 a.m. to prepare for the day's review which included two and a half hours of classroom observations, attendance at a special very comprehensive overview presentation by the principal, interviews with the accountability team, teachers, parents, and students. Over the course of the two days team members interacted with over 50 teachers and conducted 37 classroom observations. The team was able to interact with students and parents during lunch, with four administrators and four counselors during the day, and with most teachers in scheduled focus groups at the end of the day. The school was very well prepared for the External Review and provided well organized and complete artifact binders for the team's review.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

The themes that emerged from the Powerful Practices confirmed the emphasis on a unified school with a common purpose and strong direction. The school uses a comprehensive process for developing the mission and beliefs, creating a culture which promotes shared decision making, innovation, and a clear commitment to teaching and learning. The school has a comprehensive student assessment system which effectively tracks student growth in achievement. Effective evaluation and monitoring practices support improvement in teaching and learning also. Stakeholders were positive about the progress and strengths identified in their school. Parent involvement is encouraged and evident in the school's many special programs and communication practices.

The most significant area of Opportunity for Improvement is grounded within Standard 5, specifically the need for the school to develop and implement professional development for all staff focused on the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data to improve teaching and learning. Such training will have a positive impact on achievement as teachers learn how to adjust teaching practices in response to data analysis. Effective monitoring and evaluation practices by school leaders will provide valuable support and guidance to teachers in this process. This was a priority expressed by the school in the self-assessment document.

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

Classroom observations focused on the observable evidence in classroom environments that are conducive to learning. A theme that both the school and the External Review Team were in agreement was in the area of a well-managed learning environment with high expectations. This was evidenced by collaboration among students, student engagement, and mutual respect for peers and adults. The identified need to improve the technology infrastructure received support in the classroom observations. The use of technology was observed to be low. As technology upgrades take place student engagement with digital learning tools will increase.

Congratulations to the entire Douglas High School educational community on its commitment to accreditation. As the school engages in the process, the school will find that all elements of the school become stronger.

The entire school community, and, most importantly, students benefit as the school works to improve its systems and processes to increase school-wide effectiveness and enhance school learning. The External Review Team is grateful for the opportunity to be part of Douglas High School's accreditation process and appreciate the warm hospitality extended by the students and staff during the one day visitation. As a result of the visit, the External Review Team recommends that Douglas High School be granted a new five-year term of accreditation by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission..

Required Actions

1. Implement professional development for all staff focused on the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data to improve teaching a learning.

Primary Indicator or Assurance: 5.3

Based on the accreditation report, stakeholder surveys, and interviews with staff, teachers do not feel confident in their ability to use assessment data in a meaningful way to improve instructional practices. Current staff trainings have engaged staff in reviewing whole school data, graduate data, and HSPE data. However, to make systemic program and instruction decisions and improvements, focused training will teach staff how to use assessment results in a manner that would significantly improve instruction and increase achievement. The informed use of data to impact instruction will lead to consistent implementation of best practices, such as High Quality Sheltered Instruction, thinking maps, depth of knowledge, and writing process instruction. Interpreting individual student data will allow for greater differentiation of instruction also. Student and parent surveys indicate that individual learning needs are not consistently addressed. Such professional development will have a positive influence on instruction and enable teachers to have more confidence in dialoguing about student learning in parent conferences and in structured collaboration sessions. Effective training in how to evaluate, interpret, and use data will bring instructional practices in alignment with the school's mission, beliefs, and school improvement goals.

Part III: Addenda

Next Steps

The institution should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the Powerful Practices section to maximize their impact on the institution.
3. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to monitor and ensure that the system has implemented the necessary actions to complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the External Review, the Team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

About AdvancED

In 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), both founded in 1895, along with 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 (founded 1917) joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students. The Northwest Accreditation Commission joined the AdvancED network in 2011.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.