

**Report of the
Quality Assurance Review Team
for
Center Grove High School**

2717 South Morgantown Road
Greenwood, Indiana, United States 46143

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North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

Quality Assurance Review Report

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About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

Background. Founded in 1895, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) accredit public and private schools and districts in 30 states, the Navajo Nation, Latin America, and the Department of Defense Schools worldwide.

In April 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), and National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form one strong unified organization dedicated to education quality. That unified organization, known as AdvancED, creates the world's largest education community, representing 27,000 public and private schools and districts across the United States and in 65 countries worldwide and educating 15 million students.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI and SACS CASI have defined shared, research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help schools continuously improve.

The Accreditation Process. To earn and maintain accreditation from NCA CASI or SACS CASI, schools must:

- 1) Meet the AdvancED Standards and Policies for Quality Schools.** Schools demonstrate adherence to the AdvancED standards and policies which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.
- 2) Engage in continuous improvement.** Schools implement a continuous improvement process that articulates the vision and purpose the school is pursuing (vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school effectiveness, and the school community (profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).
- 3) Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.** Schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, schools host an external Quality Assurance Review Team once every five years. The team evaluates the school's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and required actions to help the school improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school and a written report detailing the team's required actions. The school acts on the team's required actions and submits a progress report following the review.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI accreditation engages the entire school community in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help schools be the best they can be on behalf of the students they serve.

Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review

Purpose. The purpose of the Quality Assurance Review is to:

1. Evaluate the school's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards and policies.
2. Assess the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and required actions to improve the school.
4. Make an accreditation recommendation for review by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

A key aim of the Quality Assurance Review is to verify that the school is operating with institutional integrity - that it is fulfilling its vision and mission for its students.

School Preparation. To prepare for the Quality Assurance Review, the school community engages in an in-depth self assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. The school identifies and describes the evidence that demonstrates that it is meeting each standard. Through this internal review, the school examines how its systems and processes contribute to student performance and school effectiveness.

Summary of Team Activities. The Quality Assurance Review Team is led by an AdvancED certified team chair and comprised of professionals from outside the school. The team reviews the findings of the school's internal self-assessment, conducts interviews with representative groups of stakeholders, reviews student performance data and other documentation provided by the school, and observes practices and daily operations. The team engages in professional deliberations to reach consensus on the school's adherence to the standards for accreditation. The team provides an oral exit report and prepares a written Quality Assurance Review Team Report designed to help the school improve.

The Quality Assurance Review Team Report. Following the visit, the review team completes the Quality Assurance Review report. After review by a nationally-trained reader, the report is submitted to the school. The report contains commendations and required actions for improvement.

Using the Report - Responding to the Required Actions. The school uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school is held accountable for addressing the required actions identified in the report. The NCA CASI/SACS CASI State Office is available to assist schools in addressing the required actions. At prescribed intervals, the school must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress the school has made on the team's required actions. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school is addressing the required actions.

Accreditation Recommendation. The Quality Assurance Review Team uses the findings from the onsite visit to make an accreditation recommendation that is reviewed at the state level and by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Accreditation is granted by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission and communicated to the school following action from the commission.

Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the NCA CASI Indiana State Office (NCA-CASI-IN), a division of AdvancED, visited the Center Grove High School in Greenwood, Indiana, United States on 11/09/2010 - 11/10/2010.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 6 members of the administrative team, 78 students, 22 parents, and 56 teachers. In addition, 8 additional stakeholders were interviewed. The team also reviewed documents, student performance data, and other artifacts provided by the school. Specifically, the team examined the school's systems and processes in relation to the seven AdvancED standards:

1. Vision and Purpose
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Documenting and Using Results
5. Resource and Support Systems
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED standards focus on systems within a school and systematic methods of attaining high student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of the standards lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards. The Quality Assurance Review Team used the AdvancED standards to guide its review of the school, looking not only for adherence to individual standards, but also for how the school functions as a whole and embodies the practices and characteristics of a quality school.

Through its examination of the school's adherence to the standards, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following commendations and required actions.

Commendations

The Quality Assurance Review Team commends the school for the following strengths and accomplishments. While additional strengths are noted in the detailed review of each standard that appears later in this report, the commendations listed below are the strengths that the team believes are most deserving of being highlighted.

- **Center Grove High School has developed a culture of high expectations for student behavior and achievement.**

A comprehensive and rigorous curriculum challenges students to high levels of academic achievement. School procedures and mores produce an orderly and productive learning environment.

The positive learning environment of CGHS supports and promotes challenging courses, high standards, and exemplary student behavior.

- **Center Grove High School has created an environment of trust and confidence among teachers and building administrators.**

Students, parents, teachers, and building administrators expressed great confidence that CGHS teachers and administrators had students' best interests at heart. Teachers feel comfortable that administrators support experimenting with teaching techniques; like students and parents, they believe their input into school procedures is welcome and influential.

The trust and confidence among various CGHS stakeholders contribute to a positive learning environment in which groups feel supported and important.

- **Center Grove High School incorporates many forms of technology into instruction and operations.**

Technology is used extensively to house and analyze student records, communicate with stakeholders, and instruct students. Both hardware and software are in ample supply and are up to date; students, parents, and faculty members use technology tools routinely.

The effect of technology permeating all facets of the school is immeasurable; parent involvement, student engagement, and effective operations are typical but not to be taken for granted.

- **Center Grove High School fosters a positive and nurturing learning environment.**

Interviews with all stakeholders describe learning environment that is exceptionally positive and supportive. Many opportunities exist for students and teachers to interact, deliver and receive instruction, and develop productive relationships.

For a large high school, CGHS has a small-school feeling, and stakeholders--most significantly students--are emphatic that teachers are committed to students' academic success.

Required Actions

In addition to the commendations, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following required actions for improvement. The team focused its required actions on those areas that, if addressed, will have the greatest impact on improving student performance and overall school effectiveness. The school will be held accountable for addressing each of the required actions noted in this section. Following this review, the school will be asked to submit a progress report on these required actions.

- **Establish and improve the connection between student performance data, goal(s), interventions, and assessments.**

Goals for school improvement should derive from student performance data, disaggregated to reveal learning gaps among student subgroups. Robust interventions should then address specific weaknesses in student performance and assessments should evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions. No clear evidence was established to confirm links between performance data, disaggregated analysis, and teacher interventions.

A clear goal, interventions specifically chosen to address that goal, and assessments to track the effect of the interventions will provide clarity, focused efforts, and evidence of success or a need to adjust interventions.

- **Clarify the school improvement goal and focus interventions on that goal.**

The school improvement goal, to improve students' reading comprehension across the curriculum, is widely misunderstood and interventions are not specifically related to the stated goal. Assessments do not evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, especially for breakout groups.

Emphasis on a clear goal will focus the school's efforts, eliminate distracting or irrelevant activities, and allow assessment of the effects of interventions related to that goal.

Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools: The team reviewed the school's adherence to each of the AdvancED standards. The findings from this review are provided in the next section of this report.

Next Steps

The school 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 commendations section to maximize their impact on the school.
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 school's efforts to improve student performance and school effectiveness.
5. Following the Quality Assurance Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the required actions. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the required actions. Lack of progress can result in a change in accreditation status.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Resources

AdvancED offers a range of resources to support your school as it acts on the findings in this report. The AdvancED Resource Network, available at www.advanc-ed.org/resourcenetwork, provides an online network of peer-to-peer practices, best practices, and resources and tools designed to help schools with their improvement efforts. Available any where, any time, the network can be queried for information on a variety of school improvement subjects. The AdvancED Research and Development division provides research, handbooks, and tools to assist schools with continuous improvement. In addition, your state office provides hands-on professional development and ongoing technical assistance. Contact your state office for more information on the range of resources available to you.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the visit, the Quality Assurance Review Team submits an accreditation recommendation to AdvancED for state review and for action at the national level by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and communicates it to the school. Upon receiving its accreditation, the school should celebrate its achievement with the school community. The NCA-CASI-IN accreditation seals are available at www.advanc-ed.org/communicationskit for accredited schools and districts to post on their website and to use in school communications. Flags, door decals, diploma seals, and lapel pins are also available and can be ordered from the website to help you share your accomplishment with your community.

Summary

The accreditation process engages the school in an ongoing journey of continuous improvement. The next steps in this journey are to build on the strengths and address the required actions noted in this report. Doing so will enable the school to advance in its quest for excellence and deepen the fulfillment of its mission for all students.

Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the Center Grove High School demonstrates that it meets the seven standards for accreditation. The findings of the Quality Assurance Review Team regarding the standards for accreditation are summarized on the following pages.

Standard 1. Vision and Purpose

Standard: The school establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Input from administration, faculty, students, and parents was used to create Center Grove High School mission and vision statements. These statements, which appear in faculty and student handbooks, the school website, and posters within the school, can be better publicized to the community beyond the school. School stakeholders also created value statements and identified 21st Century Skills that, in addition to the school-wide literacy goal, guide school activities that advance the vision. Business partners, community members, and college representatives praised students and alumni for being prepared for the work force and post-secondary studies.

Review of the School Improvement Action Plan and the Professional Staff Development Plan show a goal of “improving reading comprehension across the curriculum.” Each faculty member chooses two literacy interventions to focus on in their professional growth plans: vocabulary acquisition, reading/writing connections, and reading strategies. The Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team noted that the lack of consistent focus weakens the advancement of the overall goal. Faculty feel confident that the administrative team supports them in their professional goals and leadership roles.

STaR (Students, Teachers, and Relationships) provides students with support in making scholastic and career goals while building relationships with the teacher-mentors. Students and faculty state that STaR enhances the school’s positive atmosphere. A Credit Recovery program using NovaNet software, and the CARE alternative school have contributed to an increase in the school’s graduation rate.

Recognizing that the demographics of the school are continually changing and slowly becoming more diverse, faculty and administration update student and community profiles; information in the profiles informs school improvement initiatives. Faculty and administration recognize the need to revisit the school’s mission and vision often to keep them current and applicable and to communicate them more effectively. The school is central to attracting and retaining community members. School facilities are clean and well maintained and are adequate to support academic and extracurricular programs.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The school nurtures a culture of student and faculty improvement and responsibility.
- The community supports and takes pride in the administration, faculty, staff, and students as well as school facilities.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Create a plan for regularly reviewing and promoting the mission and vision.
- Establish a focus for the reading comprehension/literacy goal and adjust interventions accordingly.

Finding: Center Grove High School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 2. Governance and Leadership

Standard: The school provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and school effectiveness.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

At Center Grove High School the policies and procedures providing effective school operations are evident through the faculty and student handbooks, faculty evaluations and Skyward student information system. This evidence also reveals that all local, state and federal laws, standards and regulations are followed. Turnover in the district-level administration has produced uncertainty about the executive, administrative and leadership prerogatives of the head of the school.

CGHS administrators provide many opportunities for stakeholders to assume leadership roles or to contribute to the development of school programs and procedures. Faculty members select from a variety of professional development activities, develop creative teaching strategies, and lead their Collaborative Content Teams (CCTs). Students are offered various extracurricular activities in which to become involved, most notably the Raising Student Voice and Participation (RSVP) program which allows students to submit suggestions for improvement of the school to the administration through a student leadership team. Community members may participate in the decision-making processes of the school through extracurricular program booster clubs, textbook adoption committees, and the Community Advisory Board. Community members, faculty, staff, students, and parents all praised the school leadership team for being a positive force in the community and for challenging all stakeholders to become involved with activities in the school.

An evaluation system is in place that provides for the professional growth of personnel. Evaluation procedures vary by length of employment and expectations are available to personnel using the evaluation form. Faculty members are also required to develop annual professional goals which state their perceived strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities to achieve their goals.

The administration of CGHS works to foster a community of learning within the school. Teacher collaboration during early release time, CCTs, and periodic meetings with the administration during preparation periods allow sharing of ideas and teaching strategies among the faculty. Stakeholders stated

that the administration challenges the faculty and staff to constantly improve their teaching and classroom procedures. Within the individual classrooms teachers use a variety of techniques to analyze and review student data. Pre- and post-tests, Acuity testing in math, End of Course Assessments (ECAs), and Datamine and Skyward programs provide and house data; however, the school lacks a focused, school-wide system of data collection and analysis related specifically to school improvement activities..

Extracurricular activities are overseen and controlled effectively by school personnel. There is a variety of extracurricular and co-curricular activities and administrators are often present and visible at events. Discipline is monitored effectively according to handbook definitions and procedures. Also, stakeholders indicated that the administration does an exceptional job of meeting the community's expectations. The principal was described as "accessible" and "approachable"; he has "no hidden agenda"; and "he always has the best interest of the students and school in mind." Parents and community members commented on the strength of communication between the administration and stakeholders, most notably the promptness with which e-mails and phone calls are addressed. All groups of stakeholders expressed an exceedingly high level of satisfaction in the governance and leadership of the school.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Stakeholders are offered meaningful roles in the decision-making processes of the school, thus promoting a culture of participation, responsibility and ownership.
- Stakeholders have utmost confidence in the leadership of the high school.
- The school leadership team fosters a learning community, challenges the faculty and staff to constantly improve, and offers leadership opportunities.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Develop a system to provide analysis and review of student performance and school effectiveness and communicate this information to stakeholders.

Finding: Center Grove High School has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 3. Teaching and Learning

Standard: The school provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Center Grove High School communicates clear expectations for student learning based on the Indiana State Standards. Expectations are communicated to students and parents primarily through course syllabi. The school desires to cultivate students' 21st Century Skills. These expectations are communicated throughout the school building on posters of the school's mission, vision, and value statements. The school leadership maintains and implements a master calendar and class schedule that promote and protect instructional time. The school operates on a block schedule that includes time for student-teacher interaction (STaR) and early release for faculty collaboration. The course offerings are diverse, including ample courses in the arts, as well as 13 Honors and 18 Advanced Placement courses. Sufficient resources are dedicated to teacher preparation for teaching these courses. The school offers dual-credit offerings through various colleges and an Early College Program within the school. Many students graduate with college credit.

The school has demonstrated high student performance on state End of Course Assessments (ECAs), especially in math. Recent Algebra I scores indicate growth in special education and free and reduced lunch sub categories of the student population.

The block schedule permits lengthy time on task and the pace of learning seems unhurried. Through classroom observations the QAR team noted that the majority of classroom instruction is teacher-centered with limited student engagement and little apparent focus on higher-order thinking skills.

Artifacts indicate that 97% of the instructional staff meet the federal definition of highly qualified teachers. 46% of the faculty has earned advanced degrees. All faculty members participate in Collaborative Content Teams (CCTs) in which teaching resources and strategies are shared. Some CCTs develop common assessments and analyze student assessment data to guide instruction. The faculty uses Rubicon Atlas to facilitate curriculum mapping. Individual teachers create their individual course maps as well as contributing to collaborative maps. These processes encourage coordinated instruction throughout the curriculum and facilitate vertical alignment.

Instructional technology is evident throughout the school building, including data projectors, multimedia tools, 1:1 laptop classrooms, and multiple computer labs available for classroom use. Ready access to these tools is vital to the school's vision of preparing students for the 21st century working and living environments. Media staff provide media services to teachers and students. The media center is equipped with sufficient resources (print and electronic) to support instruction.

Some evidence suggests teachers use formative assessments to guide instruction. The QAR team observed several incidents of teacher-student conferencing regarding performance improvement. The school has recently established an alternative school for struggling students (CARE) in addition to previously established math and reading labs. The school also offers access to vocational-technical programs to interested students. The team did not find a systematic approach to data-driven instruction. The math

department does use common assessments and uniform teaching strategies to facilitate best practices.

The school implements a substantial freshmen orientation program that includes upperclassmen as guides to ensure a smooth transition into this large high school.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The administration and faculty cultivate a purposeful and safe learning environment for all students.
- The administration provides technology, materials, and media services to support the instructional program.
- The administration and faculty provide interventions to help students meet expectations for learning.
- The administration allocates and protects instructional time.
- The school offers a comprehensive curriculum.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Gather, analyze, and use data and research in making curriculum and instructional choices.
- Employ research-based best practices in selecting and implementing instructional strategies to promote higher-order thinking skills and 21st Century skills.

Finding: Center Grove High School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 4. Documenting and Using Results

Standard: The school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Center Grove High School uses various measures to evaluate student learning and success. Data gleaned from Acuity, ECA scores, Skyward, and Datamine provide information on student performance. CGHS exhibits growth in student performance as evidenced in state test scores, 2 and 4 year college enrollment, and graduation rates.

Several Content Collaboration Teams (CCTs) have developed common assessments to track student performance. Some CCTs regularly meet to discuss and decide upon which instructional strategies to implement. However, documentation of implementation and assessment of results are needed to evaluate instructional effectiveness.

Artifacts and interviews reveal that CGHS uses a number of methods to communicate assessment results and school effectiveness to all stakeholders. Stakeholders state that they view Center Grove as a "leader among nearby districts."

The School Improvement Plan states a goal to improve reading comprehension across the curriculum. However, interviews with all stakeholder groups revealed a belief that the school's goal was a general literacy goal and teachers lacked a clear understanding of the purpose of their professional development activities. In addition, no coherent system of assessing students' reading comprehension skills or the effectiveness of interventions is in place. As a result CGHS school improvement efforts are unfocused, misunderstood, and not specifically assessed or analyzed.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- A culture of collaboration among teachers exists.
- Datamine, Skyward, and Rubicon Atlas are excellent sources of student and teaching data.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Compare CGHS student performance data with that of demographically similar schools and revise interventions as indicated.
- Utilize comprehensive data systems to inform, direct, and improve teaching and learning processes.
- Clarify the focus of school improvement efforts, explain the relationships between the goal and the interventions listed in the School Improvement Plan, implement the activities, and assess the effectiveness of the activities on students' reading comprehension.

Finding: Center Grove High School has earned the overall assessment level of "Emerging" and has not met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 5. Resource and Support Systems

Standard: The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Interviews, the master schedule, and classroom observations indicate that the school selects and assigns sufficient staff according to their qualifications and in keeping with the school's vision and mission.

The School Improvement Plan, school schedule, and teacher interviews reveal a professional development plan in which all teachers participate. Teachers may choose from a selection of topics for professional development (PD) and the format of their PD activities may vary from face-to-face instruction to online courses managed through the Epsilon course management program. PD also occurs at different times through preparation period meetings, early release time or at the teacher's discretion for online PD.

Certified and classified staff asserted the integrity of the school's accounting personnel and systems and communication from the State Board of Accounts confirms this opinion. Stakeholder interviews cited the recent rejection of a referendum for more money to operate the school system; however, faculty members and Central Office administrators vowed to regroup, set priorities, and continue positive educational experiences for students.

Facilities are obviously clean and well kept, and both students and staff commended the quickness with which areas are cleaned and equipment repaired or replaced. A full emergency plan exists and an easy-to-use flip chart guides the response to various school emergencies. All staff members reported training and participation in emergency response drills.

Guidance services are shared among counselors, STaR teachers and upper class student leaders, Keystone course teachers, and Special Education personnel. Interviews of students and teachers documented the benefits of StaR and the Keystone course in directing and developing students' self-knowledge, education and career goals, study skills, and more. In addition to these resources, special needs students benefit from directed study halls, team-taught classes, and the availability of their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to their teachers through the Skyward student information system.

An alternative school is in its second year of service to students who are at risk of dropping out. Parents, teachers, and classified staff spoke favorably of this CARE school, its standards, and the options it offers to students. Similarly, the Early College program serves selected capable students who require additional support and encouragement to achieve and persist in high school and beyond.

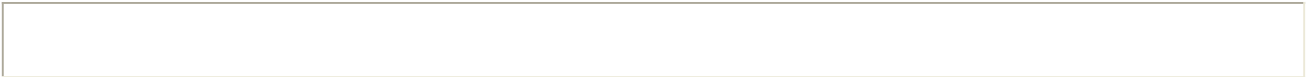
Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- School operations are smooth and orderly; students are well behaved and respect their environment; school personnel are readily accessible to students and parents alike, and their interest in student success is recognized.

- The school facility is exceptionally clean and well maintained despite large student enrollment and crowded conditions in some areas.
- Certified staff participate in professional development programs that offer choice of topic and learning style.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Narrow the focus of professional development activities to address specific areas for improvement in student achievement.
- Provide resources including time and funding for personnel and programs to focus on attaining school improvement goals.



Finding: Center Grove High School has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

Standard: The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Center Grove High School's encourages efforts to strengthen relationships between teachers, students, administrators, and support staff. Student indicated there are ample opportunities for connections with teachers such as STaR, Skyward, Epsilen, and Raising Student Voices and Participation (RSVP). All students were aware of these formal channels of communication and many of them actively engage in using two or more of these systems in varying degrees and spoke about the value of each.

Additional modes of communication with the community include automated (AlertNow) and personal phone calls/texts to parents' home and cell phones, online newsletters, school website, and school newspaper. Parents have the option to receive school information and their child's progress electronically, in writing, or by phone. Several parents commented that there was no excuse not to know what is going on at CGHS. They also expressed a feeling of community with the school and commended the "very accessible" administration and faculty. Parents stated that they are proud of the school and on more than one occasion the QAR team heard that the school "is Center Grove." Clearly the positive efforts to inform and interact with parents have created a bond between the school and its stakeholders.

The relationships built in the school foster collaboration among students that supports learning. Students stay with the same STaR teacher throughout their four years enhancing teachers' opportunity to

communicate expectations for student learning. Students and parents mentioned that STaR teachers help students keep abreast of upcoming events and due dates. Students may visit other classrooms during the STaR period for reteaching. Students felt STaR allowed them not only to build positive relationships with teachers but also with each other, stating that STaR gives them opportunities to get to know peers with whom they would not ordinarily communicate with during the day. Parents mentioned the value of STaR and guidance counselors in helping students set goals for school and post-secondary education.

The Student Government's Raising Student Voices and Participation program allows students to have a voice in their school's improvement. Students involved in RSVP stated that teachers and administrators of the school "set a good example" of leadership for them. The committee reviews issues of the student body, comes up with possible solutions, and presents them to the administration. This collaboration helps students learn about effective citizenry.

Several avenues exist to relay the school's expectations for learning. Prior to the freshman year parents and eighth grade students are invited to a panel discussion consisting of students, teachers, and counselors to promote enrollment in honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes. Upon entering the high school students and parents attend Orientation where guidelines are explained to parents and students. They sign a document that says they have received and understand the expectations for behavior and learning set forth for students. The Early College program shares expectations with both students and parents. Though the alternative school (CARE) is housed in a separate building, one parent who had children in CG and CARE felt that the communication strengths extend equally to that program. CARE's success with high expectations and resulting student graduation rate was shared with the QAR team.

The school invites local business managers to contribute to the school's efforts and business representatives commend the school's readiness and enthusiasm in accepting offers of support to the school. Some teachers have created project-based learning opportunities with business involvement; however, far more can be done to discover real needs in the community for students to address. Parents suggested that even more could be done to garner community support for educational goals through community partnerships.

CGHS attempts to foster collaboration with the community to support student learning as well. The school partners with local businesses and organizations to provide students with opportunities for job shadowing and community service (Junior Day of Caring). State government workers have come into the school as guest speakers. Community organizations partner with school groups to help raise funds and encourage and support school organizations.

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and businesses support school functions and student requests. Parents feel that it is easy to volunteer at CGHS. Booster Clubs and parent groups are involved in many sports and other activities. Parents cite instances in which the school has welcomed their input in school policy and improvement including work with the grading scale, small learning communities, and school remodeling efforts.

The school provides meaningful and useful information about students and their performance. According to teachers, students, and parents, the most-used and perhaps most powerful tool of communication is Skyward. Skyward users receive school alerts, email between parents/teachers, look up lunch account balances, check attendance and grades, compare a student's vs. whole class performance, and receive messages about upcoming school events. Some parents and students expressed frustration that not all teachers maximize the potential benefits of this system. Students also engage in communicating successes and getting the word out about "who and what CGHS is" through the school newspaper, *The Trojaner*. Monthly school board meetings celebrate student successes in academics, athletics, and clubs.

Although the school's goals and improvement plans are available using the Center Grove website, discrepancies exist between information on the website and goals stated in the school's improvement plan.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The school and community are strongly committed to communication and community involvement.
- A wide variety of formal communication tools exist and stakeholders value and use these tools.
- All stakeholders have opportunities to build relationships with the school.
- Stakeholders expressed confidence in the school's support of student learning.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Review and update all school publications to ensure that current information is available.

Finding: Center Grove High School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Standard: The school establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Center Grove High School engages in a continuous process of school improvement as evidenced by the School Improvement Plan, including statements of vision, mission, and values, collections of student performance data, a school and community profile, a Professional Development Plan for teachers and an action plan to address weaknesses in student achievement.

However, the identified goal of improving reading comprehension was widely confused by many stakeholders as a general literacy goal and interventions were understood as goals. Therefore, interventions are unfocused, assessments are unspecific, and data does not provide concise information about the effects of the school's efforts to achieve the stated goal. In addition, because interventions and assessments are unfocused, data is difficult to gather, evaluate, apply, and communicate to stakeholders.

Many stakeholders are involved in the school improvement process. Parents, students, and community members serve on standards committees alongside teachers, all of whom selected a committee. Community and business representatives are knowledgeable about school programs and initiatives and they support students in their educational endeavors.

Student achievements are communicated through newsletters, Board recognition, the CGHS Academic Profile (brochure), and the school website. A data board is present in the Distance Learning room; this information could appear in more prominent and public locations.

A primary mode of professional development is Collaborative Content Teams, or CCTs. Teachers of common courses develop curricula, administer common assessments, analyze student results, and adjust instruction. Interviews suggest that some CCTs seem more focused on assessment data while others focus on identifying, testing, and evaluating successful instructional strategies. The school schedule and records of Prep Period Meetings indicate that these professional development activities are embedded within the teaching day.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The school provides ample and regular time within the teacher work day for a variety of professional development activities.
- Teachers may choose topics and methods of professional development.
- Collaboration among teachers is evident.
- Various stakeholders are involved in the school improvement process.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Clarify the school improvement goal and the relationship between the goal and interventions, including professional development.
- Collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to evaluate attainment of the school goal.

Finding: Center Grove High School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Conclusion

The commendations and required actions in this report are designed to focus the school on those areas that will have the greatest impact on student performance and school effectiveness. While powerful in potential, the commendations and required actions only have meaning when acted upon by the school. The strength of this report lies in the school's commitment to using the findings to continuously improve. The key is action. The school is encouraged to use the report as a call to action, a tool to sustain momentum in the ongoing process of continuous improvement.

The team identified required actions for improvement that the school will need to address. Following this review, the school will be required to submit a progress report summarizing its progress toward addressing the team's required actions.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to the School Administration, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for their hospitality throughout the visit. The team wishes the school and its students much success in the quest for excellence through NCA-CASI-IN accreditation with AdvancED.

Appendix

Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Ms. Annetta Petty, Chair (Noblesville High School)
- Mrs. Rochell Reberger, Vice Chair (Northview High School)
- Mr. David Arrell, Team Member (Christian Academy of Indiana)
- Mr. Lee Dabagia, Team Member (Michigan City Area Schools Corp)
- Ms. Angelique Jacobson, Team Member (Morton Senior High School)
- Mrs. Bethann Strodel, Team Member (Reitz Memorial High School)

AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools

The AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools are comprehensive statements of quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness. As schools reach higher levels of implementation of the standards, they will have a greater capacity to support ever-increasing student performance and organizational effectiveness. Each of the seven standards listed below has corresponding indicators and impact statements which can be accessed at www.advanc-ed.org.

Vision and Purpose

The school establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school.

Governance and Leadership

The school provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and school effectiveness.

Teaching and Learning

The school provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

Documenting and Using Results

The school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.

Resource and Support Systems

The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The school establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student

performance.