

Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the NCA CASI Indiana State Office (NCA-CASI-IN), a division of AdvancED, visited the Maple Grove Elementary School in Bargersville, Indiana, United States on 09/30/2010 - 10/01/2010.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 1 member of the administrative team, 13 students, 8 parents, and 37 teachers. In addition, the nurse, the custodian, clerical staff, transportation staff and the counselor 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.

- **Strong administrative leadership embraces the vision of success and fosters a positive school climate for teaching and learning.**

Staff members verified that the principal is visible in the hallways and classrooms. Parents shared that the principal is easily accessible and good to work with. The principal fills in for classified staff positions in emergency situations. The principal is sensitive to teacher frustration based on the high number initiatives being implemented in the district. Staff members shared in interviews that the principal is compassionate, supportive, and fair, with high expectations for teaching and learning. The principal ensures celebrations are held for school accomplishments and works closely with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) to foster community.

A leader who projects a positive attitude and focuses on being successful can foster the same in the staff, students, and school community.

- **Maple Grove Elementary School provides an environment conducive to learning through a caring and collegial staff, protected instructional time, implementation of research-based instructional strategies, strong parental and community support, and a facility that is clean, orderly, and safe.**

Instructional staff members collaborate 45 minutes per week during Early Release (ER) time. One hundred minutes are given to language arts and 60 minutes are given to mathematics each day. Students understand behavior expectations aligned to the Parent Compact and STAR Report. Teachers provide interventions through Response to Instruction (RtI) to meet individual student learning needs. The facility is inviting and is monitored for cleanliness and safety, with locked doors during school hours. A strong PTO and community business partnership program supports student learning outside the curriculum.

When a school community removes barriers to learning and provides skilled staff members with appropriate resources, student academic, social, emotional, and physical growth is fostered so that together they can reach their vision of success.

- **The school has a strong school-wide focus on student literacy to improve reading, writing, and mathematics skills.**

The Balanced Literacy Framework and 6+1 Writing Traits programs are adopted. All classrooms have leveled libraries. Uninterrupted blocks of time are scheduled every day (100 minutes for language arts, 60 minutes for mathematics). Multiple assessments are used to monitor student performance and identify those who need interventions. Instructional strategies include a plethora of activities such as Reader Response Journal, Guided and Independent Reading, and Reader's Theater.

Providing concentrated time for instruction on reading, writing, and mathematics supported by research-based strategies, appropriate materials and feedback on progress facilitates learning, improves test scores, and builds a framework for building literacy skills that students will use now and as they move into the real world.

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.

- **Evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and strategies through collection and analysis of data.**

Based on information from teachers and the principal, data are generated through a variety of assessments and utilized to determine the need for individual student interventions. A plethora of strategies are implemented and students have improved test scores; however, teachers and school leaders are uncertain which interventions are facilitating the growth. No evidence is available to indicate that curriculum and/or strategies are evaluated.

If data are collected and analyzed to evaluate effectiveness of a program or practice, informed decisions can be made about the necessity for change to make certain that time, materials, and personnel are being used efficiently in proportion to the outcome.

- **Provide additional professional development aligned to utilization of the multimedia classroom.**

Information gained during interviews verifies that instructional staff members are trained on the basic use of available media but would like to gain more ideas on the capabilities of the technology. Staff members shared that some have made connections for creative use such as the "virtual classroom," while others have not been able to access more information. Some classrooms have had the technology for a period of time, while others have just received the technology, and two classrooms are yet to be fitted, causing various levels of implementation and knowledge.

Further training about the use and capabilities of the multimedia tools in the classroom will allow teachers to gain new ideas and strategies to provide interactive options for learning and integration of technology into the curriculum.

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.advanced.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.

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