

Report of the External Review for Milnor Public School

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Introduction to the External Review

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 student performance 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 includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, as well as evaluations of Student Performance, the Learning Environment, Stakeholder Feedback and Assurances.

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. Before implementation, the standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains a detailed evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, identification of Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards (if appropriate), and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review team.

The AdvancED Standards and Indicators are the first of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Using indicator-specific performance levels, the External Review Team evaluates the degree to which the institution meets each indicator on a scale of 1 to 4. The scores assigned to the indicators are averaged to arrive at a single score. This score, along with scores from evaluations of student performance and stakeholder feedback, will be used to determine the accreditation status of the institution.

Average Indicator Score for this Institution	2.42
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Standard 1: 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.

Purpose and direction are critical to successful institutions. A study conducted in 2010 by the London-based Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) reported that "in addition to improving performance, the research indicates that having a sense of shared purpose also improves employee engagement" and that "lack of understanding around purpose can lead to demotivation and emotional detachment, which in turn lead to a disengaged and dissatisfied workforce."

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

Standard 1			
The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.			
Indicator		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) • Observations • Interviews • Documentation or description of the process for creating the school's purpose including the role of stakeholders • Purpose statements - past and present 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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 	2.0
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 	3.0

Standard 2: The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.

Governance and leadership are key factors in raising institutional quality. Leaders, both local administrators and governing boards/authorities, are responsible for ensuring all learners achieve while also managing many other facets of an institution. Institutions that function effectively do so without tension between the governing board/authority, administrators, and educators and have established relationships of mutual respect and a shared vision (Feuerstein & Opfer, 1998). In a meta-analysis of educational institution leadership research, Leithwood and Sun (2012) found that leaders (school and governing boards/authority) can significantly "influence school conditions through their achievement of a shared vision and agreed-on goals for the organization, their high expectations and support of organizational members, and their practices that strengthen school culture and foster collaboration within the organization." With the increasing demands of accountability placed on institutional leaders, leaders who empower others need considerable autonomy and involve their communities to attain continuous improvement goals. Leaders who engage in such practices experience a greater level of success (Fink & Brayman, 2006). Similarly, governing boards/authorities that focus on policy-making are more likely to allow institutional leaders the autonomy to make decisions that impact teachers and students and are less responsive to politicization than boards/authorities that respond to vocal citizens (Greene, 1992).

AdvancED's experience gained through evaluation of best practices has indicated that a successful institution has leaders who are advocates for the institution's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The institution's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Standard 2			
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.			
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 • Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions • School handbooks 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation Report • Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest • List of assigned staff for compliance • Proof of legal counsel • Assurances, certifications • Interviews • Findings of internal and external reviews of compliance with laws, regulations, and policies • Communications about program regulations • Observations • Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest • Governing code of ethics 	3.0
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<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 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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 	3.0
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys • Survey responses • Involvement of stakeholders in a school improvement plan • Accreditation Report • Observations • Interviews 	3.0
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 • Implementation of Marshall staff evaluation model 	3.0

Standard 3: The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

A high-quality and effective educational system has services, practices, and curriculum that ensure teacher effectiveness. Research has shown that an effective teacher is a key factor for learners to achieve 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 that include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The institution's curriculum and instructional program should develop learners' skills that lead them to think about the world in complex ways (Conley, 2007) and prepare them to have knowledge that extends beyond the academic areas. In order to achieve these goals, teachers must have pedagogical skills as well as content knowledge (Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voxx, T., Jordan, A., Klusmann, U., Krauss, S., Nuebrand, M., & Tsai, Y., 2010). The acquisition and refinement of teachers' pedagogical skills occur most effectively through collaboration and professional development. These are a "necessary approach to improving teacher quality" (Colbert, J., Brown, R., Choi, S., & Thomas, S., 2008). According to Marks, Louis, and Printy (2002), staff members who engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective institutions "supports teachers by creating collaborative work environments." Institutional leaders have a responsibility to provide experiences, resources, and time for educators to engage in meaningful professional learning that promotes student learning and educator quality.

AdvancED has found that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning. The curriculum provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

Standard 3
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

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 • Learning expectations for different courses • Posted learning objectives • Course schedules • Enrollment patterns for various courses • Course descriptions • Observations 	2.0
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 • Observations • Surveys results • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Lesson plans aligned to the curriculum 	2.0
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 • Professional development focused on these strategies • Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource • Interviews • Observations • Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool • Findings from supervisor walk-thrus and observations • Surveys results • Accreditation Report • Interdisciplinary projects 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision and evaluation procedures • Peer or mentoring opportunities and interactions • Observations • Surveys results • Interviews • Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process • Accreditation Report 	2.0
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 • Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings • Survey results • Observations • Peer coaching guidelines and procedures • Interviews 	3.0
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 • Teacher webpages 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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 • Observations • Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff • Personnel manuals with information related to new hires including mentoring, coaching, and induction practices • Interviews • State funded new teacher mentoring program. 	2.0
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"> • Observations • Survey results • Interviews • Volunteer program with variety of options for participation • 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 	3.0
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 • Observations • Master schedule with time for formal adult advocate structure 	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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 • Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting 	2.0
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 • Accreditation Report • Observations 	2.0
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 	2.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. Administration and staff collaborate in professional development activities that focus on improving teaching and learning to meet school improvement goals.

3.5

The professional development activities as described in the school improvement plan and substantiated by staff interviews indicate a school-wide approach for addressing professional development needs. Collaboration is evident by scheduled book studies twice a month for all K-12 staff members. Book studies have included discussions on *The Fundamental Five* by Cain and Laird and *What Great Teachers do differently: Seventeen Things That Matter Most* by Whitaker. On alternate weeks, elementary teachers review and analyze assessment data. Plans are in place for the 2014-15 school year to schedule three half-days of professional development to discuss ways to improve curriculum design using strategies from Wiggins and McTighe's book, *Understanding by Design*. Thirteen staff members have attended the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) training in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The activities of the professional development plan are directly linked to the school system's goals to improve curriculum and instructional practice. A professional development environment is being developed to provide all staff members the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills in order to meet the school system's goals.

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

1. Develop and implement a formal structure to ensure that every student has at least one adult advocate that supports their educational experience.

3.9

While the school does not have a formal structure, the school has many components in place to provide support for students. Class sizes are small which allows classroom teachers time to know their students' strengths and areas of concern. There is a full-time counselor for students K-12 and there is a referral system in place for identification of need and intervention of services for students. The implementation of a formal structure will ensure that every student has an adult advocate.

Standard 4: The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Institutions, regardless of their size, need access to sufficient resources and systems of support to be able to engage in sustained and meaningful efforts that result in a continuous improvement cycle. Indeed, a study conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Pan, D., Rudo, Z., Schneider, C., & Smith-Hansen, L., 2003) "demonstrated a strong relationship between resources and student success... both the level of resources and their explicit allocation seem to affect educational outcomes."

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in the 30,000 institutions in the AdvancED network that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, meets special needs, and complies with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The institution provides a safe learning environment for students and staff. The institution provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff members to improve their effectiveness. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4			
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.			
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 	2.0
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 • Observations • School calendar 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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"> • 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 	3.0
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 	1.0
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 • Observations • Assessments to inform development of technology plan • Survey results • Policies relative to technology use • Interviews 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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 • 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 • Observations 	2.0
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 • Observations • Accreditation Report • Survey results • Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning • Description of IEP process • Interviews • Description of referral process 	3.0

Powerful Practices**Indicator**

1. The school system provides a clean, safe, and healthy environment for students, staff and community.

4.3

Based on observations and interviews, the team confirms that the school is clean and in good repair. All inspection reports have been positive. Students feel safe at school based on parent and student interviews. The elementary school has received a fresh fruit and vegetable grant. Students receive fresh fruit and vegetables three times per week. During the past school year, the school system received the Healthier US Gold School Award. Every morning the elementary students participate in a half-hour activity in the gymnasium led by paraprofessionals with assistance from high school students. This activity is conducted before regular school hours.

One of the school system's improvement goals is engaging students in wellness activities to promote a healthy lifestyle. Feeling safe at school, eating healthy meals, and physical activity can have a positive impact on academic achievement. This improvement goal has measureable objectives and appropriate activities to accomplish its purpose.

2. The school system has a technology plan in place to support the school's teaching, learning and operational needs.

4.5

There is a coordinated effort by administration and staff to implement the use of iPads for every student in grades nine through twelve in the fall of 2014. The technology plan addresses staffing needs, purchase of iPads and training of staff. Elementary and high school staff member will have an opportunity to visit a neighboring school this school year to observe the use of iPads in the classroom. Plans are to have a full-time technology coordinator on staff for the 2014-15 school year.

Implementing iPads for instructional purposes will provide staff and students a more diverse method for delivering instruction and engaging students for learning. The iPads will be used to further the district goal of improving critical thinking along with promoting creativity, collaboration, and student-centered learning environment.

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

1. Adopt a school-wide behavior and discipline plan for K-12 students to provide the school system with consistent guidelines for behavior.

4.6

Inconsistencies in consequences from incidents in classrooms, on the bus, and playground were concerns expressed by parents, students, and staff. Implementing a consistent K-12 behavior and discipline process will provide uniform and consistent expectations and consequences. Communicating expectations and consequences among stakeholders will make for an effective implementation of the program.

A school-wide behavior and discipline plan will provide the implementation of proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting student behaviors resulting in positive learning environments and improved students achievement.

Standard 5: 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.

Systems with strong improvement processes move beyond anxiety about the current reality and focus on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, i.e., data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, and Wohlstetter (2007) from the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California indicated that data can shed light on existing areas of strength and weakness and also guide improvement strategies in a systematic and strategic manner (Dembosky, J., Pane, J., Barney, H., & Christina, R., 2005). The study also identified six key strategies that performance-driven systems use: (1) building a foundation for data-driven decision making, (2) establishing a culture of data use and continuous improvement, (3) investing in an information management system, (4) selecting the right data, (5) building institutional capacity for data-driven decision making, and (6) analyzing and acting on data to improve performance. Other research studies, though largely without comparison groups, suggested that data-driven decision making has the potential to increase student performance (Alwin, 2002; Doyle, 2003; Lafee, 2002; McIntire, 2002).

Through ongoing evaluation of educational institutions, AdvancED has found that a successful institution uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine strategies to improve student performance. The institution implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained, and the institution demonstrates progress in improving student performance and institution effectiveness.

Standard 5			
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.			
Indicator		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 • Observations • 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 	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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 • Observations • List of data sources related to student learning, instruction, program effectiveness, and conditions that support learning • Accreditation Report 	2.0
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Documentation of attendance and training related to data use • Survey results • Observations • Accreditation Report 	2.0
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 • Accreditation Report • Evidence of student readiness for the next level • Evidence of student growth • Observations • Evidence of student success at the next level • Interviews 	2.0
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 • Minutes of board meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals • Survey results • Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals • Accreditation Report • Interviews 	2.0

Opportunities for Improvement**Indicator**

1. Plan for and implement staff training in the use of SLDS (State Longitudinal Data Study) for providing staff with a tool for organizing and analyzing student assessment data.

5.3

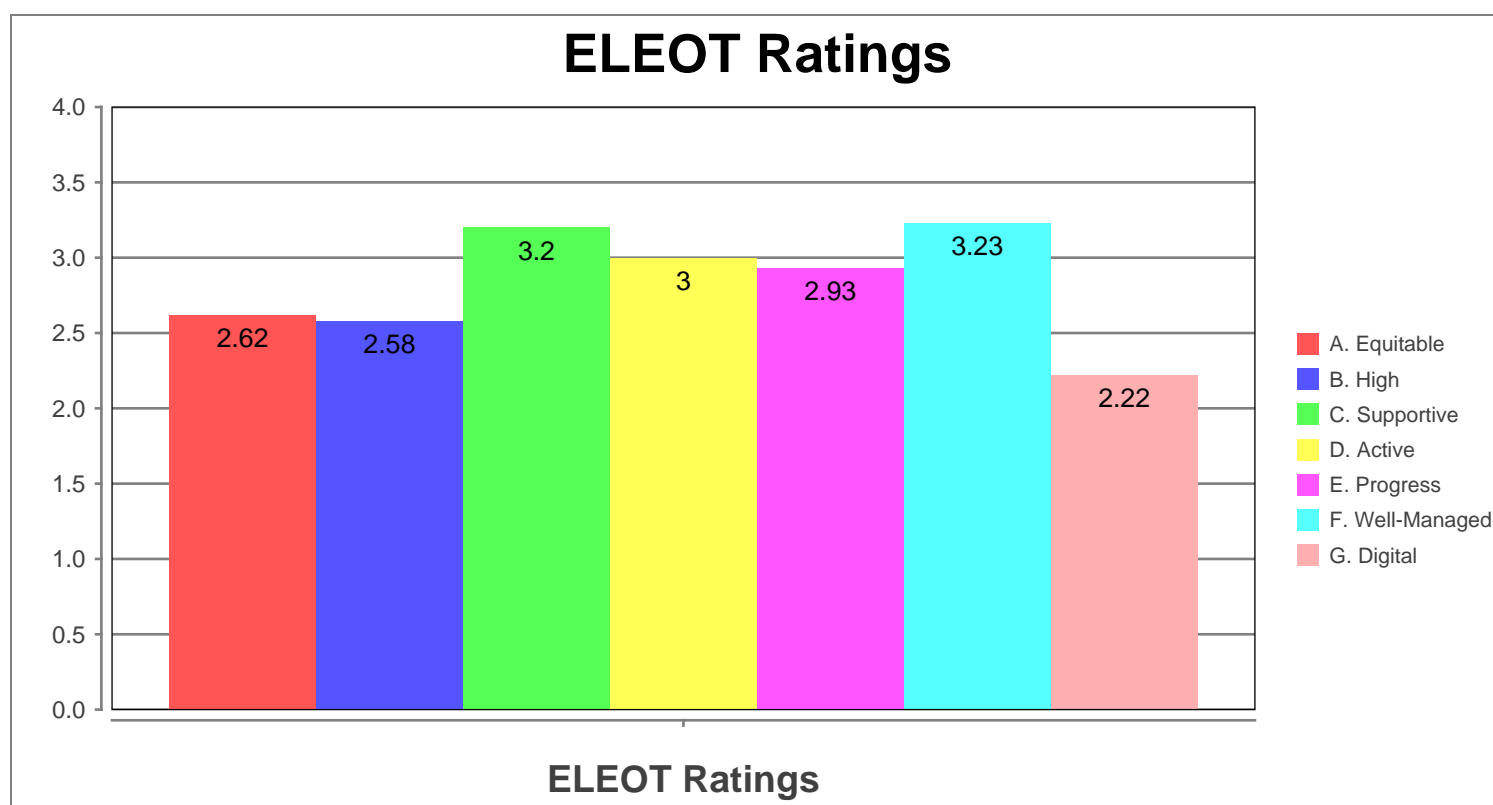
The school system does not have access to an assessment data warehouse that would provide a reporting system for student achievement by individual, classroom or curriculum area. Administration and staff members expressed the need to have the assessment data organized so they could use the information for instructional and intervention purposes.

Use of longitudinal assessment data in the short term can be used to document student progress, identify interventions, and determine teaching strategies. In the long term, the information can be used to improve organizational effectiveness by providing the school system with data for evaluating programs, professional development and/or proposing new initiatives.

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 four-point scale. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in ELEOT.



Student Performance

Student Performance on assessments is the second of three primary areas of evaluation for AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. Institutions are asked to collect and analyze student performance data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the assessments used by the institution, the degree to which the institution properly administered the assessments, analyzed and acted on the results, and the overall performance of students using a set of rubrics. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Student Performance Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Assessment Quality	4.0
Test Administration	4.0
Quality of Learning	3.0
Equity of Learning	2.0

Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys are directly correlated to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators; they provide not only direct information about stakeholder satisfaction but also become a source of data for triangulation by the External Review Team as it evaluates indicators.

Institutions are asked to collect and analyze stakeholder feedback data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the administration of the surveys by institution and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results. The scale is from 1 (low performing) to 4 (high performing). Results of that evaluation are reported below.

Stakeholder Feedback Evaluation	
Evaluative Criteria	Performance Level
Questionnaire Administration	3.0
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.0

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.

A five member External Review team conducted an on-site AdvancED visitation from Monday evening through Wednesday, April 24-26, 2014. Three team members have elementary education background and two team members have experience at the high school level.

During off-site and on-site review sessions, the External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. Most of the artifacts and evidence were provided electronically and in a timely manner. It was evident that the school was well prepared for the external team review as demonstrated by their leadership and commitment to the accreditation process.

The team interviewed the superintendent, building principals, all staff members in two groups (elementary and high school settings), twelve parents, 25 students, food service, and office staff. A school board member attended one of the parent interview sessions. The team conducted twelve formal observations using the Educational Learning Environment Observation Tool (ELEOT) along with informal classroom observations.

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 school has developed a thorough school improvement plan that focuses on developing critical thinking skills, student and staff wellness, and professional development. From observations and interviews, it was determined that the school improvement plan is being implemented throughout the school. Developing critical thinking skills is being addressed through implementation of their technology plan (staff and student use of iPads for teaching and learning). Professional development activities include regularly scheduled book studies for both elementary and high school staff and data analysis discussion at the elementary level. Staff members have attended training in the Professional Learning Community (PLC) concept. The school improvement plan outlines strategies to improve student and staff wellness through the food service program and physical fitness activities.

The team focused on five areas regarding opportunities for improvement and required action. Even through the school system had identified these areas of concern, the team believed it was important to verify the school's need in these areas and give support to their decisions. The school system has a strong structure in place to address the opportunities for improvement and required actions. By focusing on these areas [K-12 discipline program, implementation of State-Wide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS), analyzing data to determine support service staffing, and media center facility/personnel], the school system can enhance teaching and learning as it works towards meeting the purpose and direction of the district.

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.

During the on-site review, team members evaluated the learning environment by observing twelve classrooms using the ELEOT tool. Well-managed classrooms, supportive learning, and active learning environments were the strengths identified through the observations. This was supported by teacher, student, and parent interviews. The two lowest areas were digital learning and high expectations environments. Technology was in use in classrooms, but mainly by the classroom teachers and the team did not observe students using digital tools for their learning.

The school system provides educational services to the Sundale Colony. The colony is located north of Milnor and has an enrollment of forty-two students K-10. One team member informally observed two of the three classrooms. Three parents and two students were interviewed. One of the three classroom teachers was also interviewed. Starting two years ago, students completing eighth grade have had the opportunity to take on-line coursework as ninth and tenth graders. This was a positive change according to the parents and students interviewed. One class in North Dakota Studies is also offered to ninth and tenth grade students in a group setting. From the interviews and observations, there is a high level of satisfaction regarding the educational services provided to the students. One staff member suggested that in addition to art instruction and checking out library books at the Milnor School, the students also have time to work on iPads. Title I services are provided on-site for qualified students. The school system did not make AYP during 2011-12 school year based on the ELL population at Sundale. Training was provided to the staff members and AYP was met the following school year for the ELL population.

The school has a unique connection to the community. A community center is attached to the school that includes a gymnasium, community library, and a lobby/kitchen area. The facility is utilized by both the community and school for a number of activities. During the visit, the team observed an art/music open house for parents. Participation during the event indicates good support by parents for their children's activities. The school system employs a full-time art instructor for students in grades K-12 which is greatly appreciated by students, staff, and parents.

The AdvancED team would like to thank Ms. Becky Buckhouse and Mr. Bill Pribula for their preparation for and accommodations during the team visit. The team thanks Superintendent Aberle, staff members and students for their hospitality. The school was well prepared for the team visit. Stakeholders were open and honest with team members in interviews and conversations.

The team commends Milnor's administration and staff for their effort in developing a school improvement plan directed at carrying out its purpose and direction statements.

In the past, accreditation reviews resulted in an accreditation recommendation on status. Labels such as advised, warned, probation, or all clear were used to describe the status of an institution relative to the criteria. Beginning with school year, 2013-14, AdvancED is introducing a new framework to describe the result of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduces an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ). The IEQ is comprised of three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; and 3) use of resources to support and optimize learning. Therefore, your institution will no longer receive an

accreditation status. Instead, your institution will be accredited with an IEQ score. In the case where an institution is failing to meet established criteria, the accreditation will be under review thereby requiring frequent monitoring.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and Indicators; the Analysis of Student Performance; and the Engagement and Involvement of Stakeholders. Within each domain institutions will be able to connect to the individual performance levels that are applied in support of the AdvancED Standards and evaluative criteria. Within the performance levels are detailed descriptors that can be a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Required Action as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected Indicator.

The IEQ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. Your institution's IEQ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Your actions for improvement that have a positive impact will be reflected in your IEQ score.

IEQ Institutional Score: 254

Teaching and Learning Impact: 238
(Standards 3 and 5, Student Performance Criteria)

Leadership Capacity: 291
(Standards 1 and 2, Stakeholder Feedback Criteria)

Resource Utilization: 243
(Standard 4)

The External Review Team recommends that Milnor Public School and Sundale Colony School be accredited by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission for a five-year term of accreditation.

Required Action

1. Analyze assessment data on student performance to ensure appropriate implementation of interventions and instructional strategies so students can be successful at all levels K-12.

Related Indicator or Assurance: 3.6

Description:

Based on staff interviews and current Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), and American College Testing (ACT) scores in reading, there appears to be a need for additional support services for students. There is one full-time Title I teacher and half-time paraprofessional providing services to student K-6. The Title I teacher and paraprofessional spend one half day at the Sundale Colony. By analyzing assessment data, the school can determine appropriate instructional and intervention strategies that will support and improve student learning.

2. Coordinate the restructuring of instructional staffing to provide elementary students access to qualified media center personnel.

Related Indicator or Assurance: 4.4

Description:

Elementary students do not receive any media center instruction from qualified media center personnel. Instruction in skill development and research strategies is dependent on classroom teachers. Interviews with staff members indicate a need for qualified personnel to promote information literacy and instruction for locating, evaluating, and organizing information. Having a scheduled time for elementary students in a centralized and automated media center will provide students opportunities to learn library skills and access to media and informational resources. Learning library skills and access to informational resources are essential for students to be successful in the 21st Century.

3. Establish a central media center for the elementary students and an automated media center K-12 to provide all students and staff the resources to meet learning expectations..

Related Indicator or Assurance: 4.4

Description:

At the present time, there is no central library for elementary students. There are classroom libraries that vary in number and variety of books and resources. There is a community library attached to the school but is staffed at limited times during the school day. There is a plan in place to establish an elementary library within the high school library. Interviews with both parents and staff indicate a need to have a center library for the students.

The present high school library is not automated which limits the efficiency of students and staff access to a

wide range of media and informational resources. There is a plan in place to implement an automated system K-12. A more efficient system would be beneficial in providing students with access to non-fiction text and other resources essential to meet learning expectations.

Part III: Addenda

The External Review Team

Lead Evaluator:

Mr. Wayne Denault

Team Member:

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Mrs. Kelly Irene Larson

Mrs. Lavonne Ptacek

Mrs. Anna Sell

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 addressing 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 appropriate state, national, and/or international levels 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 that confers accreditation 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, and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form AdvancED: one strong, unified organization dedicated to education quality. In 2011, the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) that was founded in 1917 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.

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

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