Report of the
External Review
for
Al Dhafra Private School - Abu Dhabi

P.O. Box 25801
Musaffah ME09, Mohamed
Bin Zayed City

Abu Dhabi, 01,
AE

Mr. Daniel Bokelman, Principal

Date: February 16, 2014 - February 18, 2014

Table of Contents

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 observations about Student Performance, the Learning Environment, and Stakeholder Feedback.

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	2.53

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.	• Minutes from meetings related to development of the school's purpose • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Documentation or description of the process for creating the school's purpose including the role of stakeholders • Purpose statements - past and present	2.0
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.	• Interviews • Accreditation Report • Observations • The school's statement of purpose	2.0
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	• Interviews • Observations • The school data profile • Accreditation Report • The school continuous improvement plan	2.0

Opportunities for Improvement   *Indicator*

1. Implement a process that involves a wider spectrum of stakeholders in the development and implementation of the school's development plan.   1.3

   The External Review Team found through interviews and document review that the school's improvement process is highly influenced by the results provided by the Abu Dhabi Education Council's (ADEC) inspections. The development of the specifics for the school development plan was completed primarily by the principal and senior leadership team. Teachers indicated that they are aware of the plan, but are generally passive participants in it. While the broad outline of the plan was established by ADEC, the school is charged with the specific development and implementation. Review of the plan showed that it has measurable goals and the requisite action planning components such as timelines and budgets. The school has considerable raw and compiled data on student performance along with some demographic and stakeholder perception data. The team found that data analysis and resultant action were not documented. Interviews also revealed that any data analysis was generally confined to the senior leadership team. In its presentation to the team, the school recognized that the school's improvement process needed to be more systematic and involve a broader range of stakeholders, especially staff.

   The involvement of more stakeholders in the continuous improvement process will enhance the school development plan and increase stakeholder commitment to it.

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.	• Student handbooks • Governing body policies, procedures, and practices • Staff handbooks • Accreditation Report • Interviews • School handbooks	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	• Interviews • Accreditation Report • Governing body minutes relating to training • Assurances, certifications • Governing body training plan • 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.	• Roles and responsibilities of school leadership • School improvement plan developed by the school • Observations • Accreditation Report • Maintenance of consistent academic oversight, planning, and resource allocation • Interviews • Agendas and minutes of meetings	4.0
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	• Observations • Examples of collaboration and shared leadership • Survey results • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Examples of decisions in support of the school's continuous improvement plan	2.0
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	• Minutes from meetings with stakeholders • Observations • Copies of surveys or screen shots from online surveys • Accreditation Report • Survey responses • Interviews	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	• Observations • 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 • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Representative supervision and evaluation reports	3.0

Powerful Practices   Indicator

1. The governing board and school administration have clearly defined roles and   2.3
    responsibilities that allow for the efficient and effective operation of the school.

    The governing board has adopted the stringent policies of the Abu Dhabi Education
    Council (ADEC) in regard to board composition, policies, and practices. It was apparent
    from interviews with staff and leadership that the principal and the senior leadership team
    are in charge of and implement the school's programs and manage the daily operation of
    the school. A review of the school's Accreditation Report, a review of the governing
    board's policies, and interviews with the principal revealed that the governing board
    consists of seven members chaired by the school's owner. Five of the current members
    will finish their term of service in June 2014, having completed one year of service. The
    owner is a member of the governing board and one family member also serves. Other
    stakeholder groups represented include a parent representative and a school
    representative. The principal is a non-voting member of the Board and attends all
    meetings. Plans are underway for the recruitment of new members. The new board will
    have as a primary task the continuing review of current roles and responsibilities to ensure
    that there remains a clear distinction between the roles of the board and administration.
    The governing board meets annually and one training session on roles and responsibilities
    has been provided. Interviews with the school administration further revealed that there is
    mutual respect and support between the governing board and the administration. This
    supportive relationship has enabled the school to effectively address the needs of the
    school as it has built and moved into the new school building.

    Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the administration and the governing board
    allows the school to enhance its operational efficiency and effectiveness.

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.	• Accreditation Report • Survey results • Lesson plans • Interviews • Observations • Posted learning objectives • Course schedules	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
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.	• Interviews • Observations • Accreditation Report • Surveys results • Products – scope and sequence, curriculum maps	2.0
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	• Teacher evaluation criteria • Professional development focused on these strategies • Examples of teacher use of technology as an instructional resource • Examples of student use of technology as a learning tool • Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge • Findings from supervisor walk-thrus and observations • Surveys results • Observations • Accreditation Report • Interviews	2.0
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	• Documentation of collection of lesson plans and grade books • Observations • Supervision and evaluation procedures • Interviews • Surveys results • Examples of improvements to instructional practices resulting from the evaluation process • Administrative classroom observation protocols and logs • Accreditation Report	3.0
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	• Survey results • Observations • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Examples of improvements to content and instructional practice resulting from collaboration	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	• Survey results • Interviews • Observations • Accreditation Report • Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning	2.0
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	• Observations • Accreditation Report • Interviews	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.	• Accreditation Report • Survey results • 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 • Interviews	4.0
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.	• Interviews • Accreditation Report	2.0
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.	• Accreditation Report • Evaluation process for grading and reporting practices • Interviews • Sample report cards for each grade level and for all courses • Sample communications to stakeholders about grading and reporting • Policies, processes, and procedures on grading and reporting	3.0
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	• Observations • Interviews • Accreditation Report	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	• List of learning support services and student population served by such services • Accreditation Report • Interviews	2.0

Powerful Practices   *Indicator*

1. The school effectively uses a variety of methods to communicate with parents about individual student progress.   3.8

   The External Review Team noted that the school utilizes multiple methods to communicate with parents about student learning and progress. The team observed that the school effectively uses digital tools to facilitate two way communications with parents. The school has in place a text messaging system for quick and immediate communications with parents including attendance and tardiness issues. The school's management system has a password-protected parent portal that is updated frequently. It provides parents with weekly lesson plans, student grades, and other information. Also, the school's website is used to facilitate email communications from and to parents. Additionally, the elementary grades use a "communications book" on a daily basis for communication. Interviews with parents and teachers also revealed use of traditional communication protocols such as conferences, formal and informal meetings, and activities that include parents such as book fairs, competitions, and coffee days. Parent interviews showed that parents are well-pleased with the school's communication. Moreover, student interviews affirmed that they are able to communicate with the school leadership through their Student Council representatives.

   Effective and reciprocal communication between parents and school staff is a vital component that positively impacts student learning and fosters parental support for the school and its staff.

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.	• School budgets for the last three years • Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement and retention of professional and support staff • Accreditation Report • Assessments of staffing needs • Interviews	3.0
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	• Accreditation Report • Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources • School schedule • Interviews	2.0

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.	• Observations • Interviews • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • 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.	• Accreditation Report • Budget related to media and information resource acquisition • Interviews • Observations	2.0
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	• Interviews • Observations • Accreditation Report	2.0
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	• Interviews • Student assessment system for identifying student needs • Accreditation Report • Observations • Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education • List of support services available to students	2.0
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	• Accreditation Report • Interviews • Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning • Observations • Description of referral process	2.0

Powerful Practices	*Indicator*

1. The school is a well-maintained and well-equipped facility that provides a safe and clean environment conducive to learning. | 4.3

The school is a new purpose-built facility that is designed for up to 2000 students. It contains clearly designated and secured areas for kindergarten, elementary, and secondary students as well as well-equipped computer laboratories, science laboratories, office spaces for staff, a bus parking and loading space, and swimming pools. The building is enclosed by a security fence and the entries are monitored very closely by a third party security firm. The school utilizes the ADEC policies, procedures, and expectations for school maintenance, health, and safety.

The team noted during the student tour and subsequent observations that the school's activity, laboratory, classroom, and hallways are well-equipped with safety equipment. Signs regarding safety precautions and emergency procedures are clearly posted throughout the building. Records, photos, and interviews confirm that safety drills are conducted. The school has an active environment, health, and safety committee. The student council also has a role in promoting health and safety throughout the building. Interviews with students, parents, and staff revealed a clear pride in their school's appearance. The team observed good student and staff use of trash containers. The school has an environmental awareness program and designates one day each week as a no-paper use day. The team observed that there are many health and safety checklists posted, used, and monitored throughout the facility. Space use is optimized. The roof areas are used for morning assemblies and play activities. The basement has space for bus parking and loading, teacher parking, a dividable indoor gymnasium space, storage areas, and a large swimming pool. Additionally, the team noted that the school has attractive corridors and classrooms, an abundance of technological resources, spacious halls and media centers, six well-equipped science labs, five computer labs, and two swimming pools.

Attractive, safe, and well-maintained facilities provide the conditions for improved student learning as well as being a source of school pride.

Opportunities for Improvement	*Indicator*

1. Increase the amount, and accessibility of media and information resources to support the educational program for students and staff. | 4.4

Student interviews and a perusal of artifacts revealed that the library/media collection is limited and is currently available only in the girl's section. The school library has 6,700 items of printed material, most of which do not meet the expectations and needs of students in upper grades. The school has well-equipped computer laboratories, but students and teachers report that they are not used much for research and information gathering. The team observed that the smart boards were vastly under-utilized and could be a more robust resource for classroom media. While there are limited e-book resources in the IGCSE section of the high school, teachers and students expressed a need for more e-books and other information resources. Classroom observations showed limited use of resources and media in the instructional program.

The ready availability of media and information resources are essential for engaging students in student-centered learning inside and outside the classroom.

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.	• Interviews • Accreditation Report • Documentation or description of evaluation tools/protocols • Survey results • 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	2.0

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.	• Accreditation Report • Interviews • Observations	2.0
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	• Interviews • Accreditation Report	1.0
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.	• Observations • Interviews • Evidence of student readiness for the next level • Evidence of student growth • Accreditation Report • Evidence of student success at the next level	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.	• Accreditation Report • Interviews	2.0

Opportunities for Improvement	*Indicator*

1. Implement a continuous, systematic process for school staff to compile, analyze, and use data to improve student performance and school effectiveness.   **5.2**

   The team found that the school has a variety of assessment results especially in regard to student performance. The school has in place a system for grading and reporting the results of quizzes and exams and other classroom-based assessments for individual students. According to staff interviews, the system works well to assess individual student achievement relative to classroom-based work. Teachers primarily review data regarding individual students and their own classes. There is no evidence of a systematic method for collecting, disaggregating, and analyzing the results of student learning across class sections of the same course, by subject, by grade level, or by each classroom by teachers and staff. The team found evidence of a process to identify students who would benefit from special services to meet their needs. The team found some trend data on student learning, but very little on stakeholder satisfaction or program effectiveness. Summary trend data for the International General Certificate for Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) are available and charted for several years, but there is no evidence of using data to identify curricular strengths and areas for improvement. Data on school effectiveness measures is sparse and has not been used to guide program improvement. Additionally, no evidence was found that teaching staff utilize data to develop or evaluate improvement initiatives regarding student learning, program effectiveness, or organizational performance.

   A systematic process for collecting, analyzing, and using data from a variety of assessments strengthens the school's efforts to improve student learning and the conditions within the school that support learning.

2. Communicate with stakeholders the aggregated results of classroom-based and standardized assessment and stakeholder satisfaction surveys.   **5.5**

   Interviews and discussions with stakeholders indicated that summary or aggregated data results are not shared with them. The school collects and assembles a rich quantity of data about student performance. There is somewhat less data on school demographics, stakeholder perceptions, and school effectiveness measures While parents, staff, and students receive the results of classroom and standardized assessment on an individual student basis, there is little or no dissemination of aggregated results that provide information and context for stakeholders about overall school academic performance. Likewise, the results of recent stakeholder perception surveys have not been shared with the stakeholders.

   Communicating the results of significant summary data not only informs stakeholders, but also helps create a sense of responsibility for the school's success.

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

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 program has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all children.			
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.	• Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement, and retention of professional and support staff • Interviews • Observations • Accreditation Report • School budgets for the last three years • Staff License/certification/qualifications • Staff compensations/benefits • Professional and support staff/child ratios	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.2	The school employs qualified Administrators/Directors for each administrative position to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	- Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement, and retention of professional and support staff - Accreditation Report - Observations - Interviews - Staff compensations/benefits	2.0
4.3	The school employs qualified teachers for each professional teaching position to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	- Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement, and retention of professional and support staff - Interviews - Observations - Staff License/certification/qualifications - Staff compensations/benefits - Accreditation Report	2.0
4.4	The school employs qualified assistant teachers for each position to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	- Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement, and retention of professional and support staff - Interviews - Staff License/certification/qualifications - Observations - Staff compensations/benefits - Personnel evaluation forms - Accreditation Report	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.5	The school maintains a class-size and ratio of young children to teachers that support the care and developmentally appropriate learning, growth, and development of young children.	• Policies, processes, procedures and other documentation related to the hiring, placement, and retention of professional and support staff • Interviews • Stakeholder results • Staff compensations/benefits • Accreditation Report • Staff to student ratio records	4.0
4.6	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the early learning school.	• Equipment purchasing and maintenance • Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources • School schedule • Interviews • Alignment of budget with school purpose and direction • School calendar • Accreditation Report • Itemed/audited budget	3.0
4.7	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all young children and staff.	• Written health and safety policies • Interviews • Facilities and equipment maintenance records and schedules • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • Building inspections record • Accreditation Report • Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills and evacuation routes • System for maintenance requests	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.8	The school regularly assesses and maintains all indoor spaces to be accessible to all young children and adults; ventilated, lighted, and temperature-controlled; and the spaces that primarily serve each age-group of young children have direct access to bathroom/washing facilities, sinks, and drinking water.	• Written health and safety policies • Interviews • Observations • Facilities and equipment maintenance records and schedules • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • Accreditation Report • Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills and evacuation routes • System for maintenance requests	4.0
4.9	Each classroom/learning space has sufficient usable floor space and size to support the creativity and developmentally appropriate learning, growth, and development of young children; is highly functional for program delivery; and encourages positive staff-to-child relationships.	• Written health and safety policies • Observations • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills and evacuation routes • System for maintenance requests	3.0
4.10	Each classroom/learning space has furniture, equipment, and resources that are safe, clean, well maintained, adaptive, accessible, and developmentally appropriate for the age-group of young children they directly serve; are sufficient in number; and are organized in ways to support appropriate and effective implementation of the program.	• Accreditation Report • Observations • Interviews • Facilities and equipment maintenance records and schedules • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • System for maintenance requests	4.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.11	Indoor and outdoor equipment are safe, available to all young children, are developmentally appropriate for the age-group, have appropriate surfaces to support a variety of types of learning and play, and have impact material under all climbing equipment and swings.	• Written health and safety policies • Facilities and equipment maintenance records and schedules • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • Observations • Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills and evacuation routes • Accreditation Report • System for maintenance requests • Interviews	4.0
4.12	Each classroom/learning space has multiple learning/interest centers that are organized for independent use by young children, that support the learning activities of the instructional program and the creativity of young children, and that are well equipped with materials supportive of the purpose of each learning/interest center.	• Accreditation Report • Observations • Interviews • System for ordering/maintaining sufficient supplies	2.0
4.13	Each classroom/learning space provides all children with safe and comfortable/cozy areas to relax, rest, or sleep that are continuously supervised by adults at all times.	• Observations • System for ordering/maintaining sufficient supplies • Interviews • Accreditation Report	2.0
4.14	Children and school personnel use a range of interactive media and information resources that support the educational programs.	• Observations • Technology and interactive media inventory • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Data on media and information resources available to staff and children • Examples of interactive media and technology work such as digital portfolios, educational texting, artwork, audio and video recordings, etc.	2.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.15	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	• Family engagement networking plan • Evidence of central depository and data back-up mechanism • Technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure • Accreditation Report • Hardware and software inventory • Interviews • Observations • Policies relative to technology use • Security of information policies	3.0
4.16	Each classroom/learning space has displays that are used effectively as a learning tool, are developmentally appropriate for the age-group, attractively presented, appropriate in content, portray the current learning activities, and showcase children's work and creativity.	• Interviews • Accreditation Report • System for ordering/maintaining sufficient supplies • Observations • Displays pictures/photos	4.0
4.17	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of young children that are integral to the educational program.	• Special classes/activities for children with disabilities • Examples of child assessments • Assessment system for identifying children's needs • Accreditation Report • Intervention services referral • Observations • Interviews • Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education	2.0
4.18	Each child receives individual personal care by staff members who consistently promote the child's general well-being, nutrition, health, and safety.	• Handbooks, procedures • Observations • Facility/classroom design for storage space of personal items • Stakeholder communication forms • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Health inspection records	3.0

Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.19	Arrival and departure routines focus on the care and well-being of each child and encourage a daily exchange of family and school communications regarding the care, well-being, and educational progress of the child.	• Handbooks, procedures • Interviews • Accreditation Report • Observations • Stakeholder communication forms • Health inspection records	3.0
4.20	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, and educational referral needs of all students.	• Lists of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning • Accreditation Report • Observations • Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning • Interviews • Description of referral process	2.0
4.21	All children, parents, and staff experience an environment of reciprocal respect, trust, and open communication in a fair and just way, respecting the needs and characteristics of each individual, and promoting a sense of community, belonging, ownership, and pride.	• Handbooks, procedures • Observations • Interviews • Statement of principles • Accreditation Report • Stakeholder feedback results • Stakeholder communications forms	3.0
4.22	All indoor and outdoor spaces are free from hazards and dangerous circumstances for young children and adults, and adults actively remove and resolve hazardous conditions as they may occur.	• Observations • Facility and equipment specifications • Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements • Accident records and reports • Accreditation Report • Interviews • Safety handbooks, guidelines, procedures, expectations • Health inspection records	2.0

Powerful Practices   *Indicator*

1. The kindergarten department prominently and attractively displays children's work in all classrooms and hallways.   4.16

   During the tour of the school and all kindergarten classroom observations, team members noted the prominent and appropriate display of children's work in the hallways and inside classrooms. The rooms and hallways contain visually rich displays with age appropriate content that support and reinforce classroom learning. Most, if not all, of the children's artwork is posted. In addition, children's work related to classroom topics such as English and Arabic vocabulary, alphabet letters, vowels, writing their names, the seasons, etc. was posted so as to be seen easily. Informal interviews with kindergarten staff and leadership indicated that all posted work is changed every term. The team also noted that most other classrooms and hallways of the elementary and secondary school contained numerous displays of student work including examples of outstanding work.

   The display of children's work creates an environment that is conducive to learning and fosters the development of confident, self-directed learners.

Opportunities for Improvement   *Indicator*

1. Provide a safe, cozy, and comfortable space within the kindergarten department for students to rest or sleep when needed.   4.13
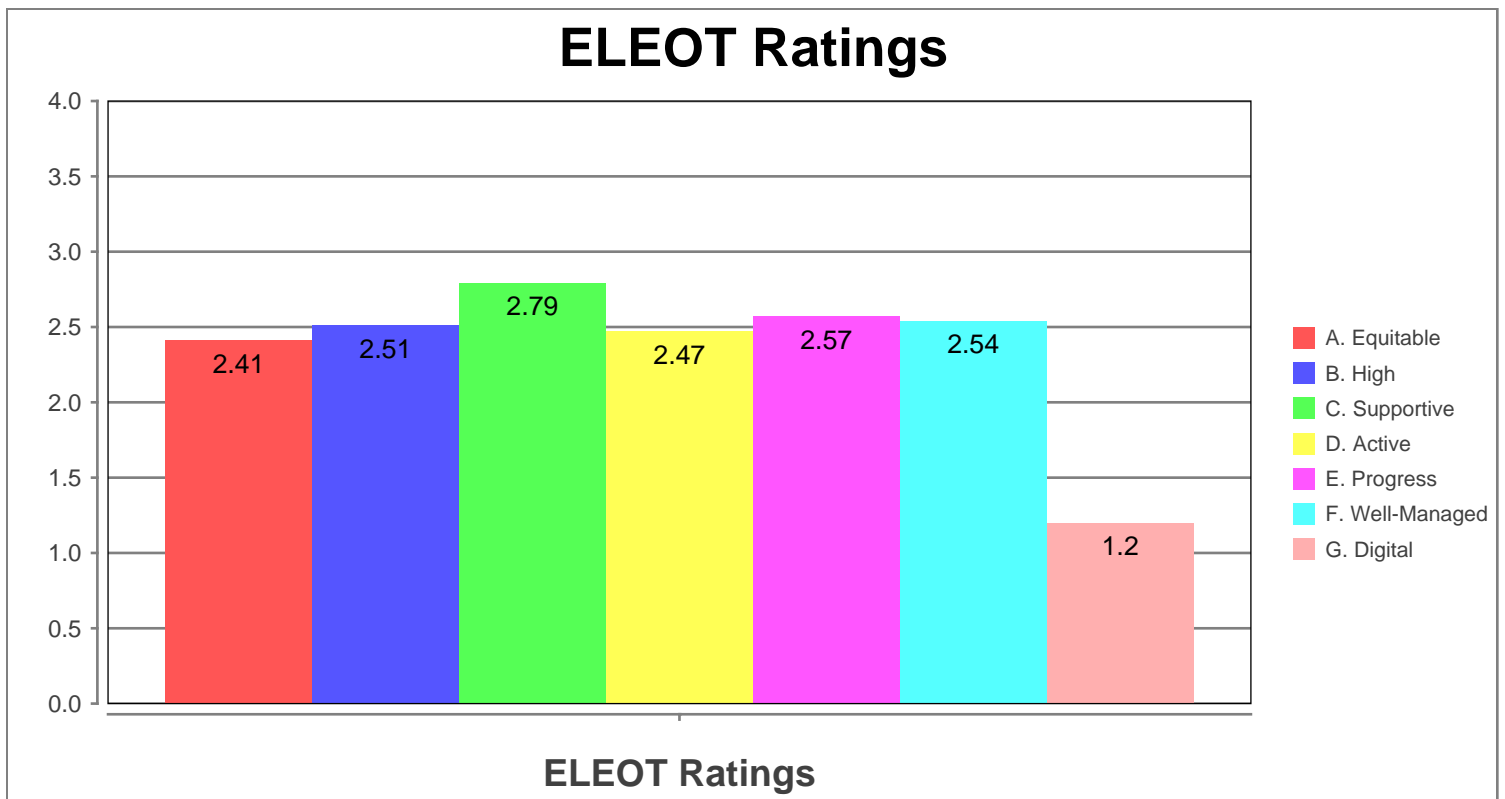
   The team observed that there was no designated space for the kindergarten children to relax or sleep, neither inside classrooms nor within the department. During a KG 1 classroom observation, an incident took place that has reaffirmed the need for a space for younger children to rest or sleep. A child fell asleep during class time. The teacher and the teacher aide did not wake him and he continued to sleep on his desk. Discussion with staff revealed that it was unclear to them what the policy or procedure was or should be regarding rest and relaxation. Review of class schedules did not indicate any specified periods for rest or relaxation.

   Attention to the rest, relaxation, and occasional sleep needs of kindergarten students will improve overall attention to learning.

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.

ELEOT Ratings

Rating	Category
2.41	A. Equitable
2.51	B. High
2.79	C. Supportive
2.47	D. Active
2.57	E. Progress
2.54	F. Well-Managed
1.2	G. Digital

ELEOT Ratings

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	2.0
Test Administration	4.0
Quality of Learning	3.0
Equity of Learning	3.0

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	4.0
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	2.0

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.

The External Review team visit began with the members' arrival in Abu Dhabi on February 14, 2014. The school met team members arriving at Abu Dhabi airport. The balance of the team arrived via automobile. On Saturday, February 15, the team enjoyed a bus tour of Abu Dhabi's major attractions including the magnificent Grand Mosque. After the tour the team met to finalize review details and complete its first ranking of the standard's indicators. The team joined the principal and members of the senior leadership team for a pleasant dinner.

Upon arrival at the school on Day One of the review, the team was greeted by student guides who conducted a complete and informative tour of the school. The senior leadership team then presented a standards overview using power point slides. The school's conference room had learning materials form each of the grade levels. Additionally, a notebook of student performance, survey, and demographic data was available for each team member. The team noted that notebooks or USB drives were not provided and organized by standards and indicators. This made the collection and review of artifacts more challenging for the team and school staff over the next two days. However, the school did provide a 300+ page PDF file of data and documents as well as a small digital file organized by standards. The team focused the balance of the day on classroom observations using the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT) and interviewing teachers and parents. One team member became ill and needed to return to the hotel. She subsequently received medical assistance and missed most of Day Two as well. The team finished the day discussing their findings and conducting its second ranking of the indicators and identifying potential Powerful Practices and opportunities for improvement.

Day Two of the review focused on completing several more ELEOT observations along with soliciting and reviewing school documents. The school secretary and other staff, including the senior leadership team, were very helpful and gracious in identifying and locating requested documents and other artifacts. The team concluded the day with more ELEOT observations and student interviews and one on one interviews with support staff. After leaving the school, the team met and conducted its third and final indicator rating as well as identifying Powerful Practices, Required Actions, and Opportunities for Improvement. Team members then worked on their respective narratives.

Day Three began with team members confirming information and completing their action narratives. The team then finalized its actions and confirmed alignment among and between the actions. The Exit Report presentation was assembled and finalized by the team. Following discussion of the exit report with the principal and some members of the senior leadership team, the Exit Report was shared with almost all the teaching staff who voluntarily attended.

Over the three day of its review (February 16-18, 2014) the team was able to formally interview the following number of stakeholders: 7 administrators, 24 teachers, 15 support staff, 25 students, and 17 parents. Additionally,

the team conducted 38 classroom observations using the ELEOT. The team found the school to be forthright and open about their current situation and future plans. While not having the artifacts well organized, the school staff was very helpful and gracious about gathering the materials the team needed to review.

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

The External Review Team found that Al Dhafra School was impressive relative to a number of indicators regarding the school's physical environment (4.3, 4.1, 4.5 Early Learning 4.16, 4.11, 4.10, 4.8, 4.7). The first and probably most obvious feature of the school is its safe, healthy, attractive, and well-furnished and equipped facility. The school building was completed in late summer of 2012 and first used during the 2012-2013 academic year. There have been obvious efforts to establish safety as a key feature of the school in accordance with the requirements of the Abu Dhabi Education Council's policies and procedures.

Several safety features are clear evidently such as up to date emergency plans, assembly points, signage, fire extinguishers, fire doors, evacuation drills, padding on pillars and corners in play and activity areas, and extensive adult supervision. Science laboratories are very well-equipped with safety features and equipment. The school is surrounded by a security wall/fence and entry to the building by visitors is gained through a rigorous protocol managed by a third party security firm. The cleanliness and healthy environment is as impressive as the safety features of the building. The school has an active environment committee that oversees the maintenance of the learning environment. There are numerous staff members that work diligently to clean and maintain the building (4.1). Posted checklists for maintenance are clearly evident. Likewise, students and teaching staff also are sensitive to keeping the facility in excellent condition. Classrooms are quite tidy and attractive with most walls and bulletin boards covered with attractively displayed student work and learning-related posters and charts. The kindergarten section is a very visually rich and attractive learning area (4.16). The school has also implemented an anti-bullying campaign and health awareness campaigns. All these efforts are directly linked to the school value and belief regarding a student's right to a safe learning environment.

The only area of concern regarding resources is the relative paucity of media and information resources (indicator 4.4). The school's major library is in the secondary girl's section which is not easily accessible by the boy's section or elementary sections. It has a limited number of books and audio-visual or digital resources. The school has several excellent computer laboratories with an ample number of computers. The team noted that student access to digital resources and teacher integration of technology into instruction would be enhanced by relocating some computers to each classroom. The Smart boards in each class are also underutilized due to incomplete training and installation issues. All in all, the school presents a safe, health, attractive learning environment. While well-equipped, the school could redeploy and fully implement its digital resources to better serve its instructional program and students.

The school has developed a very robust system to engage parents in their child's learning through traditional and electronic means (indicator 3.8). Parents and staff note that their relationship is positive and is actively promoted by traditional activities such as conferences, school activities, parent events, a home-school communication book in the kindergarten and elementary grades, and daily face-to-face interactions. The school has implemented electronic methods to facilitate communications through the use of text messaging, the school management system's password-protected parent portal, and the school's website. The parent portal supports and enhances the school's grading and reporting policies (Indicator 3.10). The team noted that these engagement efforts are

beginning to establish a more student-centered and learning focused culture within the school (Indicator 2.4).

The school also demonstrates an appropriate governance and leadership relationship (Indicator 2.3). The board of trustees, chaired by the school's owner, provides general overall direction to the school principal. The board has been properly oriented on its role in relation to the leadership. Likewise, it sees its role as one of allocating required resources to implement the school's program. (Indicator 2.5) The board has adopted the rigorous and detailed policies and procedures established by ADEC to guide operations of the school (indicator 2.1). The principal has clear authority and responsibility to manage the learning program and daily operations of the school. No stakeholder indicated any interference by the board in the school's program and they clearly understand the authority of the principal to manage the school. The team found that this feature of the school is due to the broad influence of ADEC on school management, but more significantly influenced by the strong leadership of the principal and oversight experience of the board members and the school owner and board chairman.

The school has a clearly articulated and ambitious vision for the school. It was appropriately created by involvement of stakeholders (indicator 1.1). Strong emphasis is placed on the values and beliefs of the school regarding right to learn, progress and attainment, personal development, and safety. These statements form, to a large degree, the basis of the school culture (indicator 1.2). The mission statement presents a managerial imperative, but does not articulate a clear purpose and function focused on students and their learning. The school's former, and more typical, mission is listed on the ADEC website as part of the school's development plan. Thus, there is some confusion by stakeholders regarding the vision, mission, and beliefs. This confusion impairs the ability of leadership to clearly and unambiguously link improvement initiatives to the purpose and direction of the school (indicator 1.3). It also makes a clear evaluation of the extent to which the school's program is in accord with its direction and purpose more difficult.

Another important theme identified by the team is the need for professional development (indicator 3.11). The school has put in place a new middle leader structure and process to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This forms a solid framework for improvement (Indicator 3.4). Teachers also reported interest in, but little use of collaborative learning (Indicator 3.5) or more formalized induction and mentoring opportunities (Indicator 3.7). Initial professional development efforts have been implemented to improve instructional methodologies in the kindergarten and elementary sections, but the team found the need for further training with these teachers as well as their secondary counterparts. The school staff and leadership also recognize that improved instruction is at the heart of improved student learning (Indicator 3.6). In addition to increased training and support for instructional improvement, there is a very clear need for professional development on the collection, analysis and use of data to inform improvement efforts (Indicators 5.3, 3.2, 1.3). Team classroom observations, interviews, and curriculum document review also indicate that there is a need for much more training on the integration of technology into instruction (see ELEOT digital learning environment). Also evident from class observations and interviews, there is a need for professional development on classroom management especially in regard to improving the instructional transitions.

A final theme discerned by the team is the need to align the various components of the curriculum more carefully and clearly (Indicator 3.1). Interviews and document review revealed a very loosely coupled relationship between the Virginia Standards of Learning, the learning benchmarks, scope and sequence, instructional materials and practices, and assessments. While the staff and middle leadership are working hard to address and manage all those components, there is confusion on how they all relate to and inform each other and the school's purpose and

direction (Indicator 1.1). The school staff clearly recognizes that they need to adapt the curriculum to the students and context of its learners (e.g. second language learners). The school's self-assessment forthrightly stated the need for "a customized and cohesive curriculum". Finally, it was difficult for the team to access the curriculum components. It appears that the responsibility for curriculum is divided across the various middle leaders and coordinators. This creates variance in approaches, vocabulary, formats, and other aspects about the curriculum that need to be communicated to teachers, parents, and students.

The school leadership and staff have been focused on the construction, move, and operationalization of the new facility. The framework for significant attention and improvements for revisiting its direction and purpose, curriculum alignment, professional development, and use of data for continuous improvement is set. The school now needs to address these issues in a careful and well-planned manner. The External Review team believes that the school governance, leadership, and staff have great potential to undertake the improvements needed to advance student learning and school effectiveness.

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.

The External Review Team members noted four themes in their observations of classroom learning at Al Dhafra Private School. The most obvious area of strength was in the area of a supportive learning environment. The highest ranking was on Supportive Learning Environment (2.79) and the highest scoring indicator was on teachers providing support to understand content and accomplish tasks (3.03). Students exhibited positive attitudes about their experiences (2.84) and demonstrated that the learning experience was positive (2.82). They were certainly willing to take risks (2.71) and were actively engaged (2.71). Additionally, the students demonstrated understanding of the rules and consequences as being fair (2.84) and respectful interactions were positively noted (2.82).

In spite of some training on differentiation and more student-based instructional strategies, most classrooms were observed to be teacher-centered. Differentiated learning scored rather low at 2.24. Collaboration with other students was not frequently observed (2.13) even though students were engaged in discussions usually mediated by the teacher (2.58). Students were generally engaged in their learning, usually on an individual basis, at a rating of 2.71. Observations of alternative or additional instruction were not pervasive (2.42). However, observations revealed that students responded to progress monitoring and feedback to improve their work (2.59)

The most problematic learning environment was the digital learning environment (1.20) coupled with opportunities for real world connections. The use of technology by students was consistently low for all three types of potential uses (1.18, 1.21, and 1.21). Teachers used the Smartboards frequently, but usually as a lighted white board. Teachers indicate that some features of the boards are not operational and also that they lack training in their use. Nevertheless, student interaction with the technology was infrequent and inconsistent. Teachers sometimes used their personal laptop computers for instruction, but student use was not observed. The lack of school computers or other digital tools in the classroom (except for a computer in each kindergarten classroom) undoubtedly minimized the opportunities for students to use the technology. In a somewhat related manner, connections of learning to real

life experiences were not frequently observed (2.13) nor was there much opportunity for students to learn about their own or others backgrounds, cultures, and differences (1.79).

The final theme discerned from observations of the learning environment focused on classroom management and high expectations. While students generally know and follow rules (2.63) and abide by classroom routines (2.68), the availability of valuable instructional time was reduced by inefficient transitions at the beginning, during, and at the end of classroom sessions (2.45). Possible contributing factors may be observations of somewhat lower ratings regarding a high expectations environment (2.52) and active learning environment (2.50).

The External Review Team appreciates the opportunity to learn about and provide both an evaluation and an outline of a way forward for the school as it proceeds to improve student learning and school effectiveness. The team wishes to thank the school principal, the senior leadership team, the support staff, especially the principal's secretary, the teaching staff, and the students for their kind welcome and gracious hospitality.

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: 244

Teaching and Learning Impact: 233
(Standards 3 and 5, Student Performance Criteria)

Leadership Capacity: 273
(Standards 1 and 2, Stakeholder Feedback Criteria)

Resource Utilization: 229
(Standard 4)

The External Review Team recommends that Al Dhafra Private School be approved for continuing accreditation by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission for an additional five-year term.

Required Action

1. Develop and implement a process for the periodic review and revision of the school's vision and mission statements to reflect the school community's shared and understood core values and beliefs.

   Related Indicator or Assurance: 1.1

   Description:
   The team found that the current principal instituted a full review of the school's vision, mission, and beliefs when he was appointed in the spring of 2011. Using a 360 degree process, community and school staff input was gathered and synthesized. The school currently has a vision statement that clearly articulates a bold aspiration for the school. The mission statement is atypical in that it indicates an intention to implement and achieve the goals of the school development plan. As such, it does not articulate a strong purpose and functional or operational imperative on behalf of students or their learning. The school has a clear statement of beliefs and values that are more broadly communicated and understood throughout the school. Stakeholder interviews revealed little knowledge, understanding, or connection to the school's purpose. It was not clear to the team that linkages between the school purpose statements and school programs has been or is being made by its stakeholders. The team found that no plans or schedule were currently in place for review of the school's vision, mission, and values statements.

   Revisiting on a regular basis the vision, mission, and values by all stakeholders not only ensures clarity on the school's purpose, but also promotes stakeholder understanding and commitment and program and operational alignment with that purpose.

2. Develop and implement a long range plan to align curriculum standards, benchmarks, scope and sequence, instructional materials and practices, and assessment consistent with the school's purpose.

   Related Indicator or Assurance: 3.1

   Description:
   The team found from interviews and document review that the school has a curriculum based on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL). While the requisite components of the curriculum are available, the alignment and coordination among them is often unclear to teachers. The school recognizes that this is a significant area for improvement. The school's self-assessment and standards presentation both noted that the school was in need of a "customized and cohesive curriculum and courseware". Teachers expressed concerns about the need to clarify the standards, benchmarks, and scope and sequence, especially as they apply to second language learners. Likewise, teacher interviews revealed that they and school leaders do not feel the existing curriculum adequately meets students' learning needs and are supportive of appropriate adjustments. This is particularly true for students identified for special needs services. The team found no evidence that the results of the Virginia SOLs administered in grades 3-8 have been used to assess and adjust curriculum or instructional practices. While the school has initiated staff development to improve teacher use of student-

centered instructional practices such as differentiation, classroom observations indicate inconsistent usage across the subject areas and grade levels. While many of the standards and benchmarks require critical thinking, problem solving, and student collaboration, instructional strategies and assessments frequently do not include them.

Alignment of the various elements of the curriculum is essential for improving classroom instruction and providing challenging learning opportunities for each student.

3. Design and implement a school-wide process for analyzing student data results in order to adjust curriculum and improve instructional methodology.

Related Indicator or Assurance: 3.2

Description:
The school has considerable data on classroom-based and standardized assessments of student learning from classroom marks, SAT, IGCSE, and Virginia Standards of Learning assessments. However, review of the school's documentation and leadership and teacher interviews indicate that there is no structured or formalized review or analysis of the data. Teacher review of data is usually limited to individual student performance and does not include review of aggregated or disaggregated data about student performance on the assessments. Much of the data that currently are available is not assembled or displayed to show trends or comparisons. The recent addition of the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests and the SAT Key Stage tests in grades 5-9 will provide a wealth of data for identifying strengths and weaknesses across the assessed subject areas and grade levels to strengthen vertical and horizontal alignment. The senior leadership team members have begun initial efforts to look at data, but no systematic process is currently underway. Additionally, there is no evidence of analysis on the impact of curricular, instructional, or program changes.

The systematic and careful analysis of student learning data provides the basis for informed and effective improvements of curriculum and instructional practices.

4. Develop and implement an ongoing needs-based professional development program to improve and enhance instructional practice and school effectiveness

Related Indicator or Assurance: 3.11

Description:
School documentation and interviews indicate that the school does not have an ongoing, intentional professional development program based on school and/or staff needs. Teachers in the kindergarten and elementary grades have received training in the classroom use of differentiation. Evidence was found of several workshops provided to staff. Classroom observations at those grade levels showed some evidence of

the use of some differentiation techniques. There was no evident connection between the workshops and school initiatives as indicated in the school development plan. Likewise, subsequent support and follow-up on implementation of learned practices was also not indicated except for the lesson planning template used in classrooms. The school's executive summary, standards presentation, and school development plan all cite an increased need for professional development. Areas suggested for additional professional development include student use of digital tools for learning, improved instructional methodology for teachers, the effective use of data for continuous improvement, and classroom management practices. Teachers expressed that the professional development they had participated in had been useful to their work, especially when expectations for use and support were provided. They also concurred with their need for more training on the use of differentiation and technology in classrooms.

A coordinated professional development program aligned to identify needs is a powerful tool for improving student learning and school effectiveness.

5. Plan and implement a program that trains leadership, instructional, and support staff on the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data to guide continuous improvement efforts.

Related Indicator or Assurance: 5.3

Description:
A review of the school's self-assessment reveals that the school recognizes that there is a need to improve the capacity of staff to review, evaluate, interpret, and use data to improve student learning and the school's programs. The senior leadership team and coordinators have some training and experience in data analysis and presentation. Teacher interviews indicated that most teaching staff have not been trained in data use for improvement. Data review and use have generally been confined to classroom teachers using data to improve instruction for individual students. The team found that a systematic program of training on data analysis is not currently in place. A review of the current supervision and evaluation system for teachers reveals that the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data are not included as a criterion. The school collects a variety of aggregated student performance data on classroom grades and standardized assessments. There is, however, little evidence from interviews, presentations, and document review to indicate much in the way of data analysis and subsequent action for curricular or instructional improvement. The team could find no evidence for a linkage between data analysis and the professional development program. Likewise, there seems to be little collection or analysis of data for program evaluation.

Providing ongoing training in data analysis and data interpretation strategies will enhance the ability of staff to make appropriate modifications to curriculum, instruction, and school programs.

Part III: Addenda

The External Review Team

Lead Evaluator:
Mr. Larry D Fuglesten

Associate Lead Evaluator:
Mr. Jay Wansley

Reviewer:
Dr. Patricia P Woodruff

Team Member:
Mrs. Azza El Sherbiny

Mr. Yehia A Kallash

Ms. Anita Madhu

Mrs. Hiba Nashabe

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.

References

Alwin, L. (2002). The will and the way of data use. School Administrator, 59(11), 11.

Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voxx, T., Jordan, A., Klusmann, U., Krauss, S., Nuebrand, M., & Tsai, Y. (2010). Teachers' mathematical knowledge, cognitive activation in the classroom, and student progress. American Educational Research Journal, 47(1), 133-180.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. (2012). Shared purpose: the golden thread? London: CIPD.

Colbert, J., Brown, R., Choi, S., & Thomas, S. (2008). An investigation of the impacts of teacher-driven professional development. Teacher Education Quarterly, 35(2), 134-154.

Conley, D.T. (2007). Redefining college readiness (Vol. 3). Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center.

Datnow, A., Park, V., & Wohlstetter, P. (2007). Achieving with data: How high-performing school systems use data to improve instruction for elementary students. Los Angeles, CA: Center on Educational Governance, USC.

Dembosky, J., Pane, J., Barney, H., & Christina, R. (2005). Data driven decision making in Southwestern Pennsylvania school districts. Working paper. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Ding, C. & Sherman, H. (2006). Teaching effectiveness and student achievement: Examining the relationship. Educational Research Quarterly, 29 (4), 40-51.

Doyle, D. P. (2003). Data-driven decision making: Is it the mantra of the month or does it have staying power? T.H.E. Journal, 30(10), 19-21.

Feuerstein, A., & Opfer, V. D. (1998). School board chairmen and school superintendents: An analysis of perceptions concerning special interest groups and educational governance. Journal of School Leadership, 8, 373-398.

Fink, D., & Brayman, C. (2006). School leadership succession and the challenges of change. Educational Administration Quarterly, 42 (62), 61-89.

Greene, K. (1992). Models of school-board policy-making. Educational Administration Quarterly, 28 (2), 220-236.

Horng, E., Klasik, D., & Loeb, S. (2010). Principal time-use and school effectiveness. American Journal of Education 116, (4) 492-523.

Lafee, S. (2002). Data-driven districts. School Administrator, 59(11), 6-7, 9-10, 12, 14-15.

Leithwood, K., & Sun, J. (2012). The Nature and effects of transformational school leadership: A meta-analytic review of unpublished research. Educational Administration Quarterly, 48 (387). 388-423.

Marks, H., Louis, K.S., & Printy, S. (2002). The capacity for organizational learning: Implications for pedagogy and student achievement. In K. Leithwood (Ed.), Organizational learning and school improvement (p. 239-266). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

McIntire, T. (2002). The administrator's guide to data-driven decision making. Technology and Learning, 22(11), 18-33.

Pan, D., Rudo, Z., Schneider, C., & Smith-Hansen, L. (2003). Examination of resource allocation in education: connecting spending to student performance. Austin, TX: SEDL.