

**Report of the
Quality Assurance Review Team
for
Berkley Accelerated Middle School**

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United States

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

Quality Assurance Review Report

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About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

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

In 2006, NCA CASI, SACS CASI, and the research and development arm of the accrediting associations, the National Study of School Evaluation, unified to form AdvancED. Dedicated to advancing excellence in education, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 23,000 schools in 65 countries, serving 15 million students.

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

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

1) Meet the AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools. Schools demonstrate adherence to the seven AdvancED standards which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.

2) Engage in continuous improvement. Schools implement a continuous improvement process that articulates the vision and purpose the school is pursuing (vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school effectiveness, and the school community (profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).

3) Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review. Schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, schools host an external Quality Assurance Review Team once every five years. The team evaluates the school's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and recommendations to help the school improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school and a written report detailing the team's recommendations. The school acts on the team's recommendations and submits a progress report following the review.

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

Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review

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

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

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

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

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

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

Using the Report - Acting on the Recommendations. The school uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school is held accountable for addressing the recommendations identified in the report. The NCA CASI/SACS CASI State Office is available to assist schools in addressing the recommendations. Following the Quality Assurance Review Team visit, the school must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress the school has made on the team's recommendations. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school is addressing the recommendations.

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

Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), a division of AdvancED, visited the Berkley Accelerated Middle School in Auburndale, Florida, United States on 05/04/2009 - 05/05/2009.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed Jill Bolender, 2 members of the administrative team, 10 students, 7 parents, and 18 teachers. The team also reviewed documents, student performance data, and other artifacts provided by the school. Specifically, the team examined the school's systems and processes in relation to the seven AdvancED standards:

- Vision and Purpose
- Governance and Leadership
- Teaching and Learning
- Documenting and Using Results
- Resource and Support Systems
- Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
- Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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

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

Commendations

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

- **Berkley Accelerated Middle School has created a school culture conducive to student learning and building relationships.**

Interviews with stakeholders and observation of documents and processes gave evidence of multiple avenues of communication which enable parents, students, board members, faculty and administration to share ideas, information and concerns. The reception and responses to these create an open atmosphere which honors and values the individual. The resulting trust relationships establish the basis for a strong sense of family and community.

Student learning flourishes in climates that are accepting and encouraging. Exchanges of information and ideas encourage and support a learning environment.

- **Berkley Accelerated Middle School has achieved a wide commitment by all groups of stakeholders, including teachers, staff, parents, board of directors, and students toward a shared purpose and mission.**

The school's mission and purpose is reviewed regularly by all stakeholders in a variety of ways, which include weekly meetings with staff, the school newsletter, the Parent Teacher Organization, monthly meetings of the Board of Directors, parent teacher conferences, and daily work with students. The implementation of the school's mission continues to lead instructional practices.

This learning community truly lives its motto "Accelerated Learning for All; Whatever it Takes."

- **The school has compiled school information and expectations in a comprehensive faculty handbook.**

School calendars, accountability plan, crisis plan, assessment information, media, lesson plan guidelines and standards, field trip, forms and discipline, grading, reading plan and professional development are included.

Beginning teachers, as well as seasoned teachers, have the expectations and the information necessary to facilitate a smooth running classroom.

Recommendations

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

- **Engage and inform all of the stakeholders in the Accountability Plan for continuous school improvement and the School Assessment Report for AdvancED.**

Interviews with students, parents and the School Board revealed limited knowledge of these documents. All understood the direction of the school and alignment of actions with the school's vision but had not seen these documents.

The Accountability Plan sets the yearly direction for determining student needs and instruction and the School Assessment Report reveals how the school is organized and what it does to support the attainment of the goals in the Accountability Plan.

- **Update or amend the school Accountability Plan each year with current school-wide data for year-to-year analysis of progress towards school goals.**

The team found, through review of Berkley Accelerated Middle School's Accountability Plan, that the school's five-year accountability plan contained important historical student performance data for the 2006-2007 school year. The team noted a lack of more recent evaluation data and its impact on continuous progress.

By including more recent performance data in the accountability plan, stakeholders at all levels can better evaluate progress towards meeting school goals and make better decisions for student achievement and school improvement

- **Allocate and prioritize resources to increase the physical size of the media center, as well as increase the number of volumes, periodicals, software and computers. Students' reading levels must be considered when selecting the materials.**

The space allocated for the media center is not adequate to accommodate classroom research and media resources. Previously, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) required a minimum of 10 books for every student; presently the school has 1400 books. Because the school's mission states the importance of meeting the needs of all students, it is imperative that the resources be in place to support the instruction and students' inquiry via written materials and technology.

The school can align with the mission of the school and better meet its academic goals with a fully functioning, well supplied media center.

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

Next Steps

The school should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the commendations section to maximize their impact on the school.
3. Develop action plans to address the recommendations made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the recommendations.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the school's efforts to improve student performance and school effectiveness.
5. Following the Quality Assurance Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the team's recommendations. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the recommendations. Lack of progress can result in a change in accreditation status.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Resources

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

Celebrating Accreditation

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

Summary

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

Standards for Accreditation

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

Standard 1. Vision and Purpose

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

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

Berkley Accelerated Middle School has achieved a wide commitment by all groups of stakeholders, including teachers, staff, parents, board of directors, and students toward a shared purpose and mission. This commitment is evident based on interviews, artifacts, and observations. The school's mission and purpose is reviewed regularly by all stakeholders in a variety of ways, which include weekly meetings with staff, the Parent Teacher Organization, monthly meetings of the Board of Directors, parent teacher conferences, and daily work with students. The school has a clearly outlined process for the review of goals which are aligned to the school's mission. There is wide distribution of the school's mission throughout many classrooms so that staff, students and stakeholders may become more familiar with it. Additionally, each morning announcement includes the school's mission and it is included with every newsletter to parents and on school letterhead. Finally, there is clear evidence to suggest that perceptions among the stakeholders strongly indicate that the articulated mission of the school is embedded in the goals and operation of this learning community.

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

- All stakeholders clearly articulated that the operation and processes of the school are guided by the school's mission statement.
- The implementation of Data Day provides opportunities for staff to analyze data and through staff development, team meetings, and the creation of Individual Professional Growth Plans, teachers customize instruction towards the needs of students.
- Teachers align instruction and school goals through the implementation of the "Reading Structure" of the monthly in-service plan.
- Walk-throughs are conducted regularly to monitor instructional practice alignment with the school's vision commitment. It is clear that the goals of the school's Accountability Plan are aligned with the school's mission.

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

- Analyze the vision on a regular basis to determine whether revision is necessary. Include all the stakeholders in the review process.

Finding: Berkley Accelerated Middle School has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and

has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 2. Governance and Leadership

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

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

The school's governance and leadership is evident from the inception of the school as a start up charter school five years ago to the present. The board is made up of community business leaders and parents of students attending the school. Several of the board members were instrumental in establishing the mission and vision as well as the school's Accountability Plan.

The board has been instrumental in establishing the school's policies and procedures without micromanaging the administration of the school. The principal is considered the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the school reporting directly to the board. The principal is identified as the administrative head and recognized leader of the school. A teacher representative serves on the board and reports back to the school. Board minutes are also emailed to all staff. The principal maintains communication with board members through email concerning parent questions and concerns.

The school holds two Data Days during which the faculty review academic performance data which dictate instructional direction. The administration and faculty have embraced Kagan Learning Strategies as a school with evidence apparent in each classroom. Highly accelerated learning is expected from all students as indicated in the mission statement.

Teachers and students are allowed the opportunity to demonstrate leadership and ownership of the decision-making process through participation in various school committees including discipline, sunshine, safety, scheduling, special events and curriculum. Staff members have the opportunity to provide leadership and contribute to the decision-making process through weekly meetings designed to discuss curriculum, policies and student concerns.

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

- Board members understand their role and provide support to the administration of the school. They are available to all stakeholders through email and the school's website.
- The administration, faculty and staff are dedicated to and believe in the mission of accelerated learning for all students.
- Faculty collaborate on policy recommendations that directly relate to the operation of the school.
- School policies, procedures, staff development calendars and other operational information are provided in a binder to each staff member at the beginning of the school year.
- Data from the state assessment and Kaplan testing are reviewed on a regular, established timeframe and are used to address individual student instruction.
- The school offers many curricular and extracurricular opportunities for student growth: book club, money matters, Rubies, Disciples of Christ, student government, National Junior Honor Society, fitness and sports.

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

school:

- Share the Standards Assessment Report with all stakeholders including the board members.

Finding: Berkley Accelerated Middle School has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 3. Teaching and Learning

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

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

Berkley Accelerated Middle School's curriculum is aligned with the Sunshine State Standards and follows the Polk county curriculum maps as well as the county adopted Kaplan curriculum and assessment. The team reviewed supporting documentation, the accountability report and their Charter Application. The school has adopted the usage of Kagan cooperative learning strategies and reading concept maps in all subject areas while incorporating current technology in all classrooms.

Faculty reviews are frequent and the monitoring of student progress is through the district progress monitoring system, Interactive Data Evaluation and Assessment System which accesses Kaplan and Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) data. Across grade level articulation and alignment are reviewed weekly during faculty grade level meetings and shared with the entire school through email. Teachers share results with students individually to allow them to monitor their progress, realize gains and target weaknesses. Instruction is adjusted to meet each student's needs for remediation. Students scoring below grade level take two periods of remedial math or remedial reading, as necessary.

Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students are provided accommodations and modifications, as indicated in their Individualized Education Plan.

All faculty are trained in Kagan Cooperative Learning and apply those strategies in their classrooms. Administration performs frequent walk-through visits of each classroom to review teaching objectives, taxonomy, instructional strategies, learner engagement and learning environment. Focus on the feedback and reflective thinking about classroom successes and failures are encouraged. The usage of Kagan Cooperative Learning Strategies and the Reading Structure a Month were observed and documented.

The school has identified the media services that support the curricular and instructional programs as emerging. It was reported that the media center contains 1400 books and limited technology. The team recognized that the media center is in its infancy, but given the vision of the school, the research and literature resources must fit the school's purpose. In addition to more books and periodicals, the need exists for up-to-date computers and software including book checkout software for tracking. The media center houses the TV production studio and a teacher resource area, as well. To accommodate the multiple functions of a media center size is an important factor. The current size of the media center is inadequate for the needs of the school.

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

- Students were observed in all classrooms as being actively engaged in the learning process.
- Faculty has been provided with and utilizes the most up to date technology in all core classrooms. Technology includes Smartboards, Tablets, Elmos, PowerPoint, LCD projectors, laptops, Pinnacle online grade books and email.
- Sixth graders are learning technological skills including Office applications, website and power point creation and general keyboarding.
- Given the small size of the school, it is noted that the administration supports a full-time guidance counselor, a media specialist, an ESE specialist, and remedial math and reading teachers.
- As a result of their early academic success, the school was granted a 10 year renewal after three years of operation by the School District of Polk County.

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

- Increase the number of books, periodicals and software available in the media center while expanding the physical size of the media center to accommodate students' needs. The present state of the school's library does not align with the mission of "Accelerated for all, whatever it takes." Resources are necessary to address the needs of all students.
- Add a portable computer lab for use in any classroom including electives as funds become available. The present computer lab is utilized six out of seven periods by the 6th grade classes.
- Increase the use of technology in the remedial math and remedial reading classes to enable students to achieve the school exit goals of reading on an 8th grade level and completing Algebra.

Finding: Berkley Accelerated Middle School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 4. Documenting and Using Results

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

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

Berkley Accelerated Middle School has established a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results and are of adequate technical quality. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, design and improve instructional strategies and practices, and determine interventions to improve and enhance student performance.

Evidence analyzed included observations, interviews, and artifacts including Section 4 of the Standards Assessment Report (SAR.) Examples of assessments include the formal state assessments once per year, Kaplan assessments three times a year, reading assessments including Florida Assessment Instruction in Reading three times a year, and on-going classroom assessments created by teachers. The assessment system yields timely information that is useful to school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts for individual students and subgroups of students.

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

- Of note, it is extremely evident that all decisions made at Berkley Accelerated Middle School are data based. Data based decision-making is a clearly established part of school processes and culture. School leaders, teachers, the Board of Directors, and students often referenced the use of data as a vital component of the decision-making process.
- The school schedules a “Data Day” during planning week and can access data through the use of the Interactive Data Evaluation and Assessment system throughout the school year to allow teachers to analyze data and glean vital information. The information is also used to create Academic Success Plans for students in need of academic improvement.
- Most importantly, there is evidence to support the practice that data are used to modify instructional practices of teachers to best meet the individual needs of their students.

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

- Update or amend the school's Accountability Plan each year with current school-wide data for year-to-year analysis of progress towards school goals. The leadership team must be the initiator of this review.

Finding: Berkley Accelerated Middle School has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 5. Resource and Support Systems

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

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

Berkley Accelerated Middle School has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and to ensure achievement for all students. A member of the Governing Board of Directors serves as the school's accountant providing the accountability for expenditures. The administration with input from the stakeholders determines the priorities and allocation of the financial resources. The accountant indicated that the philosophy of the school is to establish a very conservative budget. The school administration works with the Board of Directors to “anticipate lower” to assure the school operates “in the black” rather than have unforeseen circumstances pull the school into a negative budget. The school would rather have a high probability of a positive bottom line with a healthy fund balance for the next school year.

Berkley Accelerated Middle School recruits highly qualified faculty to address the learning needs of the students. The “turn-over” of teachers is minimal, most being due to family issues or promotion to more responsible positions. New teachers are mentored by experienced teachers at the school who meet weekly to discuss needs and school expectations. The mentor teachers model instructional practices and coach teachers in the implementation of new strategies. Professional Development has a high priority which is supported through the allocation of funds. The administration and the Board of Directors are committed to supporting teachers in their endeavors to pursue additional certifications, such as the National Board Certification for Teachers.

Personnel are in place to ensure students have the support necessary to meet the school's vision and Accountability Plan. Guidance services are available for personal issues, referral, mentoring and career counseling. The Major Area of Interest (MAI) and the electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP) evidence the guidance counselor's efforts to assist students in understanding and choosing their educational pathways.

The faculty, materials and instructional strategies at Berkley Accelerated Middle School support the vision and accommodate the students' needs in both remediation and advancement. All students are expected to advance and work to their highest potential as evidenced through the intensive classes and the classes for high school credits. Professional development is ongoing and is embedded in daily instruction. Parents, students, the Board of Directors and the faculty articulate the opportunities available at the school which enable the individualization of student expectations and learning.

When asked about the accreditation of their school, one student replied, " We want to be sure our classes are valid and going to count. The school has worked hard for it. It has had barriers and has overcome them. The students have some ownership in the progress. It is an honor to be here."

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

- The administration and the faculty value being on the cutting edge of educational research and instruction that enhances and increases student learning. Not only is outside training a priority but professional development is embedded in daily classroom teaching.

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

- Give priority of future funding toward a fully functional media center, intensive classes enhanced via technology and visual and performing arts classrooms.

Finding: Berkley Accelerated Middle School has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

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

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

Berkley Accelerated Middle School has established strong communication strategies and built meaningful relationships among all stakeholders. Collaboration, positive relationships and effective communication are evidenced through interviews with the Board of Directors, faculty, students and parents. Methods are in place to facilitate contact with the stakeholders. Among those are email, ConnectEd, the weekly newsletter, The Silver Sword, student planners, monthly Board of Directors and Parent Teacher Organization meetings, conferences, administrative walk-throughs and parent, student and teacher surveys. These systems make certain that stakeholders are informed and have the opportunity to offer input. Communication is a positive, well accepted concept at the school. Open dialogue occurs among and between students, parents, faculty and administration. Constructive, encouraging working relationships/partnerships are nurtured from their inception and the school leadership promotes a collective

responsibility for student learning. As one student shared, “they can see their ideas happen; to watch them grow.”

The Board of Directors is knowledgeable about all aspects of school life and members have frequent communication with the school’s administration. The Board of Directors’ member who has fiscal oversight of the school is the school’s accountant and is on campus working with the principal twice a week. As evidenced through the interview session with the Board of Directors, the principal keeps the board informed about issues that occur and her response to them. A teacher representative attends every Board of directors meeting and the minutes from the meeting are sent to the faculty.

The administration at the school actively pursues professional development. Teachers are given opportunity to attend training; upon returning to the school they are expected to become the trainers of other teachers in order to extend their learning to the rest of the faculty. The understanding that implementing effective strategies for all levels of achievement necessitates faculty be models of continuous learning. The Berkley Accelerated Middle School (BAMS) In-Service Plan which outlines the monthly expectations for faculty in the areas of Reading Strategies, Kagan Structures and Character Lessons evidences this focus.

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

- The school demonstrates a strong commitment to open communication which is a common thread that exists through and among all stakeholder groups. Interactions are facilitated via a multitude of avenues and opportunities

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

- Provide opportunities for students to participate in meetings specifically organized to discuss the strengths and opportunities for their school. Their thoughts often give added insight into school operations and school priorities.

Finding: Berkley Accelerated Middle School has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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

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

Berkley Accelerated Middle School engages in a continuous process of school improvement focused on advancing the school. The school’s organizational structure and culture are supportive of academic programs that align with the goals of the Accountability Plan. During “Data Day” at the beginning of the each school year the administration presents the most recent Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) results to the faculty. The Accountability Plan goals provide direction for the FCAT score data. The score data are analyzed to determine student and school progress and areas in need of improvement.

Student needs and challenges are prioritized on the basis of the results; teachers establish the goals for their professional development plans, Individual Professional Growth Plans (IPGP), accordingly. Intensive Reading and Intensive Math classes are available for students who score levels one and two on the FCAT. Enrollment of the students in these classes validates the school's intention to accelerate all. Interviews with faculty and reviews of the Individual Professional Growth Plans evidence a process that supports a continuous improvement model. Kagan Structures and Reading Strategies of the month provide added accountability to the continuous improvement focus. The continuous improvement goals give direction for the allocation of financial resources for both the general budget and the fundraising efforts.

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

- Data drive the curricular material and instructional decisions. Instruction centered on research-based practices aligns with the Accountability Plan Goals and the vision of the school.
- The faculty was involved in the determination of growth plans for the students and for themselves. They were active participants for all standards in the assessment process for writing the School Assessment Report for AdvancED.

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

- Engage and inform all of the stakeholders in the Accountability Plan for continuous school improvement and in the Standards Assessment Report for AdvancED. Interviews with students, the Board of Directors and the parents revealed limited knowledge of these documents.

Finding: Berkley Accelerated Middle School has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Conclusion

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

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

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

Appendix

Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Dr. Barbara Johnson, Chair
- Mr. Joel DiVincent, Team Member (Chasco Middle School)
- Ms. Sharon Mizner, Team Member (Nolan Middle School)

AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools

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

Vision and Purpose

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

Governance and Leadership

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

Teaching and Learning

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

Documenting and Using Results

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

Resource and Support Systems

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

Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

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

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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