

# Report of the External Review Team for Meridian Technical Charter High School

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# Introduction

The External Review is an integral component of AdvancED Performance Accreditation and provides the institution with a comprehensive evaluation guided by the results of diagnostic instruments, in-depth review of data and documentation, and the professional judgment of a team of qualified and highly trained evaluators. A series of diagnostic instruments examines the impact of teaching and learning on student performance, the capacity of leadership to effect continuous improvement, and the degree to which the institution optimizes its use of available resources to facilitate and support student success. The results of this evaluation are represented in the Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) and through critical observations, namely, Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

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 specific to their institution type, demonstrate acceptable levels of student performance and the continuous improvement of student performance, and provide evidence of stakeholder engagement and satisfaction. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the conditions, processes, and practices within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness.

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 Standards were developed by a committee comprised of talented 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 define institutional quality and guide continuous improvement. Prior to implementation, an internationally recognized panel of experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research reviewed the standards and provided feedback, guidance and endorsement.

The AdvancED External Review Team uses AdvancED Standards, associated indicators and criteria related to student performance and stakeholder engagement to guide its evaluation. The Team examines adherence to standards as well as how the institution functions as a whole and embodies the practices and characteristics expected of an accredited institution. The Standards, indicators and related criteria are evaluated using indicator-specific performance levels. The Team rates each indicator and criterion on a scale of 1 to 4. The final scores assigned to the indicators and criteria represent the average of the External Review Team members' individual ratings.

The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation. It energizes and equips the institution's leadership and stakeholders 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 the in-depth examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with all stakeholder groups, and extensive observations of learning, instruction, and operations.

## Use of Diagnostic Tools

A key to examining the institution is the design and use of diagnostic tools that reveal the effectiveness with which an institution creates conditions and implements processes and practices that impact student performance and success. In preparation for the External Review the institution conducted a Self Assessment that applied the standards and criteria for accreditation. The institution provided evidence to support its conclusions vis a vis organizational effectiveness in ensuring acceptable and improving levels of student performance.

- an indicator-based tool that connects the specific elements of the criteria to evidence gathered by the team;
- a student performance analytic that examines the quality of assessment instruments used by the institution, the integrity of the administration of the assessment to students, the quality of the learning results including the impact of instruction on student learning at all levels of performance, and the equity of learning that examines the results of student learning across all demographics;
- a stakeholder engagement instrument that examines the fidelity of administration and results of perception surveys seeking the perspective of students, parents, and teachers;
- a state-of-the-art, learner-centric observation instrument, the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) that quantifies students' engagement, attitudes and dispositions organized in 7 environments: Equitable Learning, High Expectations, Supportive Learning, Active Learning, Progress Monitoring and Feedback, Well-Managed Learning, and Digital Learning. All evaluators must be trained, reach acceptable levels of inter-rater reliability, and certified to use this research-based and validated instrument.

The External Review Team's findings and critical observations are shared in this report through the IEQ™ results as well as through the identification of Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

## Index of Education Quality

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 a school relative to the AdvancED Standards and other evaluative criteria. Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, AdvancED introduced a new framework to describe the results of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduced an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ™). The IEQ™ comprises three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the capacity of leadership to guide the institution toward the achievement of its

vision and strategic priorities; 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 and demonstrated improvement.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and associated indicators, the analysis of student performance, and the engagement and feedback of stakeholders. Within each domain institutions can 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 serve as a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report and building on their Powerful Practices, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Opportunity for Improvement and Improvement Priority as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected indicator(s).

The IEQ™ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. An institution's IEQ™ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Subsequent actions for improvement and evidence that these have had a positive impact will raise the institution's IEQ™ score.

## Benchmark Data

Throughout this report, AdvancED provides benchmark data for each indicator and for each component of the evaluative criteria. These benchmark data represent the overall averages across the entire AdvancED Network for your institution type. Thus, the AdvancED Network average provides an extraordinary opportunity for institutions to understand their context on a global scale rather than simply compared to a state, region, or country.

It is important to understand that the AdvancED Network averages are provided primarily to serve as a tool for continuous improvement and not as a measure of quality in and of itself. Benchmark data, when wisely employed, have a unique capacity to help institutions identify and leverage their strengths and areas of improvement to significantly impact student learning.

## Powerful Practices

A key to continuous improvement is the institution's ability to learn from and build upon its most effective and impactful practices. Such practices serve as critical leverage points necessary to guide, support and ensure continuous improvement. A hallmark of the accreditation process is its commitment to identifying with evidence, the conditions, processes and practices that are having the most significant impact on student performance and institutional effectiveness. Throughout this report, the External Review Team has captured and defined Powerful Practices. These noteworthy practices are essential to the institution's effort to continue its journey of improvement.

## Opportunities for Improvement

Every institution can and must improve no matter what levels of performance it has achieved in its past. During the process of the review, the External Review Team identified areas of improvement where the institution is meeting the expectations for accreditation but in the professional judgment of the Team these are Opportunities for Improvement that should be considered by the institution. Using the criteria described in the corresponding rubric(s) to the Opportunity for Improvement, the institution can identify what elements of practice must be addressed to guide the improvement.

## Improvement Priorities

The expectations for accreditation are clearly defined in a series of the rubric-based AdvancED Standards, indicators and evaluative criteria focused on the impact of teaching and learning on student performance, the capacity of the institution to be guided by effective leadership, and the allocation and use of resources to support student learning. As such, the External Review Team reviewed, analyzed and deliberated over significant bodies of evidence provided by the institution and gathered by the Team during the process. In the professional judgment of the Team as well as the results of the diagnostic process, the Team defined, with rationale, Improvement Priorities. The priorities must be addressed in a timely manner by the institution to retain and improve their accreditation performance as represented by the IEQ™. Improvement Priorities serve as the basis for the follow-up and monitoring process that will begin upon conclusion of the External Review. The institution must complete and submit an Accreditation Progress Report within two years of the External Review. The report must include actions taken by the institution to address the Improvement Priorities along with the corresponding evidence and results. The IEQ™ will be recalculated by AdvancED upon review of the evidence and results associated with the Improvement Priorities.

## The Review

The External Review Team arrived onsite on Wednesday, February 22, 2017, and stayed onsite from 7:45 AM to 4:00 PM. The team returned to Meridian Technical Charter High School on Thursday, February 23, 2017, and worked from 7:45 AM until they were released in the late afternoon. The team was represented by a teacher, Career and Technical Education Director from a local school district, an alternative school principal, and a staffer from the State of Idaho Department of Career and Technical Education. The review took place at a public charter high school authorized by the West Ada School District. The team prepared for the review offsite by reviewing the school website and the school accreditation report. Team members were assigned standards and were charged with reviewing evidence and artifacts to ensure that all questions were answered and that a thorough review was conducted. Prior to the External Review Team arriving onsite, emails and phone calls were exchanged between the Team members, Lead Evaluator, and the School Principal. The Lead Evaluator facilitated a phone conference with the school principal approximately three months prior to the external review. While onsite, the External Review Team completed eleot observations of nearly every classroom and reviewed evidence and artifacts provided by the school. Additionally, stakeholder interviews were held with the school board chair and a board member, school principal, CTE director, faculty and staff, students, and parents.

The Team thanks the families, students, faculty, staff, and leadership of the Meridian Technical Charter High School community for being such gracious hosts during our two-day onsite visit. The External Review Team appreciated the time, effort, and energy that the school community put forth in preparing for the External Review by providing the various artifacts and evidence, participating in stakeholder surveys, inviting students, staff, and community members to meet with the External Review Team, and for providing a review environment that was both welcoming and supportive.

Stakeholders were interviewed by members of the External Review Team to gain their perspectives on topics relevant to the institution's effectiveness and student performance. The feedback gained through the stakeholder interviews was considered with other evidences and data to support the findings of the External Review. The following chart depicts the numbers of persons interviewed representative of various stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Interviewed	Number
Board Members	2
Administrators	2
Instructional Staff	11
Support Staff	1
Students	43
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>



# Results

## Teaching and Learning Impact

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement is the primary expectation of every institution. The relationship between teacher and learner must be productive and effective for student success. The impact of teaching and learning includes an analysis of student performance results, instructional quality, learner and family engagement, support services for student learning, curriculum quality and efficacy, and college and career readiness data. These are all key indicators of an institution's impact on teaching and 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 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.

Institutions 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 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
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.	3.33	2.82
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.	2.67	2.45
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	3.33	2.63
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	3.00	2.69
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	3.33	2.52
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.67	2.56
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	2.33	2.56
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	3.67	3.07

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
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.	2.33	3.01
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.	3.33	2.71
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.00	2.48
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	2.67	2.63

### Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

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	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	3.00	2.64
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.	2.67	2.33
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	2.33	2.03
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.	2.67	2.45
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.	3.33	2.68

### Student Performance Diagnostic

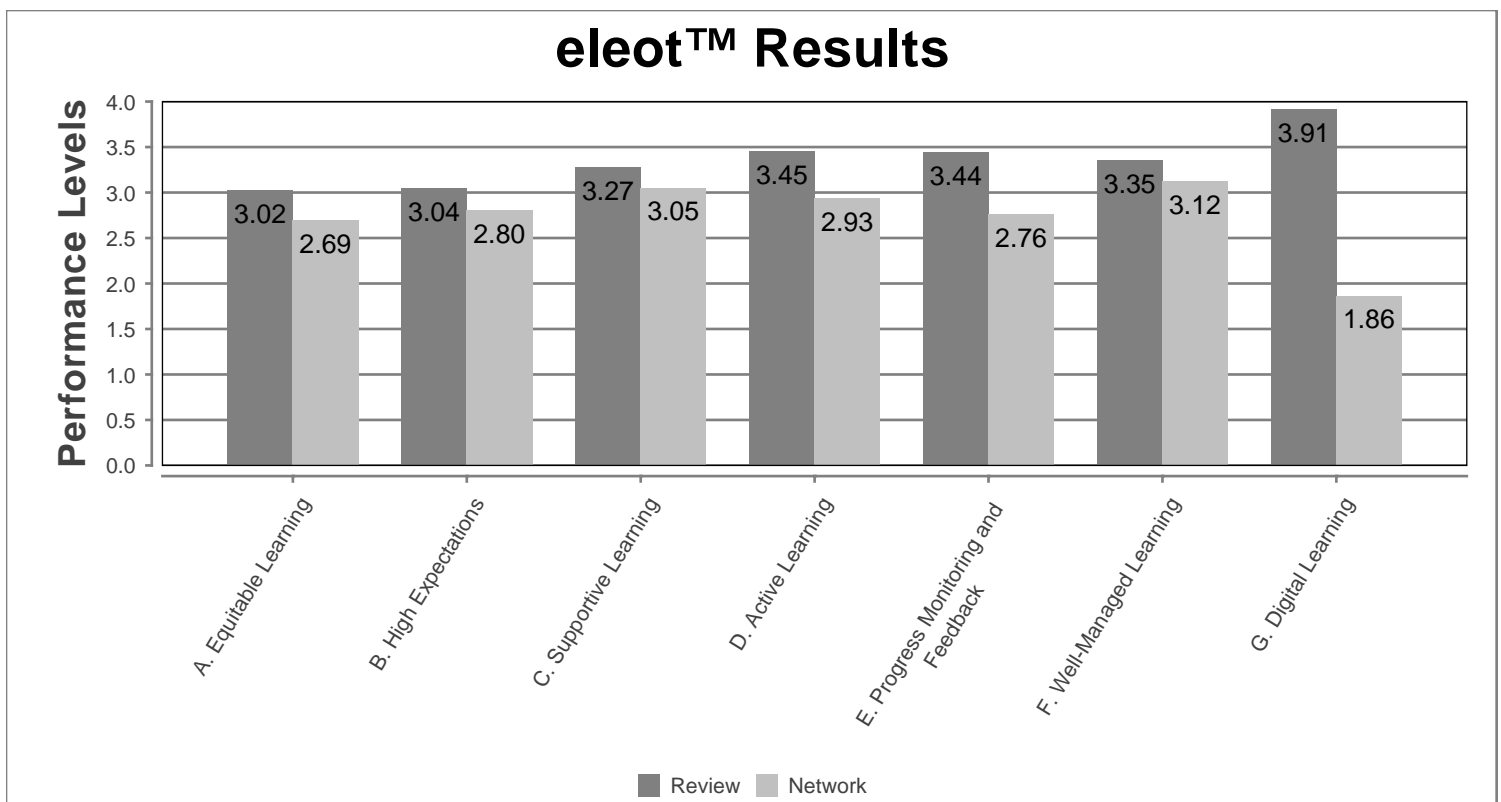
The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	3.00	3.11
Test Administration	3.00	3.46
Equity of Learning	3.00	2.75
Quality of Learning	3.33	2.93

## Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

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. Every member of the External Review Team is required to be trained and pass a certification exam that establishes inter-rater reliability. Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale (4=very evident; 3=evident; 2=somewhat evident; and 1=not observed). The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in eleot™ as well as benchmark results across the AdvancED Network.



During the External Review Team's two-day onsite visit, a total of 11 eleot observations were completed covering nearly every classroom on the campus. The eleot domain scores are represented as Equitable Learning Environment 3.02 (2.69 AEN), High Expectations Environment 3.04 (2.80 AEN), Supportive Learning Environment 3.27 (3.05 AEN), Active Learning Environment 3.45 (2.93 AEN), Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment 3.44 (2.76 AEN), Well Managed Learning Environment 3.35 (3.12 AEN), and Digital

Learning Environment 3.91 (1.86 AEN). Of these results, all areas of the eleot scored well above the AdvancED network average. Most notably, the school should be commended for its use of technology in the classroom as evidenced by its 3.91 Digital Learning Environment score. During this review, none of the areas observed caused concern for the external review team.

The student population provides numerous opportunities for one-on-one and small group instruction. The students were observed to be friendly, respectful, and on task. It was observed that students were engaged in collaborative learning with teachers monitoring student learning and responding appropriately and accordingly to the tone within the room. Examples that support such a high rating for Digital Learning Environment include observations of students actively using technology to create products and complete assignments, students using technology to diagnose and repair damaged computer components and school network issues, and consistent observable use of technology to aid instruction in the classroom. Additionally, interviews with students, staff, administrators, and Board members, the External Review Team learned that students are highly involved in managing the school network and developed the school website. Additionally, students partner with industry and complete internship hours in technology related fields in the community with some students securing employment immediately after high school in high-tech fields. It is evident that there are high expectations for learning and that the school culture is supported and protected. Teachers, students, parents, and Board members all shared a high level of pride in the school and confidence in the work that is being done every day in the classrooms.

In visiting with students, staff, and stakeholders, it is evident that the primary focus is on students before and above all else. All stakeholder groups declared pride for the school and the community and demonstrated their appreciation for each other through interviews, observations, survey data, and evidence provided by the school. Walking into the school, the Team found a strong sense of the school and community culture, and the emphasis placed on the important role the school plays in the community.

**eleot™ Data Summary**

<b>A. Equitable Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.09	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	45.45%	27.27%	18.18%	9.09%
2.	3.91	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	90.91%	9.09%	0.00%	0.00%
3.	2.82	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	54.55%	9.09%	0.00%	36.36%
4.	2.27	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	36.36%	0.00%	18.18%	45.45%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.02</b>						

<b>B. High Expectations</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.36	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	54.55%	36.36%	0.00%	9.09%
2.	3.36	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	54.55%	36.36%	0.00%	9.09%
3.	2.00	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	27.27%	9.09%	0.00%	63.64%
4.	3.36	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	63.64%	18.18%	9.09%	9.09%
5.	3.09	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	54.55%	9.09%	27.27%	9.09%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.04</b>						

<b>C. Supportive Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.45	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	63.64%	27.27%	0.00%	9.09%
2.	3.36	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	54.55%	36.36%	0.00%	9.09%
3.	2.82	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	45.45%	18.18%	9.09%	27.27%
4.	3.55	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	81.82%	0.00%	9.09%	9.09%
5.	3.18	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	54.55%	27.27%	0.00%	18.18%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.27</b>						

<b>D. Active Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.36	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	63.64%	18.18%	9.09%	9.09%
2.	3.36	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	54.55%	36.36%	0.00%	9.09%
3.	3.64	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	63.64%	36.36%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.45</b>						



<b>E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.45	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	54.55%	36.36%	9.09%	0.00%
2.	3.64	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	63.64%	36.36%	0.00%	0.00%
3.	3.45	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	63.64%	18.18%	18.18%	0.00%
4.	3.36	Understands how her/his work is assessed	63.64%	18.18%	9.09%	9.09%
5.	3.27	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	54.55%	27.27%	9.09%	9.09%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.44</b>						

<b>F. Well-Managed Learning</b>			<b>%</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>
1.	3.82	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	90.91%	0.00%	9.09%	0.00%
2.	3.82	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	90.91%	0.00%	9.09%	0.00%
3.	3.09	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	63.64%	9.09%	0.00%	27.27%
4.	2.36	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	45.45%	0.00%	0.00%	54.55%
5.	3.64	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	72.73%	18.18%	9.09%	0.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.35</b>						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.91	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	90.91%	9.09%	0.00%	0.00%
2.	4.00	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
3.	3.82	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	90.91%	0.00%	9.09%	0.00%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.91</b>						

## Findings

### Improvement Priority

Implement a professional development plan aligned with the school's purpose and direction in which all staff members will participate in ongoing professional development with a focus on improving outcomes for students.

(Indicator 3.11)

#### Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.11

#### Evidence and Rationale

Current practice for staff development is to allow individuals to determine the level of participation and area of focus rather than a school-wide focus on a particular area of professional growth for educators. This was evident when the team conducted interviews of staff and administration. Research shows targeted and well-planned professional development for staff and teachers has the potential to impact school-wide student achievement and increase measurable outcomes.

### Opportunity For Improvement

Design and implement a data analysis plan to help make decisions regarding student instruction and learning. (Indicator 5.2, Indicator 5.3, Indicator 5.4, SF2. Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis , SP2. Test Administration, SP3. Quality of Learning, SP4. Equity of Learning)

#### Primary Indicator

Indicator 5.2

### Evidence and Rationale

During interviews and observations, and while reviewing the accreditation report, the External Review Team observed a lack of training on data analysis and the systematic use of data to improve student learning. Schools that have a data analysis professional development plan show higher test scores for all students increased teacher satisfaction, student understanding of individual learning expectations, and overall expected outcomes and growth goals (individual and school).

### **Opportunity For Improvement**

Develop a system that collects data from multiple assessments of student learning while using the data to monitor student growth and make adjustments as needed to aid in student learning.

(Indicator 3.2)

### Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.2

### Evidence and Rationale

During observations and interviews, it was determined that under the current system, achievement data is collected through Statewide achievement tests, and data gathered does not impact curriculum adjustments until the following school year. During interviews the External Review Team heard statements about ISAT data being used to determine adjustments to the curriculum, but not in real time. There was limited evidence of summative assessments and no evidence of formative assessment use. Increasing the frequency of assessment data gathering will enable the school to monitor achievement, and ensure better professional practice while more adequately and quickly responding to student needs.

### **Opportunity For Improvement**

Implement a more formal structure whereby each student has an adult advocate to support each student's instructional experience during all 4 years of high school.

(Indicator 3.9)

### Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.9

### Evidence and Rationale

In interviews with the External Review Team, it was stated students are formally placed in a mentor program with an adult during their Freshman year. During the Sophomore year the mentor program is less structured, and during 11th and 12th-grade students self-select advisors based on an interest area. The small school setting enables students to develop strong relationships with school personnel, however, without the formal process, a risk exists for students to not participate or become engaged by any adult in the environment. Schools that have a formal mentor program for all four years show increased student satisfaction and graduation rates coupled with a stronger connection between the school and community.

# Leadership Capacity

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress towards its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its institutional purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to enact strategies to improve results of student 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 more than 32,000 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.

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 1 - Purpose and Direction

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	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	2.67	2.73
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.	3.67	3.00
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	2.67	2.52

## Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	3.00	2.95
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	2.67	2.90
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.	4.00	3.15
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	3.33	3.11
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	3.67	2.79
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	2.67	2.71

## Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys (student, parent, and teacher) are directly correlated to the AdvancED 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, survey results, and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Questionnaire Administration	4.00	3.43
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	4.00	3.08

## Findings

### Improvement Priority

Create a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.

(Indicator 1.1)

#### Primary Indicator

Indicator 1.1

#### Evidence and Rationale

Artifacts showed that school purpose documents are being updated regularly, however, the systematic process for how that is being accomplished is not found in a documented policy or a formal procedure. Having a process in place will allow for seamless transitions when there is a change in leadership at both the school administration level as well as the board level.

### Opportunity For Improvement

Create a professional development plan for board members regarding the roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its individual members that clearly defines the role the Board plays versus the role school administrators play in operation of the school.

(Indicator 2.2)

#### Primary Indicator

Indicator 2.2

#### Evidence and Rationale

Interviews with school administration and Board members indicate that there is not a succession plan developed for when Board members step down. Development of an onboarding and training process for new Board members will allow for the smooth transition when Board members retire. This will allow for a smooth transition and continued successful operation of the school in accordance with the school's mission, vision, and purpose statements.

### **Powerful Practice**

The relationship between the Board and the school administrators is such that each entity understands their roles and responsibilities and work together for the fulfillment of the mission and vision of the school.

(Indicator 2.3)

#### Primary Indicator

Indicator 2.3

#### Evidence and Rationale

In interviews with Board members and the school administration, the External Review Team heard that the Board supported the administration with daily operation of the school, development of the staff, and instruction of the students. The Team reviewed artifacts including Board minutes, the continuous improvement plan, and the mission/vision statements that provided an appropriate relationship between the Board and the School. Schools that have a good working relationship with their board, have the ability to focus their time, resources, and attention on teacher development and student learning outcomes.

# Resource Utilization

The use and distribution of resources must be aligned and supportive of the needs of an institution and the students served. Institutions must ensure that resources are aligned with the stated mission and are distributed equitably so that the needs of students are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes an examination of the allocation and use of resources, the equity of resource distribution to need, the ability of the institution to ensure appropriate levels of funding and sustainability of resources, as well as evidence of long-range capital and resource planning effectiveness.

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 more than 32,000 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 and ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

## Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

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

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
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.	2.67	2.95
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	3.33	2.98
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.67	3.14
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	4.00	2.84
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	3.67	2.63



Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	2.00	2.86
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	3.00	2.75

## Findings

### Opportunity For Improvement

Consider creating a position for a full-time Career and Technical Education (CTE) Administrator who can focus solely on advancing the CTE opportunities in the school who can help chart growth into the future.

(Indicator 4.1)

#### Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.1

#### Evidence and Rationale

The CTE administrator wears multiple hats and works as a classroom teacher as well as the CTE administrator. During observations and interviews, it became evident that there is a need and a desire to have a full-time CTE administrator who can help the school grow and improve into the future.

### Opportunity For Improvement

Develop student services that support planning and programming for physical, social, emotional, assessment, career, and referral needs for all students.

(Indicator 4.6, Indicator 4.7)

#### Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.6

#### Evidence and Rationale

After interviewing staff and reading the Accreditation Report, the External Review Team noticed that school personnel try to meet the needs of all students in their physical, social and emotional needs. The areas are addressed when brought up by students or staff but no evidence of a proactive plan or program were evident. Every student's physical, social, and emotional health is vital to their overall success academically and in society. Research shows that an opportunity to an open proactive approach to these types of programs promotes self-awareness and knowledge of others needs, cultures and beliefs. Assessment, career and referral planning are also vital aspects to a comprehensive Students Services/Support Plan.

### Powerful Practice

Given the nature of the school, and the emphasis on use of technology, it is obvious that the school will have

an overabundance of technology available for students and staff to use in aiding their learning.  
(Indicator 4.5)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.5

Evidence and Rationale

Everywhere you look, there are people (staff and students) using technology to aid in effective teaching and learning. The school provides multiple opportunities for students to practice and perfect skills related to network infrastructure, designing, and fixing various technological systems in order to be prepared for success after high school.

# Conclusion

It is evident that all of the adults associated with the school and the community demonstrate care and concern for the well-being and performance of the students. There is a large theme of support for the whole child. This is evident as demonstrated by the school staff as well as members of the community. Students and staff have pride in their school and demonstrate respect for each other. There is evidence that the school and community is dedicated to advanced opportunities for every student including providing students access to the real world through a formal internship program. The school has a feeling of family in that everyone is aware of student needs and responds appropriately.

The leadership and teachers at Meridian Technical Charter High School (MTCHS) have expressed a desire to begin planning for the future of the school. Over the next two years, the school hopes to map out what the future will look like for the school including the prospect of expansion above and beyond their current cap of 200 students. Part of this work depends on the legislative level in setting or expanding the funding formula used for charter schools. As enrollment increases, the potential to increase student access to advanced opportunities and a larger variety, of course, options (Art, Music, etc) is possible, thus enhancing opportunities for students. To better accomplish this work of planning for the future, it would be in the best interest of MTCHS to increase a current position of CTE Administrator from part-time to full-time. This will provide even more support to the programs offered by MTCHS and to the students served by the faculty and staff of the school.

For MTCHS, the Improvement Priorities are identified in two related areas: First in providing a professional development plan, and second focusing some of that professional development on the use of data and how data can drive instruction. The External Review Team is confident that both of these Improvement Priorities can be achieved over the next two years. The Team believes that the stakeholders of MTCHS will make these two items a priority and will work towards completion because of the pride they have in being the best school, students, staff, and community. The External Review Team believes in the staff and leadership of MTCHS will work their mission. MTCHS's commitment to their mission only further cements the opinion of the External Review team that every student will find success at MTCHS.

## Improvement Priorities

The institution should use the findings from this review to guide the continuous improvement process. The institution must address the Improvement Priorities listed below:

- Create a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.
- Implement a professional development plan aligned with the school's purpose and direction in which all staff members will participate in ongoing professional development with a focus on improving outcomes for students.

# Accreditation Recommendation

## Index of Education Quality

The Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) provides a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of indicators and evaluative criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus.

The IEQ™ comprises three domains: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; and 3) the use of resources and data to support and optimize learning.

The overall and domain scores can range from 100-400. The domain scores are derived from: the AdvancED Standards and indicators ratings; results of the Analysis of Student Performance; and data from Stakeholder Feedback Surveys (students, parents, and staff).

	External Review IEQ Score	AdvancED Network Average
Overall Score	306.84	278.94
Teaching and Learning Impact	290.48	268.48
Leadership Capacity	330.30	293.71
Resource Utilization	319.05	286.27

The IEQ™ results include information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria as well as to other institutions in the AdvancED Network. The institution should use the information in this report, including the corresponding performance rubrics, to identify specific areas of improvement.

Consequently, the External Review Team recommends to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that the institution earn the distinction of accreditation for a five-year term. AdvancED will review the results of the External Review to make a final determination including the appropriate next steps for the institution in response to these findings.

# Addenda

## Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Mr. Tim Rigsby	Mr. Tim Rigsby has worked in education since December 2005 having served as a special education assistant, coach, teacher, athletic director, and principal. Currently he serves as a technology teacher in the Nampa School District working with middle school students as well as a principal for the Idaho Digital Learning Academy. He has an Ed.S. in Educational Leadership, M.Ed. in Educational Leadership, and B.S. in Physical Education and Community Health from the University of Idaho and currently holds certificates in Health 6/12, Physical Education PK/12, Principal and Superintendent.
Jeff Farden	As a former science teacher and building principal, Jeff currently serves as a member of Idaho Digital Learning's Supervision Team and holds the position of Lead Principal and Regional Coordinator. In this capacity, he works with IDLA's part time principals to provide an additional level of support to IDLA teachers and also assist schools with implementation of online course work throughout Region III.
Mrs. Jewels Carpenter	Jewels Carpenter has worked in education since 1999, having served as a teacher, State Program Manager, and High School Vice Principal. Currently she serves as the Director of Career & Technical Education for the Nampa School District. She has her Masters in Educational Leadership, an additional endorsement in Career & Technical Ed. Administration from the University of Idaho and her Bachelors degree in Kinesiology from Sonoma State University.
Mrs. Christine McMillen	Christine has a rich educational background in both special education and general education. She has additional training in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and has served as department chair. She is currently Principal of Atlas High School in the Middleton School District.

Member	Brief Biography
<p>Mr. Justin Touchstone</p>	<p>Justin Touchstone currently serves as the Quality Program Manager for Engineering Technology Education at the Idaho Division of Career and Technical Education providing statewide leadership for program delivery of Technology and Engineering Education. His duties includes the development statewide standards, professional development opportunities for teachers, and working with post-secondary programs working in conjunction with secondary program. Touchstone also assess the implementation of the statewide standards and the associated technical skills assessments for each Technology Education program and makes program improvement recommendations based on the research and available data.</p> <p>In addition to managing current programs, Justin has been involved in the development of computer science standards along with developing the teacher credentialing for adding computer science credentialing to CTE in the state of Idaho. Justin is actively involved in working with the universities and related industries to expand and develop the Technology Education teacher pipeline within the state.</p> <p>Justin serves as the Idaho Engineering by Design state consortium director, and is working to expand EbD and develop the pre-engineering program with the state of Idaho. Justin also serves as the State Advisor for the Idaho Technology Student Association where he oversees a career and technical student organization (CTSO) serving over 400 student in 25 chapters. His duties includes working with the leadership development of the state officers as well as working with teachers to incorporate TSA leadership activates into the classroom.</p> <p>Justin holds an Idaho Occupational Specialist Certification and is endorsed to teach general engineering, drafting, and Civil Engineering. Justin earned his Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Idaho in 1997 and worked in the Architectural industry for 13 years working of projects all over the United States. In 2010, Justin transitioned to high school teaching. He taught Pre-Engineering in the West Ada School district for five years before taking his current position with the Idaho CTE. Justin is currently working on his M.S in Curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in CTE as well as his CTE administrator certificate.</p>

## Next Steps

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with 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. Consider the Opportunities for Improvement identified throughout the report that are provided by the team in the spirit of continuous improvement and the institution's commitment to improving its capacity to improve student learning.
4. Develop action plans to address the Improvement Priorities identified by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward addressing the Improvement Priorities.
5. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
6. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Improvement Priorities. Institutions are required to respond to all Improvement Priorities. 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 address the Improvement Priorities. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the responses to the Improvement Priorities and the resulting improvement.
7. Continue to meet the AdvancED Standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

## About AdvancED

AdvancED is the world leader in providing improvement and accreditation services to education providers of all types in their pursuit of excellence in serving students. AdvancED serves as a trusted partner to more than 32,000 public and private schools and school systems – enrolling more than 20 million students - across the United States and 70 countries.

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 became part of AdvancED.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. The Accreditation Divisions of AdvancED share research-based quality standards that cross school system, state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified and consistent process designed to engage educational institutions in continuous improvement.



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