



Accreditation Progress Report

Highland Senior High School

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Accreditation Progress Report

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1.0 About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

Background. Dedicated to advancing excellence in education worldwide, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 27,000 schools in 65 countries. AdvancED provides accreditation under the seals of 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).

The Accreditation Process.

To earn and maintain accreditation, schools must:

- 1. Meet the AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems.**

Schools demonstrate adherence to the seven AdvancED standards which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school systems to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.

- 2. Engage in continuous improvement.**

Schools implement continuous improvement focused on improving student performance and school effectiveness.

- 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 required actions to help the school improve. The school acts on the team's required actions and submits an Accreditation Progress Report at prescribed intervals following the Quality Assurance Review.

The AdvancED accreditation process 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.

2.0 Introduction to the Accreditation Progress Report

Purpose

The Accreditation Progress Report (APR) is a critical component of the AdvancED accreditation process. It engages the school in a detailed review and analysis of the steps it has taken to address the required actions made by the AdvancED Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team. Completing the report helps the school focus and reflect on its continuous improvement efforts.

It is the responsibility of the school to address each of the QAR report's required actions within the 5-year term accreditation. Deadlines for completion of the report are based on the school's accreditation status and must be met to maintain accreditation. Some schools may complete multiple reports during the 5-year term to demonstrate that they have fully addressed the required actions.

Structure of the Report

The APR is organized around the required actions in the school's QAR team report. The APR lists the required action from the report along with the rationale and evidence supporting the required action. The school then indicates the progress that it has made toward meeting the required action and provides a more detailed response describing the actions it has taken and the results obtained. The school provides a response for each of the QAR team required actions.

Following the school's response is the reviewer's response. Each APR is read by an AdvancED reader in the state or regional office who reviews the school's response to determine if the required action has been met. The reader provides his/her assessment of the progress the school has made and then offers comments to the school. If required actions remain in progress or not addressed, a new APR will be created with a new deadline for completion. As noted earlier, the school must address the required actions within the 5-year accreditation term.

Conclusion

The Accreditation Progress Report is a useful report for members of the school and broader community. It helps community members see and monitor the ongoing improvement efforts of their school. It demonstrates how the school uses its accreditation for the ongoing benefit of the students it serves.

3.0. Summary

1.1. Based on the actions taken by your institution to address the required actions provided by the QAR team, what has been the impact on your institution's overall effectiveness?:

Highland High School continues to improve. In October, 2012, Highland High School was designated with an "A" status under the state's most current accountability system. This was a two letter grade improvement from last year. Based upon the Indiana Department of Education's criteria, our school received 4.0/4.0. This score was determined by a measurement of student outcomes in 4 categories: Student performance and/or improvement on the Algebra I and English 10 End-of-Course Assessments; student on-time graduation rate; and a calculation of students' college and career readiness (the percentage of students passing Advanced Placement Exams, earning college credit in concurrent enrollment/dual credit classes, and/or earning industry certification through successful completion of CTE programs of study offered to Highland students attending the Hammond Area Career (HACC).

Based on the actions taken by the staff to address the required actions provided by the QAR team, you can assess the positive impact on overall effectiveness. For example, 95.1% of our students passed the Algebra I assessment and 87.3% passed the English 10 assessment. Categories of improvement included a two percent gain in student performance between Grade 8 and Grade 10 on the Algebra I ECA. Significant as well is the improvement in the school's graduation rate, moving from 80 percent in 2009 to almost 93 percent in 2012. Contributing to this increase are fewer semester course failures over the three year period from 2010-2013. An average of 81 percent of Highland High School students passed all of the classes in their semester schedule over this period of time. The school also added an alternative program for at risk students. Finally, the school has improved upon its passing rates on Advanced Placement (AP) examinations. In 2009, 13 percent of students taking AP tests scored a 3, 4, or 5. In 2012, 52 percent of students taking AP tests scored 3, 4, or 5. Corresponding to this increase in performance is an increase in the percentage of students taking AP tests, from 16 percent in 2009 to 42 percent in 2011.

1.2. What would you consider to be challenges that still lie ahead and how do you plan to address those challenges?:

Two challenges lie ahead which are exclusively out of the control of the faculty and administration of Highland High School: an increasing number of students hailing from backgrounds of poverty coming up through the system and a declining enrollment. These two forces will challenge the performance gains we have made over the past several years.

The work that we have done so far, in terms of providing all students with a "guaranteed and viable" curriculum, will sustain academic improvement by creating a "learnable" (or mastered) versus a "teachable" curriculum. By focusing upon the continued development and refinement of local common core state standards, quarterly instructional objectives, and common formative assessments combined with a professional learning communities model, we will be able to provide a safety net for the struggling learner as well as bridging the gap between what students demonstrate that they know and where they need to be, as defined by the standards. As financial resources shrink, we will have to leverage our precious professional development time to make the most substantial impact at the least cost to the school district.

1.3. How will you use the insights gained from your accreditation activities to inform and enhance your quality assurance and school improvement efforts?:

We are committed to the process of continuous quality improvement. The professional learning communities model that we implemented at Highland High School during the last two years is a product of research that we have done on the topic of how to use assessment together with curriculum alignment and refinement to drive school improvement efforts. This research effort originated from one of the recommendations made by the accreditation team during their visit. That recommendation encouraged HHS to study the assessment efforts of school similar in size and demographics to ours that by use of this strategy were witnessing marked gains in student results. Of particular benefit was a visit to a consortium of north and northwest suburban Chicago schools working together with consultant Joe Crawford. These school successfully implemented integration of their standards with the Common Core Standards, thus creating local CCS, that in turn were aligned with Quarterly Instructional Objectives and assessed by the school on a quarterly basis. Highland High School adopted the contentious cycle of improvement (that Crawford calls "Plan Do, Act, Check"). The result of this research led to a system that is not only changing how we use and view assessment; it is also transforming the learning and teaching culture of or school.

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Highland Senior High School hosted a Quality Assurance Review team on 03/18/2010 - 03/19/2010. Through interviews with school stakeholders, classroom observations, and a review of school documents and student performance results, the team developed a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) report detailing its findings from the visit. The full report can be viewed at www.advanc-ed.org.

The QAR report contained commendations and required actions for the school. The school is responsible for addressing each of the required actions in the report. At prescribed intervals based on the school's accreditation status, the school must complete an Accreditation Progress Report. Below, please find the required actions from the QAR report and the school's response to each required action. Following the school's response is the reviewer's progress response and comments.

4.0. Required Action 1

Source: QAR

Date: 2010-04-19

Required Action:

Develop appropriate formative assessments and performance measures to assist students in learning the necessary End-of-Course Assessment (ECA) content materials. Research, develop, and implement strategies for special education and limited English proficiency students. Review base-line data to determine the areas of strength and weakness to ascertain best practice strategies. Use the ECA data to more formally plan in the major content areas strategies that enhance student achievement on these major accountability assessments.

Evidence:

These recommendations are a result of a review of documentation, the Standards Assessment Report (SAR), and teacher/administrator interviews.

Rationale:

This is a critical step necessary for improvement on the ECAs. It is important that all departments participate in the development for formative assessment processes.

4.1. School Response

Progress Status: Completed

Response: We have gone beyond developing local assessments in math and ELA that assess and reinforce content and skills found exclusively on the ECA. Granted, we are using Acuity in both math and ELA to predict performance and use its instructional resources to design problems to help build skills. We are also using USATest Prep to build and reinforce skills of students in special populations in Algebra, ELA, and Biology.

In addition, we have developed course-specific classroom assessments administered by teachers on a quarterly basis. The assessments all contain a writing component. We are writing across the curriculum. Our ELA teachers (9-12) complete quarterly writing assessments with all of their students. To support students in Biology, we enroll skill-

deficient students in and Integrated Chemistry and Physics course as freshmen. Those students take Biology as 10th graders, thus taking the Biology ECA a year later than the rest of their classmates. We hope to see improved performance on the Bio ECA from those students.

4.2. Reviewer Response

Progress Response:

**Comments for
Institution:**

5.0. Required Action 2

Source: QAR

Date: 2010-04-19

Required Action:

Enhance use of comparison and trend data from comparable schools to evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment program.

Evidence:

This opportunity is noted in the SAR and reinforced by documentation reviews and teacher interviews.

Rationale:

The development of comparison and trend data will assist the school in looking carefully at all of the subgroups in the building as compared to groups from around the state in English and mathematics.

5.1. School Response

Progress Status: Completed

Response: We have conducted this analysis of students in our own school system because we can discern trends within cohorts of students that we work with and decide how to best intervene. Comparing our results with other schools is really a meaningless exercise since the comparisons are not truly valid.

We have begun to utilize the results of the PSAT; the Acuity as a performance indicator in math, ELA, and Biology; as well as analysis of ISTEP and ECA data in order to make judgments about the effectiveness of student learning and classroom teaching.

The effectiveness of these strategies is evident in our improved student results during the past two years.

5.2. Reviewer Response

Progress Response:

**Comments for
Institution:**

6.0. Required Action 3

Source: QAR

Date: 2010-04-19

Required Action:

Utilize the Essential Questions in instructional planning as a major part of curriculum mapping.

Evidence:

Within the curriculum mapping framework adopted by the school corporation, it is obvious during examinations of documentation and through interviews of teachers that Essential Questions are not universally being used in the curriculum mapping process.

Rationale:

The Essential Questions set the tone for the curriculum goals on the maps. They can be used as both goals and objectives in assessing student learning and teaching.

6.1. School Response

Progress Status: In Progress

Response:

Now that we have refined our curriculum and quarterly assessments, as the new year begins we will reintroduce essential questions and curriculum mapping during 2013-14.

6.2. Reviewer Response

Progress Response:

**Comments for
Institution:**

7.0. Required Action 4

Source: QAR

Date: 2010-04-19

Required Action:

Establish a consistent and continuous system of reviewing student performance. The area of analysis and review of student performance continues to emerge as described by teaching staff. There is movement by some departments, but not in others.

Evidence:

This opportunity area is noted by the team in both interviews of the North Central Association (NCA) coordinating team, teachers, and administrators as well as in documentation.

Rationale:

This is a critical area to becoming a great school. The ability to analyze data to make student-centered learning and assessment decisions is an ongoing activity that is important that the entire school develops.

7.1. School Response

Progress Status: Completed

Response: We utilize our weekly Wednesday early release professional development days for data analysis, assessment writing and refinement, and instructional improvement. Our teacher teams are responsible for writing a reflection at the end of each quarterly cycle of assessment. This reflection is organized around three questions (as seen in this exemplary response):

Highland High School

Professional Development Agenda

Course: Integrated Chemistry and Physics

Name: Anthony Belli, Sean Hunter, and Patrick Mucha

Date: April 2013

Written reflective response

1.

Based upon the results of your first formative assessment, in your opinion, was it sufficiently rigorous? What evidence can you offer that supports your assessment of your results? If it was not sufficiently rigorous, what evidence can you present that supports your opinion? Finally, what changes or improvements will you make in your classroom instruction materials, instructional strategies and/or assessment to help students master your first quarter QIOs?

Yes, the assessment was sufficiently rigorous. We included multiple choice and short answers questions from each level of the Depth of Knowledge Framework. In the future we plan on including more questions on our weekly quizzes that assess content covered in the previous weeks. We believe that by keeping the students responsible for content they have already been assessed on they will be likely to retain more knowledge. Additionally, we have begun to integrate more writing on our weekly quizzes as opposed to having only multiple choice questions.

1. What type of feedback will/have you given your students after analyzing and discussing your results with your team? To help you with this question, please see the attachment entitled "7 Things to Remember About Feedback?" (From "Feedback for Learning" Educational Leadership, vol. 70 (1), September, 2012).

We return the test to the students and allow them to make the proper corrections to their assessment. This is a tool we can use to further review the subject material and types/styles of questions that we will likely include on the final. After they make corrections, we can go over major ideas/questions that the majority of the students answered incorrectly. This gives us the ability to correct any holes in the concepts that still might be occurring. This feedback on their performances should allow the students

to realize that these concepts are important AND that they are necessary to build into the next concept(s).

1. What resources/assistance do you need to improve your students' reading, writing, and/or speaking skills as they relate to your content area of teaching? (For math teachers only: What resources/assistance do you need to improve your students' Mathematical Processes skills?) To help you with these questions, please see the three attachments entitled "Key Shifts of the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics," "Formative Assessment Methods Aligned to Learning Targets and Bloom's Taxonomy," and "Bloom's Lesson Planning Framework for Scaffolding."

We will develop a method of ensuring students are conducting the required reading from the book and assigned reading. We need to develop a better method to reward positive behavior in this regard. To improve on speaking skills we will continue to include more whiteboarding and presentation by student of problem solutions. We need additional student generated writing samples to model successful scientific writing.

7.2. Reviewer Response

Progress Response:

**Comments for
Institution:**