

**Report of the
Quality Assurance Review Team
for
John Paul II Elementary School**

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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) 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 April 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), and National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form one strong unified organization dedicated to education quality. That unified organization, known as AdvancED, creates the world's largest education community, representing 27,000 public and private schools and districts across the United States and in 65 countries worldwide and educating 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 North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), a division of AdvancED, visited the John Paul II Elementary School in Overland Park, Kansas, United States on 12/03/2009 - 12/03/2009.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed Susie English, 2 members of the administrative team, 7 students, 7 parents, and 9 teachers. In addition, two support staff and one parish pastor were interviewed. 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.

- **A welcoming, safe, positive, faith-based, and student-centered environment exists at the school.**

The first impressions of the school lead to an immediate sense of family and faith. The walls are covered with student artifacts, both academic and religious. The school is organized around learning, with classroom layout, learning center proximity, and use of space all dedicated to a student-centered environment. All stakeholder groups interviewed commented on the safe and welcoming climate with faith underlying all they do.

An environment, conducive to learning, growth, and dedication, is so important to the overall success of any school.

- **Student achievement is a strong school-wide focus.**

Data is made available to teachers, students and parents in order to fully understand each child's academic needs and fullest potential. The move from administering the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) to giving the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment has meant better alignment of data to the teaching standards and better knowledge of student progress. The staff has used the new MAP data to identify "flagged" students in need of further assistance from the learning center teachers. The school has also reached the lofty levels of student achievement on the Kansas Assessments qualifying for the Standard of Excellence in several grade levels and in several subjects.

Such data-driven decision making and instructional changes attest to the school's focus on student achievement and what is best for student learning.

- **Available resources, including teaching faculty, are being used to their maximum potential to further the mission of the school.**

As the resources of the school were discussed, particularly the teaching faculty, it was very clear the school has made very good choices as they utilize their staff. Three teachers not only teach supportive classes such as technology, physical education and Spanish, but they also serve as learning center teachers part of the day. They work one-on-one or in small groups with students needing additional time and teaching in order to master the curriculum. The staff also provides many before and after school experiences and enrichments.

A small staff must look for innovative ways to maximize their time and contact with students and John Paul II Elementary School (JP II) has done this very well.

- **The faculty, administration, and staff are supportive, caring, and committed to the helping each student reach their greatest potential.**

As stated in their mission, helping each student reach their fullest potential is a daily expectation. Parents and students both confirmed during interviews the strong commitment the school has to their overall mission. Students felt very supported and challenged to continually give their best. Teachers were seen as both caring and committed to serving each individual child.

A strong commitment to a strong mission will always serve to guide a school to high expectations and excellent results.

- **There is a strong sense of merged community and family, yet with individual connections with students.**

During interviews with students, parents and faculty, the terms "community" and "family" were frequently used. However, it was also very obvious the one-on-one level of caring and teaching that is taking place. This was supported by the pastor and principal observations as well. With the merger of two parish schools into one, this sense of family and community is particularly important.

In order to be a successful Catholic school, both academically and spiritually, both levels of caring and teaching must exist - the family/community level as well as the individual student level. Both are achieved quite well at John Paul II School.

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.

- **Identify ways to further deploy technology, both as a classroom instructional tool and a management and communication resource.**

During classroom observations and school tours, there appeared to be a lack of technology present in most classrooms. Students may access computers in a laboratory situation, however, there did not appear to be much use of technology as an instructional tool during classroom lessons. In addition, teachers are not all using the online gradebook and homework software available to the school. Parents and students were very interested in being able to virtually "see" their child's entries in the gradebook, see if assignments were missing, view scores on assignments and tests, and identify any homework their child might have. Parents viewed this as another strong source of home/school communication. A lack of funding options has helped slow the acquisition of technology, making the infusion into the classroom less possible.

The use of technology, both as a teaching enhancement tool and for management and communication, is an very important skill for students and teachers.

- **Investigate ways to further enhance and broaden accessibility to various resources to support the mission of the school, including grants, enrollment, alumni and the Archdiocese.**

During conversations and interviews with the administration, the pastor, parents, and staff, it was very evident that resources play a large role in the decision-making of the school. It is difficult during these economic times to have all of the resources needed to fully support the mission of the school and all of its programs. Several needs were mentioned, including increased access to technology, both within the classroom and for managerial and record keeping needs. Many ideas were discussed, including the possibility of grant writing, having more contact with alumni, seeking out increased enrollment, and possibly seeking ideas from the Archdiocese.

These ideas and other possible ways to enhance all types of resources will assist the school in the pursuit of their mission.

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 NCA CASI accreditation seals are available at www.advanc-ed.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 John Paul II Elementary 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:

John Paul II Catholic School does an excellent job of committing to a shared mission and purpose. The faculty and administration came together as one staff at the beginning of the merger in 2004/05. They brainstormed what they wanted to include in a new mission statement and developed several options. The entire staff then voted on the final version. The School Council, pastors, and Parish Council also viewed the mission before final approval. This mission statement is displayed at the entrance of the school as well as throughout the building and in each classroom. It is communicated through the school handbook, in newsletters, on the school website, is part of the school's brochure, and included in the discussion at meetings. The mission is recited each morning by all students as part of the morning announcements. Students, parents and staff were all very aware of the mission and how it guides the decision-making of the school and parish.

The excellent commitment to a shared mission and purpose has allowed the school to build stakeholder understanding and support. The importance of this can not be underestimated, as it has helped the community embrace the difficult process of merging St. Pius X and Queen of the Holy Rosary schools.

The staff continually reviews the school improvement process and collaborates to ensure that all of its objectives are implemented. The process of continually evaluating the school, students, and community helps to validate their chosen direction and processes. Evidence of this improvement process can be found in the School Handbook, School Improvement Plan, meeting minutes, and professional development. General understanding of this process is also shared by students, parents, and the faculty.

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

- The staff has worked to build overall stakeholder support.
- The staff continually reviews and revises their school profile.
- The development of the mission was embraced by the school community.
- Participating in professional development and sharing newly gained knowledge with peers has helped unify the two teaching staffs and guide the continuous improvement process.
- Tools and processes are implemented at the classroom level to support the school improvement plan.

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

- Continue to review the school mission statement on a regular basis to ensure its alignment with future goals.
- Construct a vision statement to complement the mission and purpose of the school.

Finding: John Paul II Elementary 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 leadership and governance of JP II work within the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas, yet this leadership is very site-based in terms of policies and effective operation. With the merger of the schools at St. Pius X and Queen of the Holy Rosary in 2004/05 into one new school, John Paul II, the leadership of the administration and the two pastors was crucial. The two parishes support the unified school, even though the school is located near the Queen of the Holy Rosary church. Communication and visibility continues to build and solidify support for the merger.

The principal reports directly to the two pastors and meets regularly with them to discuss policies, resources, events, and any other issues needing their input. The pastors are very willing to trust the day-to-day operation of the school to the principal. The merger of the two schools also required many documents, including the student/parent and faculty handbooks, to be rewritten and approved. Parents and staff were very aware of the handbooks, policies and procedures that make up the effective operation of the school.

Parents are offered leadership roles through participation in the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) and being elected to the School Council, which is a ten-member board that serves in an advisory capacity to the school. The Council includes parents as well as parishioners. Parents are also offered the opportunity for input via the parent survey conducted yearly. There is also a Parish Council for each parish and an overall Finance Council, which makes recommendations regarding budget and expenditures. At the school level, there is an administrative assistant who also serves as the bookkeeper for the school. Regular audits are conducted by the Archdiocese.

Teachers and students are also provided opportunities for leadership. All teachers serve in some capacity on school improvement committees, the Student Intervention Team (SIT), goal committees, and other groups as needed. They are very instrumental in the decision-making regarding school improvement and instructional strategies. For the students, there is a strong Student Council comprised of representatives from each class with officers coming from grades 6, 7, and 8. They meet monthly to work on school-wide activities and consult with the administration and faculty sponsors on the school issues.

Professional development is heavily tied to the school improvement plan and goals in math and reading. Many trainings are conducted onsite by the Archdiocese. Teachers who attend other off-campus trainings share the knowledge they have gained with the rest of the staff. Faculty also regularly share innovative classroom practices during five-minute reports at faculty meetings. The principal is responsible for teacher

evaluations with a newly developed process used by all schools in the Archdiocese. New staff is evaluated twice their first year with yearly evaluations for veteran staff.

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

- The staff is involved in a quality professional development process including consistent sharing of quality classroom practices.
- The merger of the two parish schools into one new school was brought about through the excellent leadership of the administration and the two parish pastors.
- There are excellent opportunities for leadership roles among teachers, staff, students and parents.
- The administration is very open to suggestions and ideas and is very understanding of the needs of both parishes.

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

- Continue to look for additional sources of funding for the school, including grant writing.
- Continue to work to involve parents, particularly through the PTO.

Finding: John Paul II Elementary School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" 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:

John Paul II Catholic School meets the essence of the teaching and learning standard by providing research-based curriculum and instructional methods that support increased student performance. Teachers described Hitting the Bullseye with Curriculum as a way to identify the grade level standards for each grade. This promotes effective teaching of assessed indicators and curricular outcomes. Teachers shared how they use data to make instructional decisions. Students can be “flagged” for extra support. Students reported that some children go to the Learning Center if they need extra help, with parents reporting the same. They both viewed this a positive aspect of the school. Students indicated they have opportunities to do different or more challenging assignments based on their academic performance. Eighth graders take a placement test to determine eligibility for high school algebra course. Overall, parents, students, and teachers described that students have opportunities to increase their academic performance.

John Paul II has a School Improvement Plan which teachers designed to enhance learning in math and reading. The reading interventions include A-Z Reading, graphic organizers (specifically on text structure), small group instruction, and frequent assessment of student progress. Math interventions include the purchase of new textbooks (and professional development for effective instruction), Mountain Math, math fact fluency, and flagged students' participation in the ALEKS math program.

Parents report that teachers communicate student progress during conferences, but they receive more immediate feedback through email and “backpack” communications. Students were clearly aware that

their teachers communicate about their progress to them during class and to their parents in a variety of ways. The school improvement plan is monitored by teacher lesson plans, faculty meeting group sharing, and regular submission of student work samples. Teachers report they communicate with each other concerning quality teaching interventions and student achievement on a regular basis. Collaboration happens after school and during faculty meeting times. Three learning center teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to identify which students need additional academic support. These processes are all a part of the school's Multi-Tier System of Support (MTSS) designed to help each student succeed.

Students described how they participate in formative assessments. After the assessment, the student can return to the classroom from testing and share anything they found difficult or confusing. The teacher then reviews with the whole class. Parents shared that the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments let them know how their child is doing on grade level outcomes. Teachers reported this is the third year of MAP testing and they understand how to use the data for instructional decision-making. Students understand that assessments are important for their teachers to help them learn. Student attitudes to the learning center were positive. School climate is such that students are comfortable working with students across grade levels.

John Paul II staff attend many professional development workshops that are aligned with their school improvement plan. After attending a workshop or conference, teachers do a "five-minute report" at faculty meetings. These same "five-minute reports" are used by teachers to share other classroom strategies that are working successfully. These are accompanied by handouts so teachers can return to their own classroom and consider implementation.

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

- The use of data is effectively used in identifying students for differentiated instruction.
- Teachers may access various professional development opportunities.
- The staff has created an environment in which students feel comfortable and successful.

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

- Continue differentiated instruction and consider activities for enrichment.
- Infuse more technology into classroom instruction.
- Visit schools that are implementing the MTSS as a multigrade practice.

Finding: John Paul II Elementary 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:

John Paul II School has shown increased student performance. After the merger of two schools in 2004/05 school year, John Paul II also merged data. The testing for students changed from two grade levels in math and two grade levels in reading to grades 3 through 8 in both math and reading. Data indicates student growth. The school displayed the Building Report Card from Kansas State Department of Education as evidence of recent state assessment data. Student scores increased in math from 70% proficient and above in 2004 to 79.6% proficient and above in 2009. Reading scores increased from 84% proficient and above in 2004 to 92.6% proficient and above in 2009. Also available as evidence to the team were the multiple Standards of Excellence awards for the school and the grade levels. Other local data indicated increased student performance. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) was administered in the first two years of the school improvement cycle. The school changed assessments from ITBS to the MAP tests that are more directly aligned with the Kansas state standards. Both assessments showed program sustainment or improvement. Small class sizes impact performance results.

In preparation for summative Kansas assessments, John Paul II administers the formative assessments from the University of Kansas. The teachers also identify those students who need additional support, and these students are assessed more frequently by the learning center teachers. Parents are informed of student progress in a variety of ways. Individual reports are shared with parents, and those students who have more intensive needs are assessed more frequently for instructional decision-making.

Students in grades 6 and 8 are also administered the Assessment of Catechesis and Religious Education (ACRE) to measure their understanding of the Catholic faith. It was unclear if the results were shared with parents on a regular basis.

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

- Student performance has increased in both math and reading on the state assessments.
- Resources were accessed in order to provide formative assessments to students.
- Assessment results are communicated to the parents.

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

- Clarify the significance of student assessment results such as meeting the Standard of Excellence, grade level results, and ACRE with both parents and students.

Finding: John Paul II Elementary School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" 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:

John Paul II School recruits and employs professional staff members who are well qualified to fulfill their assignments. The merged faculty from its two predecessor schools have formed a cohesive, cooperative group of staff members which meet Archdiocesan and Kansas state standards. Students and parents express support for the staff and the manner in which they carry out their assignments.

The individual teachers are appropriately assigned to areas that suit their training and abilities. Those assignments are done in a manner that effectively uses part-time as well as full-time staff to maximize the use of resources. For example, Learning Center teachers teach other classes part of the day, and are assigned to specific grade levels when working in their capacity as resource teachers. Students and parents view their teachers as a very strong point about the school.

A high degree of professional development is shown by the record of attendance at training and staff development activities. Furthermore, those attending staff development activities return to school and share what they have found at regularly scheduled teacher meetings. The five-minute reports may be followed up in various ways and handouts are provided.

The budget for staff appears to be adequate to meet the needs of the school and staff. The budget for learning materials is generally adequate, although the amount of learning and teaching technology appears limited. The building is clean and the recent refurbishments and a newer gym floor indicate an awareness of the importance of good maintenance and repair. Staff, teachers, parents and students indicate they feel safe at school. Procedures for fire, tornado and lockdown drills are published and followed.

Students report feeling comfortable with teachers when seeking advice about subjects other than academics. Teachers are supported by a part-time counselor hired through Catholic Charities. In addition to individual counseling, the counselor carries out VIRTUS training and guidance groups.

John Paul II School provides support for students with a wide range of academic needs. Three teachers use part of their time to work with designated classes for remediation of “flagged” students. Older students may take algebra classes at Bishop Miege High School. The school has adopted the Multi-tier System of Support (MTSS) model and uses the Student Intervention Team (SIT) model to assist students with their learning.

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

- John Paul II School maximizes the human resources of the school in a student-centered way.
- The staff is dedicated to helping each student reach his or her full potential.
- Teachers and staff are a very strong asset to the school.
- The school is a safe, well maintained, and inviting facility. The condition of the building testifies to the care given on a regular basis.

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

school:

- Continue maximizing the potential of staff as they serve the needs of students.
- Consider ways to access additional sources of funding, particularly in the area of instructional technology. This will become increasingly important in the future.

Finding: John Paul II Elementary School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" 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:

John Paul II Catholic School works diligently to collaborate with community stakeholders to support student growth. Stakeholders feel comfortable approaching the principal, as well as the teachers and pastors. A system of open communication has been established.

Parents are actively involved in the school through the PTO, volunteer programs, and the School Council. The school has established clear communication of the policies for volunteers. Through the school calendar, parents are aware of the multiple events they may assist with as well as the committees on which they may serve.

The school works to communicate the learning expectations and goals for improvement. John Paul II Catholic School has multiple means of communication: email, phones in classrooms, parent-teacher conferences, newsletters, website, grade cards, midterms, and memos. Communications also include the parish bulletin, parent handbook and the principal's State of the School Address. Parents, students, and parishioners have an understanding of the continuous learning that takes place. Teachers are not yet fully using the online gradebook system designed to give parents increased knowledge of grades and scores as well as assignment completion and assigned homework. This will serve as an additional source of home/school communication.

It is important to the community of JP II to ensure that all stakeholders are informed of student activities and performance. Through multiple avenues the faculty and staff work to promote and communicate the continued growth of students academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

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

- John Paul II Catholic School utilizes multiple avenues of communication.
- Parents and students feel at ease approaching administration and teachers.
- Open lines of communication among teachers are made available through in-services and sharing of ideas from staff development opportunities through the use of five minute reports.
- Keeping all stakeholders informed of growth and improvement is a strong practice at John Paul II Catholic School.

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

- Investigate ways to improve stakeholder understanding of assessments (ACRE) and how schools achieve Standard of Excellence.
- Increase knowledge of how John Paul II Catholic School compares with surrounding schools.
- Explore accessibility of the on-line gradebook for teachers to communicate and parents to monitor student performance.

Finding: John Paul II Elementary School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" 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:

John Paul II Elementary School has gone through a two school merger during this accreditation cycle. With the combination of the schools, they implemented a school improvement plan to raise achievement for all students. Through staff development, they have initiated several innovative and effective teaching strategies to assist in classroom instruction. The staff is committed to each student as an individual. All members of the staff serve on one or more school improvement committees and help develop strategies and interventions that are key pieces of the continuous improvement process. They play a large role in the overall decision-making process.

Data is also a key component. With the switch from ITBS to MAP testing, the staff has further knowledge of student strengths and those needing further skill development. This has led to the use of three staff members for student remediation. Several classroom strategies chosen as part of the plan are also an outgrowth of data analysis. John Paul II also has a strong Student Improvement Team (SIT). The team meets weekly with teachers and support staff to discuss students in need of additional help. Parents are scheduled for visits every 6 weeks.

Staff development has been a top priority for the school. Both outside conferences and inside resources have been utilized for this education piece. These strategies have been used to ensure the process of continuous improvement. Parents, teachers, and students have high expectations for success. Their recent scores and reaching the Standard of Excellence have shown their true dedication to the accreditation process.

John Paul II is supported by two parishes and a strong and active School Council. The tradition of the parishes is evident in the strong "community" feel throughout the building. The development and implementation of the 5-year Strategic Plan has provided direction for the school community. The plan is reviewed regularly by stakeholders. They report that academic and spirituality goals are right on target to date.

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

- The 5-year Strategic Plan is providing direction for the school community.
- There is a strong SIT process in place.

- Professional development is a top priority.
- John Paul's close school community is a true asset. Students speak of their school families and buddies.

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

- Investigate opportunities for advancement in the area of technology.
- Continue looking for time and opportunities for teachers to collaborate for even greater student success.
- Research additional resources and grants to further advance the school resources.

Finding: John Paul II Elementary School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" 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 the School Administration, 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 NCA CASI accreditation with AdvancED.

Appendix

Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Jean Ann Petz, Chair
- Mrs. Kim Hammers, Vice Chair (St. Agnes)
- Mrs. Ann McGuff, Team Member (Good Shepherd Elementary)
- Mrs. Karla Leibham, Team Member (Archdiocese of Kansas City, KS)

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.