

Report of the
Quality Assurance Review Team
for
Colegio Panamericano

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Review Dates: 03/01/2009 - 03/05/2009



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

Quality Assurance Review Report

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About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

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

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

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

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

- 1) Meet the AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools.** Schools demonstrate adherence to the seven AdvancED standards which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.
- 2) Engage in continuous improvement.** Schools implement a continuous improvement process that articulates the vision and purpose the school is pursuing (vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school effectiveness, and the school community (profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).
- 3) Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.** Schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, schools host an external Quality Assurance Review Team once every five years. The team evaluates the school's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and recommendations to help the school improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school and a written report detailing the team's recommendations. The school acts on the team's recommendations and submits a progress report following the review.

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

Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), a division of AdvancED, visited the Colegio Panamericano in Bucaramanga, All States/Provinces (Colombia) on 03/01/2009 - 03/05/2009.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed the Director, 8 members of the administrative team, 23 students, 4 parents, and 27 teachers. In addition, Support Staff 7 and Board Members 1 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.

- **The entire school community has access to a wide array of data that accurately describes student achievement and is the basis for instruction improvement.**

Standardized Test such as the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test, Scholastic Aptitude Test, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Test, the required Colombian Government Graduation Test (ICFES), and Advanced Placement Tests (AP) provide valuable comparative data for long term instructional planning.

In addition, midterm reports, grade cards, three way conferences, and informal parent-teacher conferences promote a comprehensive assessment system that is based on defined performance and provides reliable feedback on achievement to students, parents, and staff.

- **The school board, school staff and parents have initiated plans to develop and implement three significant**

documents with broad stakeholder involvement.

A new three year school improvement plan with a focus on AdvancED standards, a three year technology plan which the school board recently approved and a long range facility plan to address significant building needs due to an increase in enrollment will provide a blueprint for future direction of all aspects of operation of the Colegio Panamericano.

The Quality Assurance Review Team(QART) was highly impressed with this thoughtful approach to establishing priorities, ascertaining budget needs and committing the resources of the school to planned improvement in all areas.

- **The atmosphere at Colegio Panamericano is caring and inviting to staff, students and stakeholders and the school board, administration and entire staff encourage stakeholder involvement at all levels. The new director, principals and entire staff have developed positive relationships throughout the school and there is a sense of positive anticipation for the future of the school. During interviews the school community expressed support for decisions made affecting the school, and many changes to the personnel structure and school program were well received.**

All groups have a sense of contributing to the climate of purpose and order, positive home-school relations, and development of curriculum and instruction changes that have been well received by all groups.

This sense of “small school family” will encourage continued commitment to the recently adopted vision and purpose of the 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.

- **Codify the policies that are currently enumerated in the board minutes.**

While the Manual De Convivencia contains necessary rules and regulations to satisfy the requirements mandated by legislation, local policies and procedures that impact local rules and regulations and establish procedures for school operations are approved by the board at regular meetings, but not available to all stakeholders in an organized manner.

Organizing and disseminating this information will provide accuracy in implementation of board policies and serve as a resource for future school personnel and stakeholders.

- **Design and formulate a professional development plan that identifies specific opportunities for improvement, identifies and utilizes appropriate personnel and resources to address critical issues, and evaluates and modifies the effectiveness of inservice activities based on faculty/staff feedback and the goals of the strategic plan. Current inservice activities are appropriate but often random and provide little cohesion or follow up. Topics such as data analysis, differentiated instruction, varying instructional techniques, and others identified during interviews and evidence reviews are significant, but professional development in these areas should be**

systematic and systemic. Other topics could include board training, use of technology, classroom management, and others identified through survey and analysis of needs.

Resources should include local, national, and international contributions and also be expanded to online access of staff development.

Providing a planned series of events over a long period will address topics important to the improvement of curriculum and instruction at the Colegio Panamericano.

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

Next Steps

The school should:

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

Resources

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

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the visit, the Quality Assurance Review Team submits an accreditation recommendation to AdvancED for state review and for action at the national level by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and communicates it to the school. Upon receiving its accreditation, the school should celebrate its achievement with the school community. The SACS CASI accreditation seals are available at www.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 Colegio Panamericano 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:

The school has established a vision in collaboration with its stakeholders and has made significant efforts to communicate this vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support. After a systematic process, a newly revised vision was given formal approval in November 2008 and is prominently displayed throughout the school and campus. It is also published in school documents such as the school's official handbook, on the web page, weekly bulletins to parents and promotional material for new families.

The positive effects of this collaborative process and effective communication are clearly demonstrated through the fact that there is sense of shared focus and direction throughout the school community with all stakeholders expressing pride and commitment to the attainment of the vision.

The leadership team is poised to continue the process of transition from the previous vision and purpose and its related goals ensuring that this new vision and purpose directly guide the teaching and learning process. They are currently identifying indicators which will measure student attainment of the key characteristics of the vision and will use these to inform the school improvement plan.

Data for the school profile are taken from data compiled by the school's admissions and counseling departments, but is enriched both by the results of community surveys and the results of standardized tests. The profile is published for the educational community.

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

- Supportive of the school's vision, the school administration and other stakeholders are committed to bringing about those changes which will be necessary to make that vision a reality. The entire school community takes pride in that shared purpose and direction.

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

- Identify indicators to measure attainment of vision by defining the key terms to ensure that a common vocabulary is being used by all members of the school community.
- Develop clear systems and processes which will ensure that the school's vision and purpose are reflected in teacher planning and thus guide the teaching and learning process.
- Ensure that alumni are included in any future revision of the vision and purpose.

Finding: Colegio Panamericano has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" 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:

There are 14 members of the board who are elected by a general assembly each year. All parents of enrolled children comprise the general assembly. The board meets 10 times each year with the director and the business manager to monitor the school's accomplishment of the vision and purpose, ensure legal and ethical integrity, maintain accountability, and ensure that the school system operates in accordance with Colombian Ministry of Education requirements.

The leadership team for Colegio Panamericano consist of the director, business manager, principals and the dean of students. Weekly meetings allow coordination of operational procedures and curriculum/instruction issues. A positive relationship exists between the board and the leadership Team.

Colegio Panamericano uses the following resources to communicate with stakeholders:

- "Bits and Pieces" – Weekly Newsletter
- Manual de Convivencia – Community Handbook
- Student Handbook
- "Go-To Binder" – Document in which responsibilities are outlined
- Weekly Agenda – Produced by section principals
- Emails
- School Website

In addition to these resources, information is shared and received through the following initiatives:

- Open House
- Coffee with the Director
- Three-way Conferences

Stakeholders are provided meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility and ownership through some of the following avenues:

- Academic Council
- Academic Advisory Council
- Student Council;
- Values and Development of Self Esteem Program

By involving stakeholders in meaningful roles the board and superintendent have been able to promote a culture of participation, responsibility and ownership, with an aligned focus on student success.

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

- Leadership is demonstrated by the board and the leadership team.
- There is a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities by the board and recognition of the director as the executive and administrative head of the school system.
- There is a focus on instructional programs through the allocation of resources above and beyond what is required.
- Leadership in modeling a culture of openness, visibility and respect at all levels of the organization is evident.
- Appropriate data are collected and analyzed as a tool to decision making.

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

- Establish, implement and disseminate a manual of policies and procedures that provides for the effective operation of the school.

Finding: Colegio Panamericano 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:

In 2004 the school's leadership implemented a curriculum framework base on Dr Janie Pollock's "Big Four Strategy" from Improving Student Learning: One Teacher at a Time. School-wide learning targets were adopted in the form of McREL (Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning Laboratory) standards together with benchmarks which identified developmentally appropriate learning objectives for each grade level. These standards and benchmarks have been redistributed and modified by curriculum teams according to the needs of Colegio Panamericano students. Unit plans are designed using these standards and benchmarks for the different areas. Although a scope in sequence is in place based on McREL standards and benchmarks, there is a need to ensure that these are used consistently throughout the school to inform planning.

A number of recent innovations have been the adoption of the Reggio Emilia philosophy in pre-school and Balanced Literacy including the six plus one writing traits of writing and guided reading in elementary. An important innovation at the high school level is the inclusion of advanced placement (AP) programs in calculus, Spanish literature and language and English. The addition of Pre AP courses has provided worthwhile exposure and preparation for the demanding AP offerings.

At this time, the responsibility for overall coordination of the curriculum in each level lies with the level principal. This has allowed for growth and innovation but care is needed to ensure that where relevant, innovations are implemented on a school-wide basis.

The school is gathering and analyzing data based on both internal records and external testing such as the MAP, PSAT, SAT and ICFES (The Colombian National University Entrance Exam). It is clear that effective systems are already in place to facilitate the use of this data as it is collected over the long term when more significant patterns will emerge.

Developed as an important element recognized by the previous School Improvement Plan, the learning center provides consultation and testing services as well as a rich and varied learning environment for specific students that allow them to strengthen the foundations of their basic learning skills. The support provision is done on a pull-out basis with both therapeutic and pedagogical support being provided. As well as support for learning needs, there is also an institute which provides assistance for those students whose English is not at the level of their peers when they arrive at school. These support mechanisms are in place for students up to seventh grade.

In terms of the regular classroom, there was recognition that although the scope and sequence is clear in terms of the standards and benchmarks, the curriculum still tends towards a “one size fits all” design and there is a need to provide more effectively for a range of learning styles and abilities through the implementation of differentiated instruction. This tendency was also reflected in classroom practice where the majority of classrooms observed were characterized by teacher led activities.

Early closure of the school one day a week provides valuable time that can be used effectively to support teachers in the implementation of innovations and the strengthening of the teaching and learning process.

The school is making significant advances in instructional technology and a new three-year technology plan that will guide future initiatives has been developed and awaiting approval by the General Assembly. The materials collection in the library supports the curricular and instructional program although there is a need for closer alignment between the collection and the academic program. The collection needs to be weeded in an effort to ensure accuracy of non-fiction materials.

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

- The clearly warm and supportive environment of the school is not only conducive to student learning but also encourages and promotes open discussion of the teaching and learning process.
- Students provide feedback to teachers and feel confident that they will be heard.
- The school administration considers new instructional strategies and ways in which to support teachers in both curricula and instructional design.
- The school has made a commitment to data gathering and analysis to justify curricular and instructional

choices.

- The leadership team is particularly strong in its promotion of data based decision making and this is filtering through to other members of staff.

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

- Review unit plans to ensure that differentiation and other initiatives such as balanced literacy are addressed.
 - Revise the curriculum from a backwards design perspective to ensure there is a smooth transition from the early years to the high school programs, such as AP.
 - Consider Inclusion as an alternative instructional strategy available to students when appropriate.
 - Develop individual education plans for each of the students identified with special needs and ensure that these are shared with teachers in order to facilitate differentiated planning and instructional strategies.
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- Provide professional development on differentiated instruction to ensure that teachers utilize the strategies as instructional tools.

Finding: Colegio Panamericano 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:

The school has a comprehensive system for assessing progress to expectations as defined in the standards and benchmarks. A number of external tests such as the MAP, PSAT, SAT and ICFES provide information that is reliable, valid and bias free and which complement the internal assessment system.

At the classroom level, teachers in all sections use formative assessments on a daily basis to measure their students' ongoing progress while summative assessments are made in the form of exams and criterion referenced tests, together with authentic assessments at the end of each unit or session. These assessments are directly linked to the standards and benchmarks and this facilitates coherence, but there was evidence to indicate that the high level of teacher autonomy in grading practices is leading to some inconsistency and perhaps a greater level of subjectivity than is desired.

The introduction of the MAP testing as a clear and objective system for analyzing changes in student performance has allowed the school to gather baseline data on student performance on language arts and mathematics. The results of MAP testing are available to administrators and subject teachers almost

immediately upon completion of each testing cycle and parents receive a printed copy of their children's MAP results with trimester grade cards. The leadership team is aware that the school will need to continue with this testing before the results can be used to demonstrate verifiable growth, track changes and improve student learning. There is also a need to ensure that the school's standards and benchmarks are aligned to those used in the MAP tests.

Data is analyzed and compared with other like schools in Colombia and then presented and discussed at board meetings and leadership meetings. Section principals, counselors and lead teachers analyze data on an ongoing basis in order to support student learning. There is, however, a need to more directly involve the subject coordinators in the analysis and discussion of data within the academic council.

Data are shared with parents in a variety of ways including mid term reports and grade cards. Comments from parents and students suggested that the most successful data sharing strategy is the three-way conference where the student, teacher and parent identify strengths and opportunities for improvement while reviewing student-produced artifacts. These sessions also provide an opportunity to discuss MAP testing data and set goals toward desired future growth on these standardized tests.

Teachers have been trained in the analysis and use of MAP data through a series of workshops, but the school has identified continued professional development in this area as a specific need of the staff.

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

- The school is committed to the use of data in its decision making process and has made significant steps to ensure that systems are in place to make this happen.
- The use of three-way conference where the student, teacher and parent identify strengths and opportunities for improvement while reviewing student-produced artifacts is a highly successful use of authentic assessment.

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

- Ensure that the school's standards and benchmarks are aligned to those used in the MAP tests.
- Promote greater teacher involvement in data analysis.
- Provide workshops and training in data analysis within the professional development program.
- Promote differentiation based on the analysis of individual student results.
- Develop systems to ensure greater consistency in grading practices among teachers and alignment of formative and summative assessments.

Finding: Colegio Panamericano 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:

The resources and support systems available at Colegio Panamericano are adequate to support the vision and purpose of the school. A careful review of the district's assessment report and available artifacts, interviews with staff and stakeholders together with visits to many of the classrooms helped verify this finding.

Important to the resources is the school's work force, instructional, administrative and support, who play an important role in helping the school achieve the high degree of success mentioned elsewhere in this report. Discussions with staff revealed that much work goes into the recruitment and retention of staff. Some of these initiatives are: induction offerings, low pupil teacher ratios, scholarships for children of employees, and the subsidized program for laptops

The school's support is also evident in the professional development program. Teachers and school level administrators alike report a great willingness on the part of the director to allocate and the board to approve funds to provide opportunities for professional development.

Students, parents and teachers shared that at Colegio Panamericano is a safe and orderly environment. In fact, one student shared that the campus might be a bit "too safe." The campus is well maintained, beautifully landscaped and appropriate in size and arrangement to accommodate the program offered.

The board recently approved a technology plan; however, implementation is dependent upon the approval of the general assembly to pay \$6/month per child enrolled. The funds will allow for the purchase of hardware, software and professional development.

Annually, a budget is developed in accordance with the needs of the school and its strategic plan. The major source of revenue is generated from tuition. The greatest percentage of the budget is utilized for salary cost. The school does not have an emergency fund to cover revenue shortfalls. The firm of Grand Torton conducts an annual audit.

The emergency evaluation plan ensures that students and staff know procedures to follow in the event of a fire, earthquake, kidnapping or the presence of an intruder. With contributions from the U.S. Embassy, a cutting edge, alarmed security system has been installed. During the Quality Assurance Review Team visit, a new public address system was being installed allowing communication to all areas of the school.

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

- Effective programs and strategies are in place for personnel recruitment, mentoring, and ongoing professional development.
- A Safe and secure environment exist.
- Revenues allow the school to move forward in accomplishing its long-term plan.

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

- Create within five years a fund balance reserve equal to three month's operating cost.
- Investigate alternative financing to fund the Technology Plan.
- Weed out-dated materials in the media center.
- Link the school's budgeting process to strategic plan initiatives.

Finding: Colegio Panamericano 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:

Colegio Panamericano understands the importance of effectively communicating its vision and purpose as well as student performance results to stakeholders. Not only does the school share information, the leadership takes advantage of many opportunities to listen to the various stakeholder groups (i.e., coffee with the director, open house, and general assembly meetings). Communication avenues consist of a school Web site, newsletters, publications and community forums. The Panamericano web site is considered a valuable tool which is used to share information and is updated regularly to keep parents, community members and employees informed of the progress made.

Printed correspondence is used to ensure that all persons have access. The school publishes two newsletters (Bits and Pieces and The Preschool Times). Student agendas also serve as an invaluable communication tool. Parents are kept abreast of student performance midterm reports, parent/teacher conferences and report cards.

Through staff, department, grade level and administrative meetings, the staff is kept well informed. The addition of having Wednesday afternoons for teachers to collaborate has been a welcomed addition.

There is evidence that a strong partnership among students, families, schools and community contribute to the success of this school. The wide and varied use of stakeholder communication and relationships is commendable. It is evident that Colegio Panamericano believes that the key to student success is through partnerships among students, families, school and communities.

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

- The school has established positive and productive working relationships among students, parents, community members, teachers, support staff and administrators.
- The school uses an assortment of vehicles to communicate with stakeholders.

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

- Create methods for greater involvement and representation of students in planning and policy development.
- Plan, develop and implement an alumni association for Colegio Panamericano that will encourage participation and involvement of former students and friends of the school.

Finding: Colegio Panamericano has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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

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

The Colegio Panamericano demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through the development and implementation of a School Improvement Plan linked to AdvancED standards, the approval and implementation of a long range technology plan to provide additional access to computer hardware, software, and peripherals for staff, faculty, and students, and the planning and development of a facilities plan to assess building/grounds needs and implement a finance plan to address these needs.

In addition, the school has developed and implemented an instructional monitoring system that uses classroom assessment, standardized tests, and required tests from the Colombian government. Data binders are prepared and disseminated to appropriate stakeholders and critical conversations are held with faculty and staff to evaluate performance, implement appropriate remedial activities and assess effectiveness of implementation strategies.

All of the action steps to focus on the process of continuous improvement at Colegio Panamericano are related back to the revised and updated vision and purpose that was developed with stakeholder input in a partnership to provide a collective vision for the school.

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

- Colegio Panamericano has a highly involved and loyal community of stakeholders that create a caring school based on mutual respect and common goals.
- There exists a “small school” atmosphere that was praised by parents and stake holders, identified in documents and artifacts reviewed, and a trait developed and guarded over several years.
- The school also has strong support from area schools and other schools in Colombia and solicits advice and ideas on program improvement from a wide audience.

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

- Define, develop measurement strategies, and provide rubrics to assess the attainment of characteristics described in the vision and mission and develop a plan to address opportunities for improvement in each characteristic.
- Research , evaluate and implement a school wide plan to extend learning support to all students (grades kindergarten-12) including varying instructional strategies, higher order thinking skills and differentiation strategies implementation, and ensure that programs are sustained over time.

Finding: Colegio Panamericano 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 Steven M. Desroches, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for their hospitality throughout the visit. The team wishes the school and its students much success in the quest for excellence through SACS CASI accreditation with AdvancED.

Appendix

Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Mr. Joseph Delaney, Chair
- Mr. John Kelley, Team Member (AdvancED)
- Ms. Ruth Allen, Team Member (Colegio Albania)

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.