

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

IOWA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

Action Requested: Receive the External Review report at the Iowa School for the Deaf.

Executive Summary: The External Review is an integral component of AdvancED Performance Accreditation; it provides the institution with a comprehensive evaluation guided by the results of diagnostic instruments, in-depth review of data and documentation, and the professional judgment of a team of qualified and highly trained evaluators. This accreditation report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority for access and student success.

Background:

- ◇ **Purpose of external review.** Institutions must meet standards specific to their institution type, demonstrate acceptable levels of student performance and the continuous improvement of student performance, and provide evidence of stakeholder engagement and satisfaction.
- ◇ **Accrediting agency.** The accrediting body is the AdvancED Accreditation Commission.
- ◇ **On-Site Team Visit.** The AdvancED External Review of the Iowa School for the Deaf took place in April 2016. Seventy-two stakeholders were interviewed, including the superintendent, two administrators, 30 instructional staff, 17 support staff, 18 students, and four parents/community/business leaders. At the conclusion of the external review visit, the School was informed that “The AdvancED External Review Team would recommend to the AdvancEd accreditation commission that the Iowa School for the Deaf earn the distinction of accreditation by AdvancEd.”
- ◇ **Teaching and Learning Impact Findings and Improvement Priorities.**
 - ⇒ Develop and implement a process to train staff to analyze multiple data sources, create and monitor measurable data sources, create and monitor measurable goals, progress-monitor agency growth and analyze data.
 - ⇒ Institute a continuous and systemic school process to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of all initiatives and programs.
- ◇ **Teaching and Learning Impact Findings and Opportunities for Improvement.**
 - ⇒ Analyze and use student assessment data to design and implement a plan to improve instructional strategies and to adjust curriculum to meet the learning needs of students.
 - ⇒ Develop a clear, continuous improvement process for improving student learning and research based strategies that support learning.
 - ⇒ Ensure that there are connections between employee evaluation, improved professional practice and student learning.

- ◇ Leadership Capacity Findings and Powerful Practice.
 - ⇒ Iowa School for the Deaf demonstrates a strong unit among all stakeholders in its purpose and vision to be the statewide resource that provides optimal education and outreach services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing in preparation for adult life.

- ◇ Resource Utilization Findings and Opportunity for Improvement.
 - ⇒ Create and implement a technology plan which will meet the needs of 21st century learners.

- ◇ Resource Utilization Findings and Powerful Practice.
 - ⇒ Iowa School for the Deaf provides a safe and secure campus through video surveillance and key card single-point entry and facilities and equipment are maintained to provide a safe, clean and healthy environment.

- ◇ Conclusion. The External Review Team recognized the following themes which characterize the culture at the Iowa School for the Deaf and contribute to its success in fulfilling its purpose of being the statewide resource that provides “optimal education for students who are deaf or hard of hearing to prepare for adult life.”
 - ⇒ “First and foremost is a culture of commitment at the school and throughout the community in support of the purpose and direction of the Iowa School for the Deaf. By fostering positive relationships with stakeholders, leaders have successfully created a strong sense of community. The Team found substantial evidence of a commitment to deaf families and students shared by staff, stakeholders, and students.
 - ⇒ Stakeholder interviews confirmed that beliefs and expectations for the growth and learning of each individual child permeate all levels of the school. Leadership and staff share a passionate commitment toward professional practice to ensure increased rigor, relevance and transition into college and/or career readiness of each student. The needs of each individual student are supported by an array of support services.
 - ⇒ The school has taken significant steps to increase each student’s achievement and clarify improvement processes. However, a process to prioritize, evaluate and identify improvement initiatives to ensure a yearly, school wide implementation was not evident. The leadership and staff are aware of and committed to the school improvement process. With over half the faculty scheduled to retire within the next 10 years, the leadership acknowledged that staff turn-over, changing community demographics and budget restrictions could impact the desired outcomes. Thus, ensuring a school improvement plan for systemic implementation is important.
 - ⇒ Through interviews, the External Review Team heard an articulated need to improve the campus employee competency with American Sign Language (ASL) and to provide ASL classes for stakeholders. Many of the Iowa and Nebraska families utilizing ISD services are in need of a communication format with their children. Communication with a ‘spread out’ clientele is heavily one way and efforts to improve two-way communication with school stakeholders are ongoing.

- ⇒ In alignment with the Board of Regents strategic plan goals, the school, leadership and staff demonstrate a shared commitment to continuous improvement of student performance. The External Review Team found evidence of progress toward school goals of (A) meeting or exceeding state academic standards in reading and math; (B) identifying and adopting additional tools, professional development, and instructional strategies to motivate reluctant and struggling readers; and (C) demonstrating that school transition assessments enhance teaching and help student achieve identified goals for work, post-secondary education and/or independent living. During the fall of 2017, the school will implement professional learning communities to further empower and equip faculty and staff toward school objectives.”

- ◇ Accreditation Status. The Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) provides a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of indicators and evaluative criteria. Based on the IEQ™ results for the Iowa School for the Deaf, the External Review Team recommended to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that the School earn the distinction of accreditation for a five-year term. The School is responsible for submitting the Accreditation Progress detailing progress made toward addressing the Improvement Priorities.

TEACHING AND LEARNING IMPACT

Standard 3 – Teaching and Assessing for Learning. The school’s curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The school’s curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	3.00	2.81
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	3.00	2.49
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	3.00	2.60
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	3.00	2.70
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	3.00	2.57
3.6	Teachers implement the school’s instructional process to improve instruction and student learning.	3.00	2.57
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school’s values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	3.00	2.54
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children’s education and keeps them informed of their children’s learning progress.	3.00	3.06
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student’s educational experience.	4.00	2.98
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	3.00	2.75
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.00	2.53
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	3.00	2.61

Standard 5 – Using Results for Continuous Improvement. The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	3.00	2.66
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze, and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions.	3.00	2.37
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	3.00	2.06
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	2.00	2.46
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	3.00	2.71

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

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	3.00	3.06
Test Administration	3.00	3.45
Equity of Learning	3.00	2.70
Quality of Learning	3.00	2.92

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™). This tool measures the extent to which learners are in an environment that is equitable, supportive, and well-managed.

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.36	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet his/her needs.	16.00%	44.00%	0.00%	40.00%
2.	3.36	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	36.00%	64.00%	0.00%	0.00%
3.	2.44	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	12.00%	44.00%	20.00%	24.00%
4.	2.00	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	12.00%	20.00%	24.00%	44.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point score = 2.54						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.88	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher.	8.00%	72.00%	20.00%	0.00%
2.	3.00	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable.	16.00%	68.00%	16.00%	0.00%
3.	1.72	Is provided exemplars of high quality work.	4.00%	20.00%	20.00%	56.00%
4.	2.68	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks.	12.00%	44.00%	32.00%	12.00%
5.	2.56	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	12.00%	44.00%	32.00%	12.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point score = 2.57						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.04	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive.	24.00%	56.00%	20.00%	0.00%
2.	2.92	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning.	8.00%	76.00%	16.00%	0.00%
3.	2.96	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback).	12.00%	80.00%	0.00%	8.00%
4.	3.24	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks.	28.00%	68.00%	4.00%	0.00%
5.	2.88	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for his/her needs.	8.00%	80.00%	4.00%	8.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point score = 3.01						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.84	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students.	24.00%	48.00%	16.00%	12.00%
2.	2.68	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	20.00%	44.00%	20.00%	16.00%
3.	3.04	Is actively engaged in the learning activities.	24.00%	56.00%	20.00%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point score = 2.85						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.56	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning.	8.00%	60.00%	12.00%	20.00%
2.	2.76	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding.	12.00%	64.00%	12.00%	12.00%
3.	2.88	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content.	16.00%	60.00%	20.00%	4.00%
4.	1.96	Understands how her/his work is assessed.	4.00%	28.00%	28.00%	40.00%
5.	2.44	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback.	8.00%	52.00%	16.00%	24.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point score = 2.52						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.28	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers.	36.00%	56.00%	8.00%	0.00%
2.	2.88	Follows classroom rules and works well with others.	16.00%	64.00%	12.00%	8.00%
3.	2.64	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities.	12.00%	60.00%	8.00%	20.00%
4.	2.04	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities.	4.00%	36.00%	20.00%	40.00%
5.	2.68	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences.	16.00%	44.00%	32.00%	8.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point score = 2.70						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	1.28	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning.	0.00%	8.00%	12.00%	80.00%
2.	1.20	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning.	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	80.00%
3.	1.24	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning.	0.00%	4.00%	16.00%	80.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point score = 1.24						

LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Standard 1 – Purpose and Direction. The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	3.00	2.73
1.2	The school's leadership and staff commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills	3.00	2.96
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	3.00	2.56

Standard 2 – Governance and Leadership. The school operates under governance leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	3.00	2.96
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	3.00	2.91
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	4.00	3.15
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	3.00	3.09
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	3.00	2.79
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	2.00	2.74

Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic. Institutions are asked to collect and analyze stakeholder feedback data.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Questionnaire Administration	4.00	3.35
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	4.00	3.04

RESOURCE UTILIZATION

Standard 4 – Resources and Support Systems. The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	3.00	2.95
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	3.00	2.96
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and health environment for all students and staff.	4.00	3.11
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	3.00	2.78
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	3.00	2.52
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	3.00	2.81
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	3.00	2.75