



Accreditation Progress Report

Knightdale High School

Ms. Carla Jernigan

100 Bryan Chalk Lane
Knightdale, North Carolina, United States 27545

Prepared for the AdvancED Quality Assurance Review

Report Status : Accepted

Report Open Date : November 3, 2009

Report Due Date : May 1, 2011

Report Submitted Date : May 5, 2010

Report Accepted Date : June 2, 2010

Accreditation Progress Report

Contents

1.0 About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI	3
2.0 Introduction to the Accreditation Progress Report	4
3.0. Executive Summary	5
4.0. Recommendation 1	8
4.1. School Response	8
4.2. Reviewer Response	13
5.0. Recommendation 2	13
5.1. School Response	13
5.2. Reviewer Response	17
6.0. Recommendation 3	17
6.1. School Response	18
6.2. Reviewer Response	21

1.0 About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

Background. Dedicated to advancing excellence in education worldwide, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 27,000 schools in 65 countries. AdvancED provides accreditation under the seals of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI).

The Accreditation Process.

To earn and maintain accreditation, schools must:

1. Meet the AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems.

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

2. Engage in continuous improvement.

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

3. Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.

Schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, schools host an external Quality Assurance Review team once every five years. The team evaluates the school's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and recommendations to help the school improve. The school acts on the team's recommendations and submits an Accreditation Progress Report at prescribed intervals following the Quality Assurance Review.

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

2.0 Introduction to the Accreditation Progress Report

Purpose

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

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

Structure of the Report

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

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

Conclusion

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

3.0. Executive Summary

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

Knightdale High School today is focused on student achievement. As a response to our Quality Assurance Review we have realigned both our school improvement processes and our school leadership structure. Now all our key decisions are data-driven, our teachers are attempting consistently to provide engaging and motivating instruction, and our Leadership Team is structured to involve all stakeholders in making effective decisions.

Our Data Analysis Team leads us in maintaining our focus on collecting reliable data and using it effectively. Our staff receives training, coaching, and evaluating on its use of data to make decisions. Our staff has realized that using data to make decisions is a necessity in order to assure that our school's efforts are based upon intended results and not upon habit or custom. We work in Professional Learning Teams in order to collaborate on how to implement strategies as indicated by our data analysis. Our Leadership Team consistently asks what the data shows and, if necessary and feasible, defers decisions until adequate data is available. Our School Improvement Process is aligned with our data collection focus and keeps us moving forward toward the attainment of our goals.

Teacher dedication and hard work are evident in visiting our classrooms. Building upon intensive investigation and training, teachers work collaboratively in Professional Learning Teams to identify best practices and to find ways to help students succeed. Engaging instructional strategies are evident in classrooms at all levels. Our administration has developed and implemented a "Knightdale High School Walk-Through Form." This instrument is a check form that denotes observed instructional strategies that engage students. Feedback on the standard observation forms have recognized or encouraged more engaging instructional strategies. Students are challenged to think and to communicate throughout the curriculum, not just in the advanced courses. Our teacher evaluation process is consistent with our expectation that all classes will use strategies we anticipate will engage and motivate students. We have a School Improvement Plan, a Pyramid of Learning, a Professional Code, and an Evaluation Process that all support, expect, and inspect engaging classroom instruction that uses 21st century technology.

The heart of our school governance structure is the Leadership Team. Our team includes representatives of all stakeholder groups in our school community working in conjunction with our Administrative Team. Leadership Team meetings are open to anyone who wishes to attend our monthly, publicized meetings. Recognizing that our student population includes 39% free and reduced lunch recipients, a demographic group whose parents are traditionally not active in school governance, we provide additional opportunities and incentives to increase parent involvement. Opportunities include traditional means of communication such as grade and attendance reporting, mailings, website, emails, automated phone announcements made personally by our Principal, booster organizations for athletic and special interest activities, and a Parent Teacher Student Association. Additionally, we offer parents Power Hour, parent information sessions, designated representation on our Leadership Team along with open meetings, and volunteer opportunities within our school. Our school maintains a community presence through publicity, affiliation with the Knightdale Chamber of Commerce, and participation in local political action groups. Our Professional Code speaks to the expectation that teachers will engage in a personal exchange of information concerning a failing child's situation so that parents and school staff can collaborate on how to intervene effectively.

We are confident that our school is now appropriately focused. Our current theme for the school year, "Mission: Possible," conveys our determination to work effectively with all our available resources to achieve success for our students. It signifies to our school community the depth of our dedication to success for all students.

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

Maintaining appropriately aligned focus is a challenge for any school. The most pressing challenges we identify are to continue building staff morale, providing student motivation, and facing dwindling resources. These three areas are inter-related and, therefore, must be addressed in a cohesive manner.

Staff morale is impacted by many factors beyond the scope of the school's control. A difficult economy resulting in low wages, inappropriate student behavior, pressures to produce measurable results, large classes, cramped facilities, and outdated equipment are among a few of the reasons a teacher might become discouraged. The role of a school's leadership is to find creative ways to build staff morale in spite of the difficulties. Recognition programs, effective staff development opportunities, intentional fostering of staff collegiality, strong administrative support, and a safe and orderly work environment are among the ways that we find to be most successful. Finding new and more effective ways to enhance our programs aimed at protecting and building staff morale are integral to our plans for our future. We will make the creation of new ways to build staff morale equal in importance to maintaining our current ways.

The second challenge we identify is motivating our students to learn. Society provides many distractions to teenagers—from video games to exposure to illegal activities. These distractions make staying focused on the importance of learning difficult for high school students. The lure of immediate gratification for young people is hard for any school to overcome. We find our greatest success in engaging lessons by teachers who are enthusiastic and caring, positive relationships with staff and administrators who make it their priority to connect with students on a personal level, and community involvement to keep our school relevant to both present-day as well as predicted realities. Our focus on researching and implementing the most engaging instructional strategies we can find, employing 21st century technology in our classrooms, partnering with community groups and faith organizations, and demonstrating how deeply we care about the success of each one of our students are the ways we identify to motivate our students. We will continue to seek additional ways to achieve our goal.

The realities of our country's current economy are certain to touch schools. We anticipate more crowded classes, job losses, fewer resources for new equipment and materials, slower maintenance for our physical plant, and lower wages for our staff in the short term. Our response to these realities will have to be as a family. We plan to face the situations that we anticipate honestly and candidly. Our Leadership Team continues its process to collaborate on financial decisions. From allocation of our copy machine budget to staffing decisions, our team seeks to focus budgetary decisions on student best interest. We discuss frankly the emotional impact of a souring economy as felt throughout our school system. Together, we stand united in our determination to weather the current storm with integrity and professionalism.

Knightsdale High School is focused on our "Mission: Possible." We frequently use a quote our principal shared with us "Excellence for all. No exceptions. No excuses." We intend to use collaboration, research, and a sense of caring to meet our challenges.

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

Changes we have instituted as a direct result of the Quality Assurance Review Team visit in 2008 will continue

to inform and enhance our school's efforts as we remain committed to high student achievement. Data-based decision making, engaging instructional strategies, and effective school governance structures will remain hallmarks of our school's daily culture.

Data analysis is a skill set that we will continue to develop in all our staff. Professional Learning Teams, Leadership Team, and individual staff members will all be monitored to assure that appropriate data is driving their decisions rather than opinion or tradition. We will use research, collaboration, and technological tools to guide us in collecting and analyzing data effectively.

Our new Professional Code, created in response to our Quality Assurance Review, will continue to be considered and refined annually. Among its current components is a commitment to engaging instructional strategies in every classroom. We anticipate that commitment will always be a part of our code. It serves us well in its ability to enhance student achievement, improve student behavior, and build teacher morale.

Collaborative school governance also will continue to be inclusive of input from all stakeholders in our school community. We will continue to make collaborative decisions that allow input from a wide range of sources. Our Professional Code requires that we make effective communication between school staff and parents a top priority. We will continue to define communication as more than just sending out information. True communication is an exchange of ideas between the involved parties. Our school staff acknowledges their responsibility to true communication with parents.

Building and maintaining a school culture that is constantly seeking improvement and growth in order to achieve maximum student success cannot be a static or a top-down process. Knightdale High School will continue its commitment to collaboration, data analysis, and professional expectations as it meets the challenges ahead. "Excellence for all. No exceptions. No excuses."

Knightsdale High School hosted a Quality Assurance Review team on 04/09/2008 - 04/10/2008. Through interviews with school stakeholders, classroom observations, and a review of school documents and student performance results, the team developed a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) report detailing its findings from the visit. The full report can be viewed at www.advanc-ed.org.

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

4.0. Recommendation 1

Source: QAR

Date: 2009-11-03

Recommendation:

Teachers should develop and implement a variety of instructional strategies in order to fully engage all learners.

Evidence:

- Interviews with students indicated that there was a great deal of difference between students in honors and AP classes and students who were not in these classes;
- Classroom observations revealed a lower level of engagement on the part of students in standard classes;
- Classroom observations also indicated a difference in the degree to which teachers were interacting with instruction, and differences in students' time on task;
- Teachers commented that it was difficult to present creative, engaging lessons in all classes.

Rationale:

The more teachers can present creative, meaningful, real-world learning to students, the more engaged students will be. Engaged students are also successful students.

4.1. School Response

Progress Status: Completed

Response: Actions taken to address the recommendation: What steps did you take to address the recommendation? Summarize the steps taken by the school system in response to the recommendation. Include detail on specific strategies used, staff members involved, time frame of implementation of strategies, and other relevant details.

Upon receiving the recommendation from the Quality Assurance Review team that our

teachers should develop and implement a variety of instructional strategies in order to engage fully all learners, our Knightdale High School (KHS) Leadership Team (comprised of administrators, representatives from all academic departments, parents, and community members) began to explore ways to support teachers to enhance their instructional strategies. Our team researched best practices by consulting with school system as well as state level specialists, conducting internet searches, and attending professional conferences. Teacher surveys determined the following: (1) instructional strategies used; (2) the impact on student achievement of strategies used; (3) strategies to be implemented school-wide; and (4) training needed in order to implement strategies with fidelity. As a result of our research we have offered the following staff development opportunities to our teaching staff.

- Algebra I Training—School district curriculum leaders and KHS algebra teachers participated in 2009 summer training dedicated to creating effective and engaging strategies for math students. District staff worked closely with our school’s Professional Learning Team for math to develop effective instructional strategies. Monthly training continues to be on-going to support this effort.
- Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)—Teachers received training on instructional strategies for diverse learning needs ranging from limited English proficiency to kinesthetic learners.
- Quality Teaching and Learning—QTL process was implemented in October 2009 to instruct staff on the use of 21st century learning skills that positively impact student learning and increase both student engagement and time-on-task. Teachers learned how to use technology applications in the classroom, such as: GPS, Wikis, United Streaming, TI-Nspiration, Adobe Creation Suite, blogging, etc.
- Walk-Through Training—KHS implemented the Walk-Through process to gather data on the types of instructional strategies in use. A team of administrators and teachers were trained on this data collection process. Professional Learning Teams collaborated on best practices as a result of the data reported. Walk-Throughs continued to be conducted throughout the year to gauge learning strategies in use within the school.
- Wireless Wednesday/Thirsty Thursday trainings were implemented—Weekly staff development opportunities were implemented for KHS teachers to advance teacher knowledge in the use of current technology tools and to support the facilitation and advancement of new technologies into instructional practices.
- Interactive Student Response System Training—Teachers received training in this technology that uses electronic “clickers” to enable students to give immediate feedback to teachers during an instructional period. Student feedback serves to keep students engaged in the activity while allowing teachers to monitor and adapt the lesson based on documented student achievement.
- Administrative Modeling of Instructional Expectations—At the beginning of the school year when “administrivia” about school rules, policies and procedures must be communicated, the Administrative Team modeled effective instructional strategies to present this typically dry information. Information was shared by having teachers engaged in such creative strategies as cooperative learning groups, think-pair-share which incorporated participant movement within the classroom, and the use of

interactive student response systems (clickers). The 2009-2010 opening teacher work days also included focus on the article “Engage Me, Don’t Enrage Me” which emphasized the importance of incorporating effective teaching strategies in order to connect to today’s student.

- Monthly staff meetings were rescheduled to be held during planning periods rather than at the end of the school day. The resulting staff groups were smaller, had more time, and provided effective opportunities to reinforce expectations as engaging instructional strategies were emphasized and modeled. Each month’s meeting showcased effective instructional strategies presented by administrators, teachers, and support personnel. Administrators “walked the walk” in their preparation for frequent and engaging staff training.

In addition to staff development opportunities, Knightdale High School increased its focus on supporting teachers to develop engaging instructional strategies in other ways.

- In August 2008 the Knightdale High School Leadership Team established a Professional Code to address several aspects of staff responsibility. The code addresses expectations for student engagement. The code specifically states that students are to be engaged in at least “three different instructional activities per 90-minute class period” in order to address the needs of diverse learners and to increase student time on task. Each year the school’s process is to revisit and revise the code in order to ensure continual improvement.
- Administrators revamped their responses to classroom disruptions creating a behavior management system in which disruptive students are removed from classrooms quickly and with minimum disturbance. Students have the opportunity to complete assigned work in an alternate location. Once the student is ready to return to class he/she is allowed to return to the next class in his/her daily class schedule.
- Professional Learning Teams (PLT) began to meet each week during our school system’s designated early release time. The PLT focus is on collaboration in order to seek ways to make each student successful including identifying and sharing best practices in instructional presentation. PLT decisions are data-driven.
- Pyramid of Learning—Knightdale High School developed its pyramid with the “base” of effective instructional techniques expected in every classroom. The use of the pyramid visual helps to clarify for teachers the types of instruction considered most effective in achieving student engagement and learning. It clearly communicates the expectation that every classroom will use these wide ranging strategies.
- Intervention Team—Intervention Coordinator, Literacy Coach, Reading Intervention Coach, and Graduation Coach began to collaborate daily to enhance school-wide support opportunities to assist teachers in identifying and implementing appropriate interventions for students who are not successful in the reading instructional techniques currently in use. Personal Education Plans (PEP’s) for students promoted with intervention specifically address the use of engaging instructional strategies.
- Teacher observers specifically recommended effective and engaging instructional strategies that are appropriate to each class observed.

Results of the action steps: Were the steps effective in addressing the recommendation? Detail the results of the actions taken. Include review of the data and summary of other evidence that serve as indicators of the success/effectiveness of the actions taken.

The steps we have taken have been effective in supporting teachers to develop and implement a variety of engaging instructional strategies. Administrative observation data and Walk-Through data document that the following classroom instructional techniques are clearly evidenced at Knightdale High School. This evidence demonstrates instructional strategies that engage students in learning. They are supported, expected, and inspected at our school daily.

- Student-centered classrooms with limited lecture by teachers
- Classes begin immediately with “bell work” and students work until the end of the period on closure activities
- Classes use devices including “clickers” and portable whiteboards (Mobis) to enhance student engagement
- Student projects
- Cooperative learning groups
- Small group presentations
- Jigsaw activities
- Think-pair-share
- Labs and other hands-on activities
- Simulations
- Gallery Walk presented by academic teams showcased efforts in each department and enhanced opportunities for professional sharing of best practices.
- Reading Groups in 9th grade English classes—Two class periods per week students are separated into reading groups according to reading test scores. Groups can focus on specific literacy skills that students need to develop. The lesson plans for Reading Groups are developed by the school’s Literacy Coach providing continual staff development for teachers to help them learn to incorporate reading instruction.

Next steps: What are you doing now to ensure the recommendation is met or further

progress is made? If the actions you took were effective, explain how you plan to embed and sustain the actions to ensure that you continue to meet the recommendation. If the actions were not effective or remain in progress, detail the next steps you plan to take to meet the recommendation.

Knightdale High School has embedded into its culture the expectation that teachers will provide instruction that engages students in the learning process. Our staff meetings, staff development opportunities, PLT meetings, Professional Code, opening school year activities, and evaluation processes all support, encourage, and expect that classroom instruction will be student-centered and highly engaging. Teachers have been trained so that they now share a common vocabulary of best practices and research-based effective instructional techniques.

Monthly staff meetings are held during each teacher's planning period and are infused with staff development opportunities. At these meetings staff members demonstrate new technology and offer practice opportunities for strategies including Quality Teaching and Learning, literacy skills throughout the curriculum, Marzano recommendations, and other effective teaching practices.

Each academic team holds weekly Professional Learning Team meetings to collaborate, analyze data, and develop best practices for instructional effectiveness. PLT minutes document team efforts and results. Additionally, principal-required quarterly data collection activities measure effectiveness of team efforts.

Bi-weekly meeting of Beginning Teachers with their coordinator feature sharing of best practices with a focus on engaging instructional strategies.

Knightdale High School's Improvement Plan is truly a living document. We address instructional strategies and measure their effectiveness. Although the school improvement process is one that is required by our district and state, it is a process that we enthusiastically embrace in our determination to seek continual improvement.

The teacher evaluation process "inspects what we expect" in classroom instruction. Evaluators record instructional techniques observed and recommend additional or more appropriate techniques. The number of instructional support staff members has been increased to provide more mentoring for teachers. Peer collaboration to provide engaging instruction is clearly evident and highly valued.

Parent survey data shows that parents believe that instruction at Knightdale High School is effective and engaging. 76% of survey respondents report that our classes are "always" or "usually" effective. No respondent rated instruction as "rarely" or "never" effective.

A huge source of pride for us is our test score improvement. Knightdale students improved their scores on nine of the ten End-of-Course tests given in 2009. Seven of the nine tests saw a minimum of a nine percentage point increase in the number of students at grade level or above.

Our Administrative and Leadership Teams are committed to continued improvement in

our ability to engage students in their own learning. We continually seek research proven techniques and provide information about them to our staff. Staff development decisions are based upon staff needs for improved instructional techniques.

4.2. Reviewer Response

Progress Response: Completed

Comments for Institution: After reviewing the school’s response, AdvancED concurs with the school’s assessment that this recommendation has been completed. The school has taken the necessary steps to address the recommendation made by the Quality Assurance Review team. The school is encouraged to monitor its ongoing activities to ensure that the actions taken to address this recommendation are sustained over time.

5.0. Recommendation 2

Source: QAR

Date: 2009-11-03

Recommendation:

The school administration and faculty should integrate more 21st Century technology tools into classroom instruction.

Evidence:

- One value statement articulated by the school states that they will integrate technology into all instructional areas. However, the Quality Assurance Review Team did not observe widespread use of 21st Century technology in classroom instruction;
- Observations revealed that the technology which is available for classroom instruction is largely computers, generally considered to be 20th century technology;
- Interviews with teachers indicate that they are not aware of technology, such as the two interactive whiteboards that are in the building;
- Interviews with teachers indicate the equipment available for classroom use does not always function properly, and timely maintenance is a problem.
- Conversations with administrators revealed that budget constraints required scaling back on technology during the construction of the school, thus eliminating certain planned enhancements.

Rationale:

For students in today’s technology driven society use of technology to communicate and gather information is part of their daily lives. Teachers who are skilled in using instructional technology, and can effectively incorporate it into their classroom instruction, have a high probability of creating students who are actively engaged in their own learning.

5.1. School Response

Progress Status: Completed

Response: Actions taken to address the recommendation: What steps did you take to address the recommendation? Summarize the steps taken by the school system in response to the recommendation. Include detail on specific strategies used, staff members involved, time frame of implementation of strategies, and other relevant details.

Knightsdale High School began its response to this recommendation by going into a serious and extensive fact-finding mode.

- Our Technology Committee and Administrative Team sought opportunities and attended Technology Expositions.
- We invited vendors to our school to demonstrate available new technology and its applications in the school environment.
- We explored the Internet to determine new technology and explored its feasibility in our school.
- We solicited teacher input through surveys to determine their current use of technology and to ask about their interest in specific types of technology.
- We established a partnership with North Carolina State University to collaborate on the effects the use of technology can have on high school students' learning.
- We worked closely with Apple representatives to increase our use of Itouch and other products.

- Our school's Technology Contact began to serve as a liaison between Wake County Public School System and Knightsdale High School to assure that we benefit from district efforts to increase effective use of technology. Our principal and Technology Contact each have assumed active leadership roles in their respective district-level Technology Leadership Committees.

- School software was upgraded to reflect 21st century standards.
- Weekly technology staff development opportunities were implemented in the Media Center during the last two school years. Staff involvement has increased over time.
- We have demonstrated the use of technology tools for classroom instruction in our staff meetings. Modeling the applications for these tools has enhanced our teachers' interest in using them and tweaked their imagination to seek applications of their own.

Results of the action steps: Were the steps effective in addressing the recommendation? Detail the results of the actions taken. Include review of the data and summary of other evidence that serve as indicators of the success/effectiveness of the actions taken.

As a result of our action steps we see far more technology in use in our classrooms throughout the campus. We have continued to increase our use of computers and to upgrade our hardware. Additionally, our teachers are increasingly comfortable in using 21st century technology in their classrooms.

We now own and use the following types of technology. (This inventory does not include all our technology but is intended to refer to technology identified in the Quality Assurance Review as 21st century.)

- 16 classroom sets of Interactive Student Response Systems (electronic “clickers” for immediate student feedback to teachers)
- 14 classroom sets of Interactive Whiteboard Tablets (Mobi)
- 4 document cameras with microscope option (Elmo) for classroom use
- TI-Nspire interactive calculators in use in math classes
- Wireless internet connectivity throughout the campus
- Computer art animation with a new lab has been added
- 30 heart monitors used in health and physical education classes
- Tri-Fit System used in health and physical education classes
- 15 Electronic Babies used in Family and Consumer Science classes
- Online newspaper produced by students in journalism class

Our partnership with NCSU has come to fruition. Plans are now firm for our social studies students to connect via webcam with students in Middle-Eastern countries during the 2010-2011 school year.

KHS staff members are active in using the following technologies in their classrooms:

- United streaming
- Our journalism class is taught in a new Apple lab. Students use podcasts to enhance instruction.
- English as a Second Language students use ipods to support their English language instruction.
- ESL and selected 9th grade English classes access Academy of Reading in a computer lab
- Wiki sites for teachers and for class assignments
- Blogs maintained by teachers
- E-instruction
- Cybersense

Next steps: What are you doing now to ensure the recommendation is met or further progress is made? If the actions you took were effective, explain how you plan to embed and sustain the actions to ensure that you continue to meet the recommendation. If the actions were not effective or remain in progress, detail the next steps you plan to take to meet the recommendation.

We have instituted a number of organization changes in order to ensure that we have effectively and permanently incorporated 21st century technology into our instructional program.

We have found it essential to provide strong, immediate technical support to our staff. In addition to a district-provided support technician, we have also been able to identify a staff member who can provide expertise to trouble shoot and to assist teachers in their use of technology. This quick access to technology support on campus has shortened the response time to troubleshoot/repair equipment and resulted in reduced frustration for teachers. Fast help means teachers are more willing to experiment with the integration of technology into their classrooms.

Our district Technology Services Department offers a Refresh program to replace outdated equipment with current hardware. We have acquired new computer labs and upgraded laptops assigned to staff.

We will continue to provide frequent monthly for teachers to meet in the Media Center to upgrade their skills in using 21st century technology. We have found that facilitating their collegial learning helps them to support each other and to find creative applications for technology within their classrooms.

Our commitment of resources to technological tools for classroom use has greatly increased. Now expenditures for technology are an administrative and Leadership Team priority. We coordinate efforts with our Media Center in order to use available resources for maximum effectiveness.

Our principal is proactive in submitting purchase orders to district office for items on our technology wish lists. These purchase orders have resulted in increased acquisitions of hardware and software for our students.

Our Media Center maintains records of inventory and of the teachers who check out technology of various types. These records allow us to track an upward trend of staff who use technology and what types they use. We can then adjust our purchases to accommodate teacher demand. Additionally, we now maintain an E-Library with audio and other resources.

We anticipate that our partnership with NCSU will spread beyond our social studies classrooms and include more academic disciplines. Collaboration with the university helps our staff and our students to maintain their focus on real-world applications for technology.

KHS Administrative Team is excited by the fast-growing use of technology in our classrooms. We are proud that our staff and students are so receptive and creative to expanding their skills. We commend their efforts and assure them of our continued support. Our school's culture values and respects the technology leaders among us.

5.2. Reviewer Response

Progress Response: Completed

Comments for Institution: After reviewing the school's response, AdvancED concurs with the school's assessment that this recommendation has been completed. The school has taken the necessary steps to address the recommendation made by the Quality Assurance Review team. The school is encouraged to monitor its ongoing activities to ensure that the actions taken to address this recommendation are sustained over time.

6.0. Recommendation 3

Source: QAR

Date: 2009-11-03

Recommendation:

The school administration should enhance current means, and develop additional means, of keeping parents abreast of school information. Additionally, they should develop and implement strategies to include more parents in the decision making process.

Evidence:

- Interviews with parents revealed that segments of the parent population are not aware of the school’s mission statement;
- Interviews with stakeholders revealed a need for focused emphasis on parent involvement in leadership and decision making;
- Students commented upon the inconsistent manner in which teachers update SPAN, a school-home communication system
- Parents shared that not all teachers use SPAN or web pages effectively;
- The administration noted a desire to have more parents involved in the school.

Rationale:

Parents of all students should have the opportunity to be aware what is taking place in school both generally, and also specifically in terms of their child. Further, all parents should have the opportunity to be involved in the life of the school community.

6.1. School Response

Progress Status: Completed

Response: Actions taken to address the recommendation: What steps did you take to address the recommendation? Summarize the steps taken by the school system in response to the recommendation. Include detail on specific strategies used, staff members involved, time frame of implementation of strategies, and other relevant details.

In order to improve our communications with parents and to increase parental involvement in school decision making we have taken a number of corrective actions. We have focused on improving our school website, list serve, Phone Messenger, e-newsletter, report cards, progress reports, Student and Parent Access Network (SPAN—an online grade reporting which parents access through school-provided password) accounts to disseminate information to parents.

Staff expectations for data entry and communication have been clarified and communicated in writing to staff. Our Professional Code specifies that teachers update SPAN grade data weekly. Printed interim reports are provided to parents at three-week intervals rather than the four and one-half week intervals required by Wake County Public School System. Parents are frequently informed of our expectations and encouraged to contact the principal directly if a teacher fails to meet expectations for providing grade data.

Knightsdale High School Administrative and Leadership Teams have focused energy and resources on increasing our effective communication with parents of our students. Leadership Team meets monthly and includes designated parent representatives who provide a consistent parent voice and a liaison with our Parent Teacher Student Association. Additionally, Leadership Team meetings are open and any parent who wishes to attend is cordially invited through website, newsletter, and announcements. All parents are welcome to provide input into school policies and procedures.

We have five active parent organizations at Knightdale High including PTSA, athletic boosters, band boosters, drama boosters, and dance boosters. These groups support student programs in specific areas, assist staff in coordinating and financing student activities, and advocate for their groups with school administration. Our booster organizations are valued and active groups within our school community.

We have implemented quarterly Power Hour meetings for parents who want to interact with school administration. The name is an acronym for “Parent Opportunities to Work with Educators Regularly.” Power Hour provides a vehicle to enhance parent access to school administration. The sessions focus on current school issues and concerns. They provide a vehicle for parents to work directly with school staff to formulate creative solutions within a collaborative atmosphere.

Included among staff expectations for the 2008-2009 school year and continued into the current school year is a clarification of “communication” from teachers to parents. Our staff has agreed that “communication” must be a two-way street. Sending an email or leaving a phone message is not communication since it does not necessarily include an exchange of information. Only when a conversation actually takes place in person, by phone, online do we consider that we have communicated with a parent. Teachers are frequently reminded of the definition of communication within this context. Our school system provides two part-time staff members who assist in facilitating communication with parents. These staff members communicate with parents via phone, email, home visit. One of the two is a native Spanish speaker to facilitate communication with Hispanic parents.

Our school is a member of the Knightdale Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, our principal communicates with a community group, The Knightdale 100, which conducts community forums to dialogue about topics affecting the Knightdale Community. Through this association our principal has also been in direct consultation with the director of Wake Education Partnership, a county-wide educational advocacy body. These community involvement opportunities help Knightdale High School maintain high visibility within the community and enhance its credibility and accessibility with parents and the community at large.

Knightdale High School seeks community partnerships with organizations who want to join our efforts to achieve student success. We have an active Business Alliance who offer assistance to support school efforts especially in career development opportunities. Faith communities have increased their involvement in our school this year. Led by Wake Chapel, our official Adopt-A-School partner, area faith communities have been directly involved by recruiting tutors who come in to our school weekly to work with reading groups. Community partnerships help us to stay in touch with community leaders including parents of our students.

Our Freshman Camp is a summer orientation to assist rising 9th grade students in their transition to high school. Parents are provided information to assist in the transition as well in a special parent session during the orientation.

Meet the Teacher Nights are held at the beginning of each semester to provide an opportunity for parents to interact with school staff.

Results of the action steps: Were the steps effective in addressing the recommendation? Detail the results of the actions taken. Include review of the data and summary of other evidence that serve as indicators of the success/effectiveness of the actions taken.

The corrective steps we have taken have resulted in positive change as evidenced by collected data.

Principal-collected data document a sharp decline in the number of parent concerns reported about teacher use of SPAN to communicate grades. During the 2009-2010 school year only two parents have expressed a concern about SPAN accuracy and timeliness.

Leadership Team and School Improvement Team minutes document active parent involvement. Power Hour sign-in sheets and feed back sheets provide further evidence to document parent involvement in our decision-making processes.

Next steps: What are you doing now to ensure the recommendation is met or further progress is made? If the actions you took were effective, explain how you plan to embed and sustain the actions to ensure that you continue to meet the recommendation. If the actions were not effective or remain in progress, detail the next steps you plan to take to meet the recommendation.

The principal maintains an electronic record of any parent concerns about timely data entry into SPAN. An administrator addresses teachers directly and immediately if there is a problem to be corrected.

Our Professional Code clarifies our expectations about how student progress is to be shared with students and their parents. Teacher evaluators monitor SPAN accounts to assure they are current so that parents have access to timely information about progress. Additionally, three-week progress reports are required by all teachers.

Parent involvement is integral to our Leadership Team and to our School Improvement Process. Power Hour provides a third forum for parents to interact with school staff to forge direction for Knightsdale High School.

Knightsdale High School intentionally communicates to all stakeholders its mission and goals. Each year our school adopts a theme to tie mission to goals. Our current theme is

“Mission Possible.” It has been consistently used during the 2009-2010 school year to remind us all—including our students—that our expectations for their success are top priority. Pursuing avenues to increase parental involvement is an ongoing process at Knightdale High School.

6.2. Reviewer Response

Progress Response: Completed

Comments for Institution: After reviewing the school’s response, AdvancED concurs with the school’s assessment that this recommendation has been completed. The school has taken the necessary steps to address the recommendation made by the Quality Assurance Review team. The school needs to review how it is addressing parent communication and involvement with those that do not have access to email, internet, phones, transportation, etc. The school is encouraged to monitor its ongoing activities to ensure that the actions taken to address this recommendation are sustained over time.