

**Report of the
Quality Assurance Review Team
for
Buckner Fanning Christian School
975 Mission Springs
San Antonio, Texas, United States 78258**

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

Quality Assurance Review Report

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About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

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

In April 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form one strong unified organization dedicated to education quality. That unified organization, known as AdvancED, creates the world's largest education community, representing 27,000 public and private schools and districts across the United States and in 65 countries worldwide and educating 15 million students.

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

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

- 1) Meet the AdvancED Standards and Policies for Quality Schools.** Schools demonstrate adherence to the AdvancED standards and policies 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 required actions to help the school improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school and a written report detailing the team's required actions. The school acts on the team's required actions 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 and policies.
2. Assess the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and required actions 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 required actions for improvement.

Using the Report - Responding to the Required Actions. The school uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school is held accountable for addressing the required actions identified in the report. The NCA CASI/SACS CASI State Office is available to assist schools in addressing the required actions. At prescribed intervals, the school must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress the school has made on the team's required actions. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school is addressing the required actions.

Accreditation Recommendation. The Quality Assurance Review Team uses the findings from the onsite visit to make an accreditation recommendation that is reviewed by the 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 SACS CASI Texas State Office (SACS-CASI-TX), a division of AdvancED, visited the Buckner Fanning Christian School in San Antonio, Texas, United States on 04/27/2011 - 04/28/2011.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 4 members of the administrative team, 16 students, 8 parents, and 12 teachers. In addition, members of the Board of Trustees 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:

1. Vision and Purpose
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Documenting and Using Results
5. Resource and Support Systems
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
7. 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 required actions.

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.

Commendation 1

Commendation Statement:

The vision and purpose of the school are exhibited in every phase of the operations of Buckner Fanning Christian School.

Evidence:

The mission of the school is to educate children in an interdenominational Christian environment that extends the unconditional love and grace of God while providing an exemplary educational experience. The school attempts to promote a lifetime desire for learning, equipping the future men and women of the twenty-first century with the tools necessary to help them shape and better the world in which they live. Faculty, students, and parents

strongly communicated this vision and purpose in interviews and discussions.

Rationale:

The staff and stakeholders are clearly able to identify with the vision and purpose of the school and, as a result, become passionate supporters of the school and its programs.

Commendation 2

Commendation Statement:

The school leadership and faculty have established a strong and positive learning climate for students that is safe, nurturing and caring.

Evidence:

In interviews and discussions, board members, parents, students and faculty indicated that they believe the school is an excellent educational community that meets the needs of the students at a very high level.

Rationale:

A positive learning climate is essential for students and faculty members to facilitate the highest level of learning while providing a safe and caring atmosphere in which students can feel comfortable while pursuing their learning objectives.

Commendation 3

Commendation Statement:

There is a high level of commitment from the leadership and faculty to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of each student.

Evidence:

In interviews with stakeholders, Quality Assurance Review team members were impressed with the responses of the parents and students who indicated a high level of satisfaction with the climate and the programs of the school. There was a strong consensus that the leadership of the school and the faculty are extremely conscientious in addressing the various needs of the students.

Rationale:

It is imperative that the majority of students' needs are being met or else the parents will not feel justified in paying significant tuition and keeping their children in the school.

Commendation 4

Commendation Statement:

There is a strong commitment from the board members, and a high level of trust has been established between the board members and the leadership of the school.

Evidence:

In interviews with board members, it was very apparent that they are very pleased with the performance of the

leadership of the school. Each board member articulated that there have been numerous improvements and that there is a clear vision for a successful future.

Rationale:

The current leadership of the school has brought the school through some major issues and has directed the school through a series of improvement efforts, especially in the development of appropriate curriculum and instructional techniques.

Commendation 5

Commendation Statement:

There is a strong sense of community with the parents, students, and faculty that provides for the opportunity to build a focused plan for the future of Buckner Fanning Christian School.

Evidence:

In interviews and personal conversations, stakeholders communicated that they feel that a strong plan of action is in place to improve the programs of the school and move the school forward in its long-term development.

Rationale:

In all schools, but especially in a relatively new school, it is essential that all stakeholders believe that the programs of the school will continue to improve so that students will receive maximum benefit for personal and academic growth.

Required Actions

In addition to the commendations, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following required actions for improvement. The team focused its required actions 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 addressing each of the required actions noted in this section. Following this review, the school will be asked to submit a progress report on these required actions.

Required Action 1

Required Action:

Update and expand the current long range strategic plan to include resources needed to complete the action steps and achieve the goals of the plan.

Evidence:

In interviews, faculty and leadership acknowledged that a very specific plan of action is necessary to address the areas of improvement needed in order to have continuous improvement. Although significant accomplishments have been made in this area, additional attention to facility development, curriculum, and technology needs to be included in the plan.

Rationale:

A strong and inclusive strategic plan will help the school community remain focused on meeting the needs that have been identified by the stakeholders through the accreditation and school improvement process and will also

provide the appropriate time lines, resources and benchmarks to assess the progress of the plan.

Required Action 2

Required Action:

Analyze the school's need for technology, equipment, software and other media to be utilized by students and teachers.

Evidence:

Interviews with teachers and students indicated that advances in technology, equipment, instructional software and other media might improve the overall instructional program of the school. Technology is currently being used, but it appears that it could be expanded in classrooms and the media center.

Rationale:

Although technology is not the highest priority for the school, the school leadership must ascertain that all means for school improvement are assessed for their possible contribution to continuous improvement of the school.

Required Action 3

Required Action:

Analyze current professional development opportunities for staff, and align all activities with the needs of the instructional program by using a careful analysis of student performance data and the school's goals for improving student learning.

Evidence:

In interviews, faculty members indicated that there have been positive professional development activities at the school. However, faculty members also indicated that they need more professional development activities to align the curriculum and improve the articulation of curriculum between grade levels, as well as to improve the diversification of instruction.

Rationale:

Ongoing professional development must be designed and delivered to enable faculty and staff members to continue to improve their skills as well as to improve the overall quality of the instructional program.

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 required actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the required actions.

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 required actions. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the required actions. 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/arn, 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-TX 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 required actions 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.

Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the Buckner Fanning Christian School demonstrates that it meets the seven standards for accreditation. The findings of the Quality Assurance Review Team regarding the standards for accreditation are summarized on the following pages.

Standard 1: Vision and Purpose

Standard: The school establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school.

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

The Buckner Fanning Christian School at Mission Springs is part of an interdenominational complex established by the Buckner Fanning Evangelistic Foundation in 1998. The school began in September, 1998, with 26 students ranging from grades kindergarten through third. Buckner now has Pre-K, beginning with three year olds, through eighth grade with a student body of close to 200 students.

The land donated to the Foundation in 1995 is in a very unique and picturesque setting. It is located on several beautiful acres of hill country property that act as a buffer with the growing developments in this part of San Antonio. The school is surrounded by hundreds of live oak trees which cover the school's campus. This provides students with an outdoor experience not often found in most of today's schools. At the same time, the school provides a safe, orderly and encouraging atmosphere for the students and faculty.

The school is rooted in the unconditional love and grace of God. All subjects in the curriculum are taught in an integrated whole with scriptures at the center of the curriculum. The school strives to provide a clear model of Biblical Christian living through the staff, the Foundation Board and the School Board of Trustees. The school is committed to the principles of the Christian faith, while secondary doctrinal issues are referred to the parents. The school embraces students from a variety of faiths. In its mission statement, the school states that it "is dedicated to educating children in an interdenominational Christian environment that extends the unconditional love and grace of God while providing an exemplary educational experience." Furthermore, the mission statement states that as the school promotes a "lifetime desire for learning, the school will equip the future men and women of the twenty-first century with the tools necessary to help them shape and better the world in which they live."

The board and leadership of the school have worked diligently to ensure that the vision, mission and core values of the school guide the teaching and learning process with a key focus on the individual needs of students. It was clearly apparent to the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team that the school leadership provides a high quality, balanced program for children. In interviews with stakeholders, parents indicated that they believe that the school's vision and structure provide for an excellent academic environment for their children. A review of survey results demonstrated that the school has systematic measures in place to evaluate its dedication to the vision and purpose and to revise practices when appropriate. Most importantly, teachers and staff members shared their support for the vision and mission of the school, strongly indicating that the teaching and learning process is guided by these purposeful intentions. Curriculum materials, board meeting minutes, and other items reviewed by the QAR team clearly support

the vision and purpose of the school.

The leadership team actively seeks parental input and support for the school's programs. Frequent communications from the school to its stakeholders provide for a well informed school community. Communication with parents comes in both formal and informal approaches. Parents indicated that they feel free to talk to staff at any time. School leaders indicated that they maintain a complete "open door policy." Parents stated that the leadership team is easy to reach and is responsive to their questions and input. Parent surveys and constant conversations with parents assist in maintaining the vision and purpose of the school. Parent-teacher conferences are held on a regular basis, as well as when requested by parents. The school provides specific information, including explanation of the vision and purpose of the school on its website as well as in numerous publications.

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

- Board members, parents, faculty members and school leaders interviewed were able to clearly articulate the school's vision and purpose, and interpret it in a manner that demonstrated how it impacted their individual decisions and how it continues to impact the educational and spiritual development of the students.
- The school leadership keeps the vision and purpose before the school community in a wide variety of ways, including all school written and electronic communications. In this way, the purpose and vision is clearly tied to most community activities.
- The depth of parental volunteer involvement is clearly demonstrated as parents are visible and active in appropriate activities which support the students and the teachers.
- The school has continued to enhance the curriculum to provide an enriched academic program which better prepares students for future academic success.
- Numerous school activities provide students and parents with opportunities to give outstanding community support.

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

- Expand the use of the school's mission and purpose in marketing activities.
- Use the many strengths of the board to assist in the regular review of the vision, mission and purpose of the school.
- Develop a continuous communication process with former students and their parents to determine how the school can continue to make improvement so that students will be fully successful in their future educational endeavors.

Finding: Buckner Fanning Christian School has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

Standard: The school provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and school effectiveness.

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

The Board of Trustees and the leadership of Buckner Fanning Christian School at Mission Springs work together very effectively. The chairman of the board is always available to the school leadership and actively supports the faculty and staff. The board acts as a consultative body in times of policy decisions, but it does not micro-manage the leadership of the school or the faculty. Rather, the chairman of the board and other board members have demonstrated great respect for the head of school and his staff. The board meets regularly to implement concise and specific policies and procedures that produce a very effective school operation. Board members and the head of school, collaborating in an extremely positive and productive working relationship, clearly articulate the school's vision and work to implement an effective school program that emphasizes reverence for God and all of His creation, respect for one's self and one's fellow man, and responsibility for contributing to making this a better world.

The positive working relationship of the board and head of school has ensured collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The school's policies and procedures are based on equity for all students and a commitment to improved quality of all programs in the school. The board and school leadership continuously look for areas in which to improve. In addition to ongoing evaluation of the curriculum and results of teaching strategies, the school is beginning to look at the need for improvement of the school's facilities.

Teachers in the school clearly follow the mission and the directives of the school leadership, but they are provided with some flexibility in their instructional methods. Teachers and staff members demonstrate great respect and appreciation for the leadership of the school. Staff indicated that they have the opportunity to freely provide input and to ask for support when needed. They are appreciative of the positive support that is provided by the leadership and indicated that all their critical needs are met. The faculty demonstrates a high degree of professionalism and expertise. Many faculty members serve in multiple roles in the school. Teachers are actively involved in the decision making process in the school. Peer observation, faculty dialogue, and collegiality are encouraged and, as a result, are daily practices. Parents and students are given numerous opportunities to provide feedback to the school leadership.

Artifacts that were reviewed by the Quality Assurance Review team demonstrated that the school ensures compliance with local, state and federal regulations. Leadership is officially documented with the state licensing division. All state inspections, required certificates, and compliance data are readily available in the office. In addition, all personnel records are professionally organized and contain essential documentation.

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

- The head of school, assistant head of school, and other leadership team members are very visible with a "hands on" approach in the daily operations; they also spend quality time in the classrooms with teachers and students.
- The Board of Trustees and the head of school maintain high expectations for all stakeholders and a strong focus on Christian education.
- All stakeholders indicated that a great sense of pride and family exists throughout the school; strong

teamwork is evident.

- The Self Assessment and Executive Institutional Summary were well written, and the related artifacts were well organized and comprehensive.
- The Board of Trustees and head of school engage in a healthy relationship of mutual respect; all are clear in their purpose and mission of providing an effective structure for student learning.
- There is an excellent flow of communication between school leadership and all stakeholders.
- The Board of Trustees has recently completed a revision of the by-laws to make sure that all efforts are maintained to promote efficient governance of the school.

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

- Seek ways to diversify the student body as the school continues to grow and reach out to the community.
- Solicit community volunteers for health care, counseling and other student services.
- Establish a formal staff advisory committee and include them in the formal school improvement process.

Finding: Buckner Fanning Christian School has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" 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:

Buckner Fanning Christian School works diligently to develop and maintain a positive learning environment. The faculty is committed to the requirement that all students display good manners and proper, respectful behavior, which are necessary for an orderly learning environment. The staff strives to teach and model the necessity for a strong work ethic, self-discipline, pride in doing one's best and accepting responsibility for one's own actions. The faculty and staff seek to share with students the true joy of learning as a life-long experience, not just a school experience. Parents are asked to partner with the faculty and staff to reinforce these traits that are so important for helping children learn the pathways to successful and purposeful living. The faculty and staff also implement learning activities that promote the development of a positive self-concept in each child. It is believed that children develop genuine positive self esteem through the self respect they generate as a result of hard work, correct behavior and pride in appropriate accomplishments.

The school uses a variety of curricula to support student achievement. The curriculum offers a solid foundation of basic academic skills and content in the areas of reading, mathematics, language arts, history, geography, science, health, and Spanish. Physical education, art, music, computer science, Christian Education and Strategies of Accelerated Reasoning (SOAR) classes extend and enrich the basic academic program. The school utilizes a variety of the best materials available in the classrooms. The faculty strives to teach learning processes involving creative, critical and analytical thinking, decision-making, and problem solving, not just content and skills. The Core Knowledge Sequence Curriculum, aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), is research-based and mapped, and

crosses all levels as it forms the curricular foundation of the school. After a thorough assessment of the curriculum, the faculty and staff added Saxon Math, A Beka Reading, Accelerated Reading, Shurley English strategies, SOAR, K-2 TPRI and Star reading to support student learning. Small class sizes provide teachers with opportunities to closely monitor student learning.

The faculty and staff clearly indicated that they want to continue to assess the curriculum and the instructional program of the school to maximize the effectiveness of all school programs. Interviews with teachers indicated a need to continue to improve the science curriculum. Teachers indicated that there is a need for new textbooks and materials to strengthen science instruction in the school. The Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team clearly observed that the high quality of instruction in the school is directly related to the outstanding teachers and to the effective leadership of the school. All indicated that they will do whatever it takes to move forward and improve instruction.

Technology is found in all classrooms and in the library. Students and teachers reported that they enjoy using the technology to support and extend instruction and learning. The Parent Teacher Club recently purchased new computers for the school, and the school is in the process of updating software to enable teachers to teach new skills or support presentations, such as pod casts, recordings, and movie making. The school has one smart board, but new software is needed to maximize its use. Some teachers indicated that they are in need of additional technological training.

The library doubles as a computer lab/media center for the school. The librarian or an assistant is available to assist students and teachers. A large white board displays updated Core Knowledge information being taught in the special classrooms. Teachers indicated that it is great to have volumes in one area, but that there is a need for additional resources. A spiral notebook is used as the checkout system for resources from the library.

During classroom observations, the QAR team found that teachers are well prepared and enthusiastic about implementing the curriculum. The teachers were always actively engaged with their students and showed great passion during their interactions with the students. Teachers shared their great love for the students and appreciate all opportunities to work with the children. Teachers indicated that they are provided professional development opportunities through staff meetings and training sessions, but most stated that there is a continuous need for staff development throughout the year.

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

- The school environment is rich, peaceful, and inviting.
- The small class sizes, library space, outdoor environment, art instruction, co-curricular offerings, and tutoring provide the framework for a wide range of instruction and learning opportunities.
- The leadership of the school provides a clear, comprehensive philosophy of curriculum which has been assimilated throughout the school and engages all stakeholders.
- The faculty and staff are dedicated to the school's vision of providing an exceptional and challenging academic program in which children will learn to love as well as love to learn.
- The school leadership and faculty hold high expectations for all students and work hard to support all learning endeavors.
- The faculty and leadership of the school are committed to continuous improvement of the instructional program.
- The positive leadership of the school has clearly created an atmosphere of learning in which the faculty is open to new and creative approaches.
- The faculty is comprised of experienced and dedicated teachers with a commitment to excellence in education.

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

- Analyze and review the use of technology and media in the school to ensure that all means are applied to improve the instructional processes and the resulting student learning.
- Analyze current professional development practices, survey the faculty and staff regarding needs in this area, and develop a plan for systematic professional development that positively impacts the school's academic program and student learning.
- Explore the many methods of teaching that provide for differentiated instruction to meet the varied needs of all students and their learning styles.
- Evaluate the science curriculum and determine the need for updating and improving curriculum materials.
- Analyze the need for additional resources that can positively impact the instructional delivery system.

Finding: Buckner Fanning Christian School has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" 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:

Teachers and administrators of Buckner Fanning Christian School clearly affirmed that in the delivery of the curriculum, formative assessments are used to ascertain student learning. Overall, the assessment program provides a valid, reliable and bias-free fund of information. The school uses TPRI Early Reading Assessment for Kindergarten through grade three, Accelerated Reading Star tests, Saxon Math benchmarks, and Core Knowledge end of unit tests to assess student learning.

For grades one through eight, the school has chosen national tests that are normed using a broad range of populations for their data collection. By the use of these assessments, the school has also provided a means of effective comparisons with similar private schools, as well as public schools, in the area. During the Spring of the year, the Otis Lennon Abilities Test and the Stanford Achievement Test are given in grades one through eight. Stanford Achievement standardized test scores, administered in April of each school year, revealed that students in grades one through eight are consistently performing in the average to above average range. The staff has consistently monitored student assessments and has addressed areas of concern in a very proactive and positive manner. Leadership and faculty work hard to identify areas where improvement can be made and join forces to ensure that improvement is made to meet the high expectations of the school.

Interviews with administrators revealed that the school has employed new eighth grade math, reading, and history teachers to improve the instructional program. In 2007-2009, the school did a study of the Core Knowledge math curriculum and determined that it would be in the best interests of the students and the instructional program to adopt the Saxon Math curriculum. It was implemented in 2009-2010 and it took some time for the teachers to develop expertise in the program. Now, in the second full year of implementing the Saxon Math program, the program seems to be meeting the needs of the students.

Administrators and teachers are anxious to receive Stanford scores to ascertain the effectiveness of the program.

In addition to these previously mentioned assessments, a number of other assessment methods are used by the teachers. Frequently, students are asked to make oral presentations to demonstrate their knowledge acquisition. All students are asked to take notes of the presentations and to ask higher order thinking questions of the presenters. Progress reports are provided to students and parents each quarter. Twice yearly, or when additionally requested by parents, parent/teacher conferences are held. In addition, frequent informal conversations and conferences take place in the parking lot, in offices, and in classrooms. These communication opportunities allow faculty and parents to discuss student progress on a regular basis. Parents are able to view information about student performance through the parent portal that is provided. Administrators confirmed that curriculum meetings are held during the summer for math, reading, and science to review test scores, ascertain curriculum effectiveness, and remediate any areas.

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

- The school uses a comprehensive assessment system that is based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results.
- Assessment results provide administration and faculty with accurate and meaningful information that provides opportunities to make significant curriculum and instructional decisions.
- The assessment system assists stakeholders in understanding student performance, school effectiveness and the results of improvement efforts.
- Teachers and students take great pride in the frequent student oral presentations that are given to demonstrate knowledge acquisition and oral skills, and to apply higher order thinking skills when responding to questions about the presentations from fellow students.
- The school communicates the results of student learning and the effectiveness of the school programs through a variety of mediums.

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

- Utilize trend data from other comparable schools in order to further evaluate the effectiveness of methods used.
- Analyze relevant data from the recent testing to determine if curriculum and instructional changes have positively impacted student learning.
- Address curriculum areas that faculty and staff believe need additional attention.
- Incorporate the input of previous students and parents who have transitioned to other schools to determine how their experiences at Buckner have impacted their academic progress.

Finding: Buckner Fanning Christian School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 5: Resource and Support Systems

Standard: The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

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

Buckner Fanning Christian School is blessed to have highly qualified teachers who are totally committed to the students and the programs of the school. The leadership of the school takes time to find the right staff when there are vacancies. It was obvious to the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team that the professional staff members of the school are very capable of fulfilling their assigned roles and responsibilities. Personnel policies to ensure appropriate hiring practices, certification, licensure, evaluation, and training are in place. Teachers are provided with small classes, resource materials and training to support the vision and instructional programs. Although professional development does take place, teachers and administrators indicated a need for additional professional development.

Upon entering the school and visiting classrooms, it became obvious to the QAR team that a great deal of effort has been put into developing a safe and orderly environment. Parents commented that they feel their children are extremely safe and well cared for at Buckner Fanning Christian School. The outside grounds are clean and well kept, and children's play areas are well designed and maintained. Classrooms are organized neatly, and student work is highlighted to emphasize the impact of instruction on student learning. Documented evidence includes a safe school plan, an evacuation plan for fire drills, tornadoes, as well as other safety and security procedures. Through a review of financial records, the QAR team found sound business practices and an effective audit system in place. The business manager demonstrated a clear understanding of the financial demands that are involved with a private school and presented thoughtful planning for the future.

The school is fortunate to be connected to a strong church, the Fellowship of San Antonio, which provides numerous facilities and a great deal of support for the faculty, staff, and students. The school uses the beautiful church auditorium, gymnasium and classrooms every day. The church staff is extremely supportive of the school and provides a great deal of assistance through a variety of ways such as one of the ministers working with male students through the Christian Teen Life program. This partnership between the church and the school has demonstrated a high level of collaboration that has drawn all community members together. It has had an extremely positive impact on the school and its delivery of instruction to the students.

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

- A strong, positive relationship exists between the school and the church, and the church has provided the school with numerous resources and support services.
- The leadership recruits and employs highly capable, respectful, committed teachers who are truly concerned with the well being of the children.
- Safety measures are defined, understood, and bring a sense of security to all stakeholders.
- Small class sizes allow for teachers to provide maximum attention to each student and his or her individual needs.
- The highly dedicated staff often goes the extra mile to ensure the success of each student and each program of the school.
- There is an outstanding team environment in which staff members support each other and constantly look for ways to improve the programs and meet the needs of the students.

- The strong leadership team, with the healthy support of the board members, provides the necessary direction for the school and solves problems in a timely and effective manner.

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

- Survey staff to determine needs and develop a plan to provide professional development activities that meet the needs of the faculty to consistently improve the delivery of instruction.
- Analyze the need for additional resources such as new instructional technology and curriculum resources to improve the curriculum and instructional strategies.
- Review the benefits package for staff and determine the current and future needs of staff members to make sure that highly qualified personnel are encouraged to remain at the school.

Finding: Buckner Fanning Christian School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 6: Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

Standard: The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

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

The leadership and faculty of Buckner Fanning Christian School have created a climate of openness and trust that fosters effective communication and positive relationships among all of its stakeholders. The head of school maintains very positive communication and a healthy professional relationship with the board and with parents. This was easily observed by the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team, and these positive relationships between stakeholders appeared to radiate throughout the school community and set a positive working climate throughout all activities in the school. The school leadership makes itself accessible to the families of the students. The school leadership is always visible to the parents from the time they drop off their children to the end of the day when they pick them up. The QAR team witnessed many informal conversations between the head of school and parents in the parking lot.

Opportunities for formal and informal meetings are provided to discuss any concerns or suggestions that parents may have. Parents may request conferences at any time and they are sure to receive an immediate positive response from the leadership or the faculty. An open door policy is in place in order for parents to have easy access to teachers as well as members of the leadership team. The school's website is constantly updated to provide information to current families as well as to prospective families. Teachers maintain home pages to provide assignments and appropriate news items for parents. The bi-weekly newsletter called *The Bobcat Brigade* is provided to all stakeholders and is received with great enthusiasm. The Parent Teacher Club, in addition to providing much support for the school, also provides a monthly newsletter to keep parents informed as to the activities of the school. Gradespeed, the electronic grading system used by the teachers, provides a portal through which parents can see how their children are doing on a daily basis.

In addition to other communications with parents, the head of school writes a monthly article for a neighborhood publication that communicates the vision, purpose, and activities of the school to the larger community. Regular emails are used to communicate between parents and teachers as well as between parents and school leaders. *The Annual Report* is published each Spring and provides relevant information

for all stakeholders.

As a result of the excellent communication with stakeholders, there is a high degree of confidence in the school staff and the school program. It was very clear to the QAR team that a highly professional yet positive relationship exists between all stakeholders. The continual effort to educate all stakeholders of the vision, goals, and various communication devices provides a depth of consistency among all stakeholders. The various communication strategies provide parents with excellent information related to their child's cognitive, social, developmental, and character progress. The school has developed a school culture where high levels of collaboration are the norm. Students work very well together, just as teachers eagerly share ideas and coordinate activities and lessons. Students are very knowledgeable of the vision, mission and purpose of the school and regularly recited the mission statement to QAR team members when the team members were visiting in classrooms.

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

- The commitment of the stakeholders to the successful operation of the school program with a Christian message motivates all and encourages the promise for continual growth of the school.
- The board gives tremendous stability to the school and provides the school leadership with the means and flexibility to properly manage and administer the functions of the school.
- A variety of communication strategies has provided opportunities for virtually every stakeholder to be fully informed about the programs and activities of the school and to allow them to be active participants in the school and its process of continuous improvement.
- Students, parents, and teachers are enthusiastic about collaborative efforts such as community service activities and "family activities" at the school.

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

- Develop and promote new opportunities for staff and parents to be involved in the decision making process as well as the ongoing accreditation process.
- Survey the stakeholders to determine what services or programs could be provided by the school to assist the parents in working with their children to advance their academic achievement and spiritual development.
- Evaluate the need for students to have more access to technology to allow them to better communicate their ideas via word processing, media, and Power Point presentations using photos, music, graphics, and other creative tools.

Finding: Buckner Fanning Christian School 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:

It was most apparent to the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team that Buckner Fanning Christian School has engaged in a continuous process of improvement as it has continued to articulate the vision and purpose of the school. Over the past few years, the leadership and faculty have critically analyzed the curriculum and instructional processes of the school in order to make sure that the most effective processes and methods are being employed. As a result of these efforts, the school clearly demonstrates ongoing improvements to increase student learning. Clear evidence was provided to demonstrate that the school evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement. Improvement goals and the need for accomplishing them have been communicated to the school community so that specific financial, personnel, and facility targets can be set and monitored. Through the self study process, the leadership and faculty realized that they need to have a plan for improvement each year. They also discovered that they need to develop a system of monitoring and gathering data. In the development of these processes, the leadership developed a system of delegation of duties to allow the staff to take more ownership in the process.

The QAR team observed specific efforts for continuous improvement. The use of regular reports to parents, the assessments of student learning, parent-teacher conferences, and other means are used to demonstrate the academic progress of students' performance. School effectiveness is monitored with daily conversations with parents and by analyzing the results of parent and staff surveys. All student assessments are reviewed by the leadership in order to identify goals for improving curriculum and instruction. Assessment information is clearly and openly communicated with staff so that honest discussions can take place to enable continuous improvement efforts. Often, faculty meetings provide opportunities for professional development to help staff members gain new insights for improvement efforts. Leadership and faculty leaders encourage all staff members to share their insights and concerns to foster open communication that provides for clear understanding of continuous improvement efforts and their intended objectives.

Documentation of improvement was found in various minutes and notes that were products of meetings conducted to promote continuous improvement. Teachers and staff members enthusiastically reported that they were actively engaged in the self study for accreditation as well as in previous evaluation processes of the school over the past several years. Each time a particular curriculum area, curriculum materials, or instructional processes were evaluated over the past few years, the efforts have resulted in significant improvements. It was obvious to the QAR team that the leadership of the school has developed an excellent process for involving teachers and staff members in open discussion and improvement efforts and, as a result, the process of continuous improvement has already begun at Buckner Fanning Christian School.

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

- The school has initiated a strategic improvement process as a result of the accreditation self study.
- The faculty and staff are committed to improving their skills and abilities through professional development activities to increase the effectiveness of the curriculum and instructional program of the school.

- The leadership fosters a culture of collaboration, trust, and continuous personal and school improvement.
- Continuous improvement processes, such as staff meetings and informal professional development sessions, allow the staff to be focused on the improvement efforts of the school.
- Leadership is anxious to implement the recommendations and suggestions that will be provided through this report.

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

- Analyze staff development plans and survey the needs of teachers to ascertain that the most productive staff development opportunities are provided for staff. In addition, procure low cost opportunities for professional development where they exist by tapping into parental expertise or teacher networks. This includes communicating with other AdvancED schools.
- Update and expand the current long range strategic improvement plan to include resources needed to complete the actions steps and achieve essential goals.
- Analyze the school's needs for additional equipment, technology, and materials to better facilitate the improvement process.

Finding: Buckner Fanning Christian School has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Conclusion

The commendations and required actions 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 required actions 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 required actions 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 required actions.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to the School Administration, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for their hospitality throughout the visit. The team wishes the school and its students much success in the quest for excellence through SACS-CASI-TX accreditation with AdvancED.

Appendix

Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Dr. Gary Short, Chair/Lead Evaluator (Southwest Winners Foundation)
- Mrs. Betty Williams, Team Member (San Antonio Country Day Montessori School)

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.