

**Report of the
Quality Assurance Review Team
for
Hayesville High School
205 Yellow Jacket Dr
Hayesville, North Carolina, United States 28904-9763**

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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 North Carolina State Office (SACS-CASI-NC), a division of AdvancED, visited the Hayesville High School in Hayesville, North Carolina, United States on 11/09/2011 - 11/10/2011.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 2 members of the administrative team, 20 students, 20 parents, and 21 teachers. In addition, Support 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 school serves as a model for shared leadership as evidenced by the STAC, the make-up of the School Improvement Team, and the results of the Teacher Working Conditions Survey.

Evidence:

Interviews and examination of artifacts validated that the school's stakeholders participated in a shared leadership model of operational management. Depending upon the topic, students, teachers, community and parents, and/or the administration provides the leadership necessary to accomplish the desired results. The principal recognizes his ultimate responsibility for any actions but delegates and solicits input appropriately.

Rationale:

Shared leadership benefits from various viewpoints and creates buy-in of final decisions.

Commendation 2

Commendation Statement:

Hayesville High School is recognized across the state for academic achievement, parent, teacher, and community satisfaction, and factors measuring student commitment to learning.

Evidence:

A comparison of student achievement with other schools across the state documents that students at the school rank near the top in most assessed areas including EOCs and SAT. Survey results indicate that stakeholder satisfaction is among the highest of any North Carolina school system. Graduation and attendance rates are measures of student commitment and are above state averages.

Rationale:

To achieve recognition as excelling in a number of areas related to student success is challenging in and of itself and is deserving of commendation.

Commendation 3

Commendation Statement:

The success of the Exceptional Children's Program is attributed to the collaboration between regular education teachers and the exceptional children's team and is reflected in the achievement scores and real-life application of skills.

Evidence:

The QAR team heard that staffing limitations prevented inclusion classes for students with special needs. However, these students have the benefit of collaboration between the regular classroom teachers and the exceptional children's teachers and receive the services they need to meet the challenging curriculum expected for all children. A guided studies class provides time for them to complete homework assignments and often to receive focused help prior to a concept being introduced in the classroom. The teacher of the class is the same one the students had in middle school and provides continuity during the transition period to high school. The Busy Bee Factory allows OCS students to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life situations.

Rationale:

Exceptional children can be successful with the curriculum given the support and timeframe appropriate to their level.

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:

Implement your action plan for increasing the number of AP and honors courses to address the needs of all children.

Evidence:

Parents and students expressed their desire to have additional AP and honors classes available. Currently the school offers calculus and music theory AP courses. The school has had other AP courses in the past but they are not available currently because of staffing limitations. Students have difficulty receiving NC Scholars recognition and meeting some college admission requirements because of the lack of higher level course offerings. The school works with students to use online resources to fill in the gaps but parents and students would prefer face-to-face courses at the school.

Rationale:

College-bound students compete for admission and scholarships with other students having greater access to academically challenging courses and need equity of offerings for favorable consideration.

Required Action 2

Required Action:

Establish expectations and monitor utilization of the school's online learning management system (Moodle) by all teachers.

Evidence:

The QAR team heard that all teachers had received some training on the utilization of Moodle as a computerized instructional tool. However, teachers shared that they do not all take advantage of its capabilities. Students were familiar with the program and indicated it was a tool they could use to keep up when they were absent depending upon the teachers' level of utilization. Parents also indicated they appreciated being able to access their students' grades online if the teacher provided that service. The lack of consistency across the classrooms appeared to be somewhat frustrating for student and parent stakeholders.

Rationale:

The school's online learning management system is comprehensive and could benefit instruction and communication if use was maximized and consistent.

Required Action 3

Required Action:

Formalize a school professional development plan, including professional learning communities, that addresses data analysis, formative assessment, integration of technology into instructional practices, and inquiry-based, student-led learning activities.

Evidence:

A formal plan outlining sessions, goals, attendees, resources, and evaluation tools is not created prior to the

beginning of school to guide fiscal allocations and calendar commitments. Most professional development sessions occur in response to needed training related to state, district, and school initiatives rather than an in depth examination of instructional best practices that would support increased student learning. The challenge of a formal document would be to integrate these two aspects of professional planning into a comprehensive plan that would address both state and district initiatives and school identified needs.

Rationale:

In order for professional learning communities to provide teachers with the foundation for data analysis, formative assessment, technology integration, and student-inquiry instruction, a formal structure is necessary.

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.

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-NC accreditation seals are available at www.advanced.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 Hayesville High 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:

Hayesville High School has identified a vision and mission that reflects the school's purpose and beliefs and directs activities and decisions occurring at the school. As part of their vision and mission, the school emphasizes individual learning styles and diversity as critical to creating graduates who are "globally competitive citizens with high moral character." The development of the vision was a multi-step process with input from faculty and staff, administration, and parents. Drafts, refinement, revision, and additions occurred throughout the process. The final text of the vision and purposes is shared with all stakeholders through the web page, classroom postings, and all school publications. The vision and purpose were completed during the past year; the school will review them for possible revision at year end. The practices, procedures, and policies of the school model adherence to the vision and purpose. Stakeholders interviewed demonstrated their understanding and support for the vision.

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) includes a four-part action plan to implement the vision and purpose of the school. The action plan identifies the strategies, timeline, resources, and personnel to carry out the action plan. While the action plan was comprehensive, an examination did not find specific measurable goals related to student achievement. The plan did reference "Implement measures to meet AYP target goals" but did not indicate the mastery percentages need to meet those goals. The action plan goals do reflect an extensive profile which the school maintains related to school and community demographics and statistics. Several of the tables show longitudinal trends in attendance, graduation rate, and test scores. The data available in the profile is impressive and is available on the website for all stakeholders to view.

A review of documentation, comments during interviews, and observations indicate that the vision statement and action plan are the guiding documents for actions and decisions related to teaching and learning. Teachers agree that their role is to "identify the talents of students and show them how to be successful." Teachers feel challenged to tap into the potential of students and create a love of learning and the ability to think and reason. The School Improvement Team (SIT) shared that "having students prepared" was a priority as they made decisions related to resources, scheduling, professional development, and programs. From the beginning of the visit, the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team validated that the school intended to "set the standard for western North Carolina" with having students well rounded, service oriented, and academically well prepared.

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

- The development of the vision and purpose was a multi-step process and involved most

stakeholders.

- The school improvement plan is comprehensive detailing four action goals, strategies, resources, timeline, and personnel.
- The vision statement guides instructional decision-making and reflects the thinking and direction of school stakeholders.

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

- Revise the school improvement plan to include specific measureable goals that relate to student achievement.

Finding: Hayesville High School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

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

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

Hayesville High School has established stability within the leadership roles throughout the school. There has been a smooth transition from the previous to the existing principal who is a strong leader and is well respected by the school staff and community. He has set the standard for the school and has expectations for his staff that include a strong commitment to preparing the students to be successful as they enter the workforce or further their education. The school leadership team works with all stakeholders in making decisions that are in the best interest of the students and meet local, state, and federal expectations and standards. Parents and community partners provide leaderships for many of the initiatives which support student learning. All staff members have been involved in various committees to develop programs and opportunities that will meet the needs of their students. The SIT membership is representative of core, vocational, and elective faculty. The Student Technology Advisory Council (STAC) is one example of an opportunity for collaboration between the teachers and students to advance professional development focused on technology. Recently the STAC worked with two faculty members to conduct a workshop for staff members. The school also has numerous club and athletic opportunities for student leadership. The school sets aside time one day a month to allow clubs to meet, enabling students with after-school transportation issues to be a part of an organization.

The teachers are becoming familiar with the new evaluation system and referenced their professional development plans as they spoke of plans for improving student learning and meeting the needs of the students. They also expressed interest in exploring ways to become involved in peer observations so they can learn from each other. The SIT voiced their support for creating such a program.

The QAR team confirmed teacher, parent, and other stakeholder contentions that Hayesville High School is a school that looks at students as individuals and helps them achieve success. The staff, parents, and community members are able to informally review the performance of the students of the school. Reports such as the NC School Report Card are shared with stakeholders. Students and parents receive copies of

EOC test results. The teachers communicate with parents through e-mail, texts, and phone calls. Parents expressed a comfort in approaching teachers and administrators to ask questions about their children's progress and to request assistance for them when additional help is needed. Parents are informed through a parent notification system when report cards and other reports are sent home with students. The school has received positive responses from parents and teachers on the Parents Friendly Schools survey and the Teacher Working Conditions (TWC) survey (shared leadership). In 2009 the school system was recognized as No.1 in North Carolina on the John Locke Foundation Parents Friendly Schools survey. The SIT and the self-assessment report express the desire to create additional opportunities for parent and community feedback. Among initiatives being considered is the use of stakeholder surveys available from the Advanc-Ed Assist program. Focus groups or informal conversation events are other possibilities.

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

- The Student Technology Advisory Council provides an opportunity for collaboration between the teachers and students to advance professional development focused on technology.
- There is an authentic shared leadership in the school's learning community as the school is at the center of many activities and special programs. Community members and stakeholders shared there is "a willingness and trust to work together" for the benefit of all students.
- The Teacher Working Conditions Survey suggests that the entire staff has an active role in the leadership process.
- The transition from the former principal to the current principal occurred in a seamless manner.

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

- Create an inviting environment such as "Coffee with the Principal" in which parents and community members can communicate more effectively with the school and school leadership.

Finding: Hayesville High School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 3: Teaching and Learning

Standard: The school provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

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

The school uses the North Carolina Standard Course of Study as its basic curriculum and incorporates the North Carolina ABC accountability program to set expectations for student learning. Expectations for high student achievement going beyond mastery level is pervasive across the classrooms regardless of gender, race, cognitive level, or economic status. An example can be found in a teacher quote, "I do not lower the bar. I work with them until they know." The expectation is that all students will be challenged and successful; collaboration between the regular classroom teachers and the Exceptional Children teachers makes that a reality for students with special needs. Honors classes contribute to the rigor of the total curriculum. Advance Placement (AP) classes are offered on a rotating basis and one of the challenges of the small school is scheduling additional AP and honors classes. Pathways completion is a juggling act due to the limited course slots. Online courses are offered each period to assist students in acquiring credits

needed for NC Scholars recognition and some college admissions. Students can use the online resource to connect to courses offered by various universities and to receive dual credit for TriCounty Community College courses. Students also have opportunities for diverse cultural experiences through student exchange programs with Denmark and China. Interviewees expressed the need for additional honors, AP, and fine arts courses. In addition to the academic achievement levels identified by the NC ABC program, the school places emphasis on “life lessons.” The QAR team heard from the students that the school is “setting us up for college and real life situations.” The community service component of the curriculum provides additional opportunity for teaching the need to give back to the community. Clay County Schools are currently designing their transition to the new Common Core and Essential Standards curriculum. The school’s curriculum committee has not currently been given leadership responsibility for that transition.

The school delivers its curriculum using practices that are research-based and reflect best practices. Instructional practices are guided by the needs of the students with the philosophy of “teaching them where they are in the manner they learn.” Teachers collaborate formally and informally to share instructional strategies and seek opportunities for inter-disciplinary projects. The district has sponsored professional development to facilitate vertical curricula alignment among the elementary, middle, and high schools. While sharing opportunities exist, the QAR team did not identify time for structured collaborative planning both vertically and horizontally. The block schedule offers the opportunity for a variety of teaching strategies due to the length of each class period. Among the strategies identified in the artifacts and during observations are lecture, labs, hands-on projects, skits, group competitions, and math trivia projects. Observations and lesson plans did not indicate that instruction placed priority on students taking responsibility for their own learning. Students shared that projects are a favorite way of learning and were used especially in English and civics honor classes. Artifacts noted inter-disciplinary projects, portfolio assessments, writing keepsakes, and senior exit projects as opportunities for students to apply knowledge to real-world contexts. Kids Vote allows students to serve as poll workers during elections and internships at a local auto dealership, the hospital, and the Hinton Center also allow students to apply the academic content to real work situations. Students were involved in securing a Learn and Serve Grant that focuses on recycling and as a result, the whole school district campus participates in a recycling collection program. Students are challenged with college- and workplace-readiness skills through assignments that are self-paced with deadlines.

Teachers employ formative assessments as well as more formal evaluations to determine student understanding. Students who are self-selected or identified by teachers as needing further assistance have opportunity to receive additional help. In addition to a homework center being open and staffed four days a week from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m., the teachers have the reputation of having an open door policy for assisting any student requesting help. Students interviewed said they were not afraid to ask for help from their teachers and received the support they needed.

The availability of technological resources assists the teachers in delivering a broad, global curriculum. Computer labs are available for whole class or individual use. Classrooms have projectors that can be used with teacher computer stations or in conjunctions with the interactive white boards. Teachers can support a variety of intelligences with programs such as Study Island, LearnNC, and Moodle. The QAR team heard that 100% of the students had some experience with Moodle. Students said the program allows them to keep up with class work when they were absent. Some teachers use the program as part of their instructional strategies and post student grades for parent access. The inconsistency of utilization of all components of the program is a concern identified in the school self-assessment. The media center is an inviting environment for students to use computers, do research, locate reading materials, and display projects. Teachers are encouraged to share requests for purchases to support their curriculum.

Interviews and observations validated the school environment was conducive to student learning. The teachers, parents, and students spoke repeatedly of the respect that existed between students and teachers. Students commented on the enthusiasm exhibited by their teachers. The Parent Friendly Schools survey conducted by the John Locke Foundation in 2009 ranked the school system No. 1 in North Carolina. The consistency among the faculty, the high level of community involvement, and parent satisfaction all contribute to an environment that focuses on student achievement. The administration researches and creates schedules that provide maximum time for uninterrupted teaching and learning. Announcements are held at a minimum. Travel for athletics and international exchanges are scheduled so a minimum of instructional time is affected. The faculty demonstrate fidelity to their role, teaching from bell to bell.

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

- The level of enthusiasm and dedication of the faculty and staff contributes to students wanting to be successful.
- High expectations for student learning applies to all students and collaboration among teachers makes it a reality for special needs children as well as regular education students.
- The school's deliberate actions to protect time for student learning extends from Club Day scheduling to minimum time lost for athletic travel to international travel dates during spring break to limited announcement time.

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

- Set aside a regular, uninterrupted time when formal, collaborative planning across grade-levels and subjects can occur.
- Charge the curriculum committee with the responsibility of providing leadership in the school's adoption of the Common Core and Essential Standards.
- Explore possibilities for adapting the schedule to include additional honors and Advancement Placement offerings.
- Focus on including student-directed learning as part of daily lessons.

Finding: Hayesville High School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 4: Documenting and Using Results

Standard: The school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.

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

Hayesville High School participates in the North Carolina Testing and Accountability Program. The state program provides criterion-referenced tests for several high school courses. These End-of-Course (EOC) tests have achievement levels established and schools are judged on students achieving level three or mastery. The results of these tests are used to recognize school performance in the North Carolina ABC program and the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) assessment. The school also participates in the state Vocational Competency Achievement Tracking System (VoCATS) testing program for Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.

The school demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance on these tests through a number of reports. The North Carolina School Report Card indicates continued improvement over the last three years. EOC tests are consistently above state average and scores have risen in all areas. From 2008-2009 to 2010-2011 increases in scores ranged from 4.3 % in Civics and Economics to 15.6% in Biology. Despite the proficiency percentage increase, growth for individual students was not adequate for the school to move from the “Not Recognized” category of the ABC program. The school made Adequate Yearly Progress in 2010-2011, achieving 13 of 13 goals, and was named a School of Excellence in 2009-2010. SAT scores have risen 24 points in the last three years and are above state and national averages. Students with disabilities have composite EOC scores 30% higher than the state average for that subgroup.

As compared to other schools in the western region of North Carolina, the school scores above the surrounding schools. In comparison to similar schools, it was found that the school has the lowest dropout rate, the highest graduation rate, and the highest percentage of students at grade level or above. All stakeholders contribute this to unity between the school and the community. One teacher described the teaching and learning not just as an academic endeavor, but an extracurricular focus as well. A community member described the school as the center of activity for the community.

The school celebrates and communicates student performance to all stakeholders in a variety of ways. The school year begins with a celebration of perfect attendance, highest class averages, and citizenship awards. A senior awards night recognizes the accomplishments and scholarship recipients during the spring semester. Honors rolls are published in the local newspaper, posted in the classrooms, and the school report card is linked to the school website. Progress reports are used to update parents and students of student progress between report cards. The school does not currently have funding to utilize the parent assist program on NC WISE, which would allow for current posting of all grades for all students. During interviews of parents, students and teachers, there was a discussion of some teachers using Moodle to post students most current grades. This is a valuable replacement until NC WISE can be fully implemented.

There is evidence that data are used for making decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning processes. One example was apparent through interviews with Exceptional Children (EC) and regular education teachers and through observations of the guided studies classroom. EC composite scores have increased despite the fact that the EC staff has decreased slightly in size. When inclusion was not a viable option this year, the EC teachers continued to work closely with core teachers to provide a strong support system using guided studies. The guided studies class is used as a continuation of learning that is started in the core class. Students have the opportunity to complete class work, learn organizational skills, and strengthen their writing skills. One of the teachers stated that the goal of the school is to move back to the least restrictive environment for all students. Teachers can also identify struggling students and refer them to the Student Services Team that meets monthly. “Proactive measures are taken to ensure these students know they matter and to offer interventions.”

Policies are in place to ensure that the student record system is in accordance with state and federal regulations. A NCWISE password system provides security for student data. Additionally, the school has processes in place to ensure that state regulations are met in all testing practices, including proper training, proctoring, and security of tests.

The Teacher Working Conditions Survey (TWC) indicates that teachers support and believe the governance, support, and administrative functions are effective and efficient in the school. The TWC survey does indicate that teachers recognize a need for more support for professional development. During interviews and examination of artifacts, it was also noted that teachers do not always work formally in professional learning communities to develop and align instructional practices. Establishing

formal professional learning communities can support the use of more systematic approaches learned in the professional development. Implementing professional development to support teachers in data analysis, formative assessment practices, and use of technology will further support a comprehensive assessment system for evaluating progress toward meeting the expectations for student learning. Interviewees also expressed an interest in a peer observation program that would allow participants to see first-hand how effective instructional strategies can be employed.

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

- Informal analysis of data is used to monitor, document, and celebrate student performance. The school consistently scores above other districts in EOC/VOCAT scores, graduation rates, and SAT.
- Despite the North Carolina “No Recognition” designation, the school showed EOC proficiency ranging from seven to nineteen percentage points above the state average and achieved 13 of 13 AYP goals.

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

- Implement a professional development plan to increase teachers’ ability to use data to drive daily instruction.
- Establish a peer observation practice that allows both the observer and observed to have opportunities for professional growth in instructional strategies.
- Create a structured program of professional learning communities that includes goals for each meeting, minutes of meetings, and a self-monitoring component.

Finding: Hayesville High 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:

Documents and interviews reveal that the school has established policies to recruit, employ, retain, and mentor qualified professional and support staff. The faculty handbook reveals a well-defined process for employment, retention and mentoring for employees. The orientation for new staff members is provided by the district office. Reductions in state funding during recent years have caused the school to reconsider its organization. As a result, some class sizes have increased and some course offerings such as low-enrollment AP classes have been eliminated; however, the school has been able to retain all positions for classroom teachers. The staff includes seven CTE teachers and four elective teachers in addition to the core subject faculty. Staffing assignments are based on qualifications that are required by state law and regulations and result in 100% classes taught by highly qualified teachers for the 2010-11 school year. The school has 14 nationally board certified teachers and 59% of the teachers hold advanced degrees. Turnover is 9% due largely to retirements and moving out of area. Several staff members drive from nearby communities to be a part of the family environment.

Among the cuts in state funding are those related to professional development. As those funds decreased, the school staff has taken advantage of more “in-house” opportunities. Many faculty members share their expertise with their peers in workshops that they conduct free of charge. The QAR team heard of the Advisory Technology Council (STAC) technology workshop where teachers and students collaborated to provide staff development for the school faculty related to technology integration into classroom instruction. Other staff development available includes EC support from the regional educational alliance, attendance at NCWISE conference and the media and technology conference, and support for National Board Certification candidates. A survey is conducted each year as a needs assessment to identify possible professional development sessions. North Carolina Formative Assessment Learning Community’s Online Network (NC FALCON) and Common Core topics are anticipated for this year.

The school leaders annually, and often monthly, review available resources and allocate those funds to advance the school’s vision and mission and implement its plans for improvement. The school receives strong support from the community such as help with the athletic concession stand. Interviewees noted that the central office was open to the needs of the school and responded positively to requests related to student learning. Documents and artifacts, as well as interviews, indicate that the system ensures that all financial transactions are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and audited accounting measures.

Computer labs are available in the CTE department, the library, and the online classroom. Teachers also have available document cameras, projectors, and interactive white boards. Teachers have been exposed to Moodle and some are using the program to post homework assignments and to give parents access to student grades. The school has identified a need to have consistent utilization of the program by all staff. The QAR team saw evidence that additional training is need to support the full implementation of technology as a teaching tool.

The school maintains its facility, providing a safe, clean, and orderly environment for students and staff. The QAR team heard from students that “we want to be in a clean environment.” The school has a school resource officer (SRO) on site. The school administration provides frequent reminders about school safety and security. During classroom changes and at specific other times during the day, teachers monitor student behaviors to ensure orderly movement and general supervision of campus activity. The school has specific procedures in place for disciplinary issues and in-school suspension serves as a resource for addressing students who do not following school procedures and policies. Teachers, parents, and students shared that they feel safe when they are in the school environment. Stakeholders are aware and trained in crisis management plans which are comprehensive and well understood.

Support services at Hayesville High School include counseling services that assist students with scheduling, personal issues, college information, and career guidance. Additional services are available through partnering community agencies such as Communities in Schools. The school has the services of one guidance counselor and a guidance assistant. The guidance office communicates with parents through Alert Now messages, invitations to meetings, a newsletter which is printed in the local paper, and notices in the town library and around school. The guidance counselor meets with students to ensure they are on track for graduation and plans after high school. Students with special needs are served in the most appropriate setting. The same teacher transitions students from middle school to high school through the Guided Studies class. The school has four exceptional children’s teachers and one assistant. The QAR team heard during interviews that the exceptional children program differentiates instruction in order that all students have equal opportunity to success. They want exceptional students to recognize their full potential. The Occupational Course of Study (OCS) students maintain a business entitled the Busy Bee Factory. The entire school family works together to coordinate and place students in an educational setting which is supportive and challenging.

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

- The school employs highly qualified staff who are matched to their teaching assignments.
- Students with special needs receive appropriate services which are designed to give them equal opportunity to succeed academically and behaviorally.
- OCS students have the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life applications through the operation of the Busy Bee Factory.

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

- Determine expectations for universal utilization of Moodle for posting homework assignments, providing parent access to student grades, and integrating technology as a teaching tool.
- Consider teaching assignments that would create opportunities for additional higher level courses.

Finding: Hayesville High 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:

A clearly recognized strength of the school articulated by numerous stakeholder groups is that of its strong business partnerships and community involvement. The support given to schools by local businesses is recognized and appreciated by school staff members, parents, and students. This support is evidenced in programs such as Communities in Schools (CIS) and Kids Voting Program. A local auto dealership, the Hinton Center, and the hospital provide opportunities for internships.

The school recognizes that the job of educating the students is a job that involves the entire community and welcomes the support that the community offers. The CIS program in partnership with the school arranges for mentors to assist students and ensure their successes. The program also provides volunteers for such school needs as proctors for state testing. The school provides a welcoming environment for students and staff as well as community members. The desire of the school is to work closely with all stakeholders to make it a leader in the region, state, and nation. This collaboration and apparent partnership is an effective and cooperative way to share the task of establishing direction for the school and students.

Dissemination of information to students, parents, and community members occurs through a variety of methods. Teachers use e-mail, texting, and telephone calls to keep parents abreast of their children's progress and to share needs for improvement and opportunities for growth. Communication with students includes the student handbook which is discussed with all students at the beginning of school. A monthly calendar in the commons area informs the viewer of daily activities and student council representatives provide daily morning announcements. At this time the school does not have a system which is used consistently by teachers to give parents online access to student grades and attendance. North Carolina creates an annual report card reflecting student achievement, graduation, attendance, and teacher

qualifications among other data. The school provides this information to parents and other community stakeholders. The school also fosters a relationship with the local paper which results in school news featured prominently and often.

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

- The school has established several partnerships with businesses and individuals which provide job site internships, mentoring relationships, and tutoring services.
- Communication with internal stakeholders is supplemented through daily student council announcements, a monthly activity calendar in the lobby, and a principal-to-teacher calendar.

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

- Provide additional staff development opportunities to assist teachers in learning how to use the school's on-line learning management system (Moodle) in order that students and parents be better informed of expectations, grades, missing assignments, and other class announcements.
- Explore additional ways of soliciting community members to give of their knowledge and skills for the benefit of the school and its students.

Finding: Hayesville High 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:

The school used a systematic approach to develop its SIP and continues to monitor and evaluate the progress of this plan. Data have been gathered and analyzed and it is evident that data have been used to develop a clear vision, design a plan, and implement this plan. In the vision, the school recognizes and supports the diverse learning styles of all students and uses this to prepare leaders that will be globally competitive citizens. The action plan includes improving student growth, improving communication among all stakeholders, increasing teacher knowledge and relevance of data, and advancing student and teacher technological skills. From the advanced students to the students with special needs, a common theme of preparing all students is communicated. The school has established a strong guided studies program for students with individualized education plans. The OCS students are involved in a program known as the Busy Bee Factory that teaches these students skills for entering the workforce. The school has an active health occupations program and automotive technology program. A plan is being put into place to continuously increase the number of AP courses that will be offered at the school. Throughout the school it is apparent that the vision of the school is to prepare all students for their place in the world.

The school is an integral part of the community and stakeholders are actively involved in helping the school to continuously improve. CIS is providing students with the necessities they need to continue their education. CIS is currently working with the school to provide trained volunteers to assist in supporting testing accommodations for EC students. The local hospital supports the health occupations students with

a clinical site and scholarships, and low cost physicals for athletes. An outdoor environmental classroom has been built on the campus with the help of community partners. Faith sponsors, banner sponsors, and other businesses support the school with both time and funding.

The school has begun the process of preparing competitive 21st century students by acquiring new technology. Additional computers will allow for more classes to use computer labs each period and will prepare the school for online testing. Classrooms will be outfitted with additional technology over the next few months. The STAC has assisted in providing in-house technology professional development for the staff. Ongoing support will be needed to ensure that all staff can effectively use technology to drive instruction. Teachers have been trained on Moodle, and 100% of the students interviewed had used Moodle in one or more of their classrooms. The use of the online resource varies from teacher to teacher and continued professional development will be needed to assist all teachers in using the program effectively.

In addition to technology training mentioned above, the self-assessment identified a need for school-wide data analysis and assessments. As noted by the principal, formative assessment training will begin in December of this year. Teachers will gain knowledge of formative assessment using the NC FALCON online program. There are also plans for professional development for Education Value Added Assessment System (EVASS) and Common Core Curriculum. Each of this staff development opportunities will move the school toward achieving one of the goals in the action plan.

Stakeholders receive communication through a variety of methods including newspaper articles, emails, school webpage, and Alert Now messages. The School Improvement Team noted that while they felt the communication with stakeholders was effective, it was often one-way and the school did not always receive feedback from the community. The School Improvement Team acknowledged they should explore ways to support a two-way communication plan.

The SIP and the recently completed self-assessment both show evidence that the school has identified several needs for continued improvement and student success. The plan has a comprehensive three-year timeline that includes strategies such as implementing new professional development, using formative assessment and data analysis school-wide, adjusting the master schedules to offer more courses, increasing use of technology among students and teachers, and providing alternative programs and remediation for struggling students. The identification of specific, measurable student achievement goals would allow the school an effective and efficient manner to measure the impact of their action plan.

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

- The school has a plan for the acquisition and installation of new technology to be used in daily instruction, recognizing the importance of producing students who can access and demonstrate new knowledge and skills.
- The school improvement plan is based on an extensive profile and needs assessment and includes a detailed four-prong action plan for continuous improvement.

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

- Explore additional means of facilitating two-way communication between the school and the community and parents.
- Establish expectations for using Moodle in all curriculums and provide ongoing support to ensure the success of implementation.
- Address the utilization of human resources to expand the higher level course offerings.

Finding: Hayesville High School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" 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-NC accreditation with AdvancED.

Appendix

Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Ms. Suzi P. Cabe, Chair/Lead Evaluator
- Mr. Arnold D. Mathews Jr, Team Member (Martins Creek Elementary School)
- Mrs. Debbie S. Kraszeski, Team Member (Southern Guilford High 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.