

**Report of the  
Quality Assurance Review Team  
for  
Daegu American School**

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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 at the state level and by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Accreditation is granted by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission and communicated to the school following action from the commission.

# Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the NCA CASI Department of Defense (NCA-CASI-DODEA), a division of AdvancED, visited the Daegu American School in APO, US-AP, US on 02/01/2010 - 02/04/2010.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 2 members of the administrative team, 98 students, 13 parents, and 80 teachers. In addition, Base Command, Support Staff and School Improvement Leadership Team 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.

- **The school leaders and staff are dedicated to promoting and supporting an environment that celebrates and honors a diverse population.**

The school engages in several activities that honor and support its multi-ethnic students.

Schools with diverse populations can help students excel by building a climate that engages the whole community working together in a spirit of understanding, accepting, and utilizing each other's differences to prepare students for the diverse world in which they live.

- **Support for students at all grade levels is in place through the guidance/counseling program.**

Parents, teachers, and students indicated strong support for the guidance program, as evidenced through

interviews conducted by the QAR team. Counselors begin working with career decisions in the elementary school; design six year plans for middle school students; and four year plans for high school students.

Students who are encouraged to explore and engage in career and course planning in the early grades and continue through graduation are well prepared and able to transition better from one level to the next. This type of continuous planning leads to student success.

- **An orderly learning environment is evident at the school.**

Traffic flow is deliberately planned to integrate all grade levels to avoid problems and is successful in eliminating confusion and traffic problems. Students at all grade levels PreK-12 exist in the same buildings, and the team observed that all students are very orderly while passing in the hallway. Former students who were surveyed reported that discipline problems were addressed quickly and fairly.

Research is very clear that an orderly environment is essential and necessary before students can truly apply themselves to their learning. Daegu American School has created an orderly environment.

- **The school effectively communicates student learning expectations aligned with the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) standards.**

As evidenced by various documents such as course syllabi and homework assignments, there has been an emphasis to make students and parents aware of student learning expectations. Teachers and parents explained how various methods are used to communicate student learning expectations during interview sessions. Nearly 78% of 2009 Daegu American School graduates received scholarships.

Clear communication with students, parents, and community which outline expectations for student learning is essential to ensure that the entire school community understands, embraces, and commits to an unrelenting focus on student achievement. Students will begin to take ownership of their own learning when they see and understand what they are trying to achieve.

## 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.

- **Analyze stakeholder survey results and prioritize and act on the findings.**

In June 2009 a questionnaire was conducted with parents, students, and staff. The survey results do not include how many students were surveyed, and the number surveyed is critical in understanding the data with regard to scope and analysis. The results are very mixed, and a thorough review and analysis of the data are required to understand issues that may need to be addressed to improve the school.

Data from stakeholders are very important to assist a school with its overall school effectiveness. These data can reveal to a school how its programs, processes, and procedures are working.

- **Establish a formalized structure and ongoing professional development program in which teachers are purposefully and regularly convened to discuss student performance expectations and results so as to inform their practice.**

The team heard through interviews with faculty that there has been technology-based training to aid in their understanding in how to use the data from the Terra Nova. It has not been widely understood and used by all staff to impact instruction in the classroom.

Professional development activities to support the use of data to impact instruction and student achievement at the classroom level are critical to increase student achievement results. Understanding the power and use of data is an essential component that will not only help ensure fidelity of implementation of the school improvement plan, but will also increase the overall effectiveness of teaching and learning.

- **Establish student performance targets and gather, analyze and use student performance data to validate the curriculum and make sure all assessments are aligned with and measure curricular and school improvement goals.**

The team observed a lack of understanding by school leadership and faculty regarding the use of data to monitor and ensure fidelity of implementation of school improvement interventions and strategies as well as the use of data to impact instruction in the classroom beyond school improvement plan activities.

The single intervention for reading and the single intervention for mathematics may be rigorous enough to achieve the results desired using the assessments selected for each goal area, but the school must monitor these results in an ongoing manner and adjust, as needed, if the results are not achieved. Specified targets should be set for any assessment that will be used so that everyone has a clear understanding of what should be achieved. Additional rigorous interventions or strategies may be necessary.

- **Work with constituencies to identify and prioritize resource needs that will be necessary to implement the planned growth of the school population.**

Daegu American School has reached its capacity to serve additional students. The team heard through interviews with the Base Commander and school leadership that there are plans to renovate additional existing buildings to house school programs for students in certain grade levels.

It will be necessary to plan carefully for this expected increase in student population to ensure a seamless, smooth transition for students to ensure no disruption to the learning process. The budget process will be enhanced through systematic and detailed requests that have strong stakeholder support.

- **Monitor and evaluate the implementation and understanding of the mission and vision and the goal that supports the vision in order to determine if the school operations reflect the stated intent and if the system supports that effort.**

Various constituencies see the mission of the school differently. During interviews with various stakeholder groups it was clear that people are aware of the mission and vision of the school, but it was not clear that the mission and vision statements are more than words on a chart or wall and are used to drive decisions in the classroom and the school overall.

It is critical that clarity of purpose and mission be established in order for effective implementation to occur.

**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/resourcenetwork](http://www.advanc-ed.org/resourcenetwork), provides an online network of peer-to-peer practices, best practices, and resources and tools designed to help schools with their improvement efforts. Available any where, any time, the network can be queried for information on a variety of school improvement subjects. The AdvancED Research and Development division provides research, handbooks, and tools to assist schools with continuous improvement. In addition, your state office provides hands-on professional development and ongoing technical assistance. Contact your state office for more information on the range of resources available to you.

## Celebrating Accreditation

Following the visit, the Quality Assurance Review Team submits an accreditation recommendation to AdvancED for state review and for action at the national level by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and communicates it to the school. Upon receiving its accreditation, the school should celebrate its achievement with the school community. The NCA-CASI-DODEA accreditation seals are available at [www.advanc-ed.org/communicationskit](http://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 Daegu American 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:**

Daegu American School meets annually with representative from all stakeholder groups to revise the school's vision and mission. Students and key community members are included in the discussions. A new mission statement was implemented in 2009-2010 as directed by the Director of the Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DODEA) and will need to be integrated in to the culture of Daegu American School.

The school communicates its vision and purpose by posting it in the hallways, in each classroom, on the school website, and on correspondence that the school sends out. The vision was also written in terms understandable to elementary students (kid language). Since representatives from all stakeholder groups help with the development of the vision and mission, there is a general knowledge of the words of the mission and vision by most stakeholders.

The school identifies its goals based on a wide variety of data— disaggregated Terra Nova scores by top two quartiles, bottom quartile, and by ethnicity; AP grades; the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA); end of course exams in Algebra and U.S. History; the Balanced Assessment in Mathematics (BAM); the Communications Arts Performance Assessment; as well as stakeholder surveys. Staff reported that all goals of the school must be in alignment with the school's overall vision or they are not accepted as goals. This is achieved by bringing stakeholders together to reach consensus.

The QAR team observed that the school's profile is updated on a regular basis. The profile contains information about the school; the students and their achievement and demographics; the staff and their experience and demographics; and also provides a vivid snapshot of the community which the school serves. The profile reveals that 77% of students are multi-racial or in a minority group. The school profile is located on the Intranet, and it is available to most stakeholders.

The staff reported that curriculum must be aligned with the school's mission and vision. New standards were published at the beginning of the school year; however, there was very little evidence that the new standards are being implemented in the school. Grade level and department meetings are held monthly where interventions are discussed and documented. The vision and mission, which connect with the school's goals and interventions, are implemented and integrated cross-curricular across the elementary grades, but in the secondary grades it was observed through classroom observations and through student interviews that most classrooms did not have the interventions embedded as deeply as in the elementary

grade level.

Daegu American School is mostly committed to a shared purpose and direction, but it is not totally understood and embraced across the entire school at this time. The school has clearly defined expectations for student learning, aligned with the school's vision that is supported by most school personnel and external stakeholders. The school has an annual systematic process to look at and revise their mission and vision; however, careful monitoring is necessary to help the faculty understand what is expected and needed for full implementation across the entire school.

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

- The school has a process which involved all stakeholders to link the school's goals to its vision. Students have a good working knowledge of the school vision.

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

- Develop core understanding of the mission and vision to drive all school decisions, especially in teaching and learning. Parents need a better understanding of how the mission and vision is being used to help their children learn. For example, students have critical thinking with technical skills – What does this mean? Which technical skills? Once identified, what is the school going to do to fulfill this part of the vision?
- Secondary grades need to embed the interventions into their instruction on a deeper level.

**Finding:** Daegu American 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:**

Daegu American School implements policies and procedures established by DoDEA, the Pacific Area Office (PAO), and the Korea District Superintendent's Office (KDSO). These policy documents include: faculty and staff roster, faculty handbook, personnel manual, personnel evaluation and confidential files, and student and parent handbook. DoDEA policies are communicated by the school through meetings, forums, newsletters, and links are provided to specific websites.

In interviewing administrative staff it appears that they understand their roles and responsibilities. They clearly understand their administrative, legal and moral responsibilities to students, staff, parents, and critical stakeholders. This fact was also confirmed during student, staff and parent interviews.

The District Office reported to the team that Daegu American School complies with all applicable DoDEA education policies and rules and regulations. Through interviews of support staff, a continuum of special education, 504, psychological, counseling, and early intervention support services is provided.

The school has a system that provides for review and analysis of annual student performance and school effectiveness progress. The school uses the norm-referenced Terra Nova, Scholastic Reading Inventory, Developmental Reading Assessment, McMillian Final Math Assessment, and Advanced Placement Exams. Annual assessment improvement targets have not been established at this time. Valid and reliable short cycle formative assessments are not being utilized systematically throughout the school at this time.

The school fosters a learning community. Teachers are assigned cross-grade-level instructional responsibilities. Grade-level teams and content departments meet to address student performance, professional development, and school improvement issues. The student body is mixed with younger and older students on the same floors with a student population of 77% of students who are multi-racial or in the minority category. The administrators and faculty promote and support an environment that celebrates and honors this diverse population.

Teachers and students are provided opportunities to lead. Staff leadership teams consist of PreK-3, 4, 5, 6 and secondary department heads that meet regularly to provide input regarding student performance and professional development issues for staff. These regular meetings could become the forum for in-depth analysis of school and student data results that could help drive important decisions for teaching and learning. In addition, the School Improvement Team consists of a facilitator and lead staff person for the comprehension and problem-solving goal areas. A third staff person leads the data analysis team. An elected student council is operational at all grade levels.

Daegu American School provides stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership. The School Improvement team invites parents and stakeholders to participate as active members in the school improvement process. During the general parent interview, parents were not clear when asked about the overall performance of students at the school. Parents and stakeholders who were interviewed did report that they felt their children were in a safe, caring, and orderly environment.

The school supports curricular and extracurricular activities throughout the year. Currently, there are 19 athletic and 26 extracurricular activities provided for students.

Stakeholder surveys of students, staff, and parents were conducted in June 2009. In speaking with the School Improvement Team, improvement strategies to deal with issues arising from a review of the results have not been addressed at this time.

The school implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel. The personnel policies and procedures are directed by DoDEA, the Pacific Area Office (PAO), and the Korea District Superintendent's Office (KDSO). Staff are evaluated as probationary status in the first two years. Each year two formal observations are conducted. Continuing contract personnel develop annual professional growth plans and are formally evaluated during the third year with two formal observations. Administrative staff share the supervision and evaluation duties for all school employees.

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

- The administrative team exhibits a strong moral purpose in their work. They are inclusive and collaborative in their decision making.

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

- Stakeholder survey results should be reviewed carefully and used to generate, implement, and evaluate improvement strategies.

**Finding:** Daegu American 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 shows evidence of developing and implementing curriculum based on the DoDEA Standards which can be found on the Internet at <http://www.dodea.edu/curriculum>. Standards are displayed in classrooms and accompany syllabi that are given to parents and students at the beginning of a course.

The team observed that only in a limited number of classrooms were students actively engaged in classroom activities. During many of the observation sessions, opportunities for students to apply higher-order thinking skills was evident; however, this was not the case in all classrooms. Furthermore, student engagement in the learning process varied from classroom to classroom.

As shown in the school profile, the school has gathered and analyzed numerous strands of data that guide instruction. As indicated through an interview with the School Improvement Leadership Team (SILT), the school's faculty analyzed assessment data to determine strengths and weaknesses of the school. From this analysis of data, the school goals and interventions were chosen to address the weak areas of the schools. Through interviews with parents, students and teachers, there is strong evidence that GradeSpeed provides immediate feedback to students and parents.

Through interviews and observation, it was evident that teachers use some instructional strategies that are best practices. Several classrooms utilize cooperative learning groups, hands-on activities, discussions, and graphic organizers to augment instruction.

The school offers a curriculum that challenges most students. Interviews with parents indicated that there seems to be a period of curriculum review during the beginning months of the school year. These interviews also indicated that students are challenged with more difficult assignments and placement in higher level classes, as needed.

The school follows the DoDDS Pacific Area established school calendar which provides 183 instructional days to the students. On an individual basis, observations show that most teachers use the time in the classroom wisely to ensure quality instructional time which supports student learning.

Based on interviews, it is apparent that the teachers of the elementary grades collaborate horizontally at the grade level as well as vertically with the grades above and below to ensure alignment and articulation of the curriculum. Teachers in the secondary grades are less successful in getting all members of a department together for this alignment and articulation.

As observed in classrooms and through interviews, most of the teachers in the elementary grades are implementing interventions to help students meet the expectations of student learning. There are team meetings that are held monthly where the process of looking at student work is completed. Many of the teachers at the secondary level are likewise implementing the school improvement interventions, but some indicated that they do them only periodically. The process for looking at student work is not as consistently applied at the secondary level.

In June 2009 a questionnaire was conducted with parents, students, and staff. The survey results in the profile do not include how many students were surveyed, and the number surveyed is critical in understanding the data with regard to scope and analysis.

Responses to the survey indicate that 87% of elementary school students reported that they like the school while only 60% of middle and high school students in this survey reported that they like the school.

Interviews with the SILT revealed that the results of these 2009 surveys have been discussed but not pursued. While there is not an active plan to ensure that the school climate is conducive to student learning, students indicate that they can approach teachers, the school counselor, the school nurse or the principal with their problems. The 2009 survey results must be thoroughly and completely analyzed to ascertain whether the data reveal any steps that need to be taken to improve the school.

Through the interview process and review of artifacts, it was very apparent that the Educational Technologist (ET) department provides excellent support assisting teachers with their technology needs for delivering a quality instructional program. Some of these needs are met through monthly newsletters that include technology tips and website links for teachers. Surveys go out to teachers soliciting training needs which the ET department then compiles and provides training to teachers in the school computer lab.

The technology committee has developed a three-year plan for purchasing equipment for the school to assist students and teachers as was evident through artifacts and mentioned through QAR team reviews. This will ensure a continuation of ready-access to technology in the school to support curricular and instructional programs.

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

- Curricular standards are clearly articulated to stakeholders, evident in syllabi, and posted on the Internet and in teacher classrooms.
- The elementary grades have established practices for articulation and alignment at the same grade level as well as above and below grade level.
- The elementary grades are implementing the school improvement interventions in their classrooms consistently and with fidelity to assist students in meeting learning expectations.

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

- Establish practices for articulation and alignment of curriculum in the secondary grades.
- Implement school improvement interventions fully at the secondary level to assist students in meeting learning expectations.
- Initiate actions to review stakeholder survey results to improve the school climate to ensure that it is conducive to student learning.

**Finding:** Daegu American 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:**

The school uses an assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results. Administrators and teachers described the assessment system which includes the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) for grades Kindergarten through Grade 3, the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) for Grades 4 through 12, and the Terra Nova norm-referenced assessments in reading and mathematics for Grades 3 through 11. Other assessments in mathematics include the Final Math Assessment by McGraw-Hill in Grades Kindergarten through Grade 6. There is no local assessment in mathematics for the secondary grades. A local assessment will need to be added. The school has compiled a profile to assist in reviewing student performance and finding trends.

The team reviewed these multiple data points as part of the artifact review. Because the Terra Nova was recently renormed effective in 2009, it is difficult to use the 2009 data for a true comparison of the results. The Terra Nova data from 2007 to 2008 show mixed results with moderate gains in some grade levels, no gains in some grade levels, and loss of performance in other grade levels. The SRI data also reflect mixed results while the DRA results show substantial gains. The Final Math Assessments for Grades Kindergarten through 6 also reflect increased student performance in some grade levels. The collective data from all the assessments do not reflect a systematic pattern of student performance. Additional data will be required to analyze and determine if real gains are being achieved as a result of intentional school-wide strategies. Clear performance targets for which the school will be assessing student performance should be set for the assessments used.

The team also reviewed the tools that are used as part of the school improvement process including the T-Chart for increasing reading comprehension in nonfiction text and the 4-Square approach of Read It, Draw It, Solve It, Communicate It for problem solving across all grade levels. The administrators and teachers indicated that there may be plans to use these tools as formative assessments that can be aggregated at various grade levels to yield additional results.

It will be necessary to closely monitor student performance results where the only strategy to increase student performance is to use the T-Chart and the 4-Square problem-solving approach in order to see systematic gains in both reading and mathematics. Additional robust school-wide strategies may be necessary if gains are not realized. A careful analysis of the data will need to be conducted.

The team heard through various interviews that all faculty members have participated in module training regarding the use of the data from the Terra Nova assessments; however, staff have not had regular, planned, professional discussions on how to weave this knowledge into the everyday fabric of their work. It will be necessary to implement professional development activities to support the use of data to impact instruction and student achievement at the classroom level. This is an essential component that will not

only further develop the school improvement plan, but will also be necessary for effective teaching and learning.

The school has collected survey data from parents, community members, teachers, and students. Although there was mention of a brief review of the results from the survey, a full analysis has not been conducted, and no actions have been taken or planned at this time.

Graduation rates reflect that all students graduate on time.

The school communicates the assessment results to stakeholders in a variety of ways. Teachers stated that they review and interpret individual student test data with their students and parents during parent-teacher conferences. Similarly, parents mentioned that they receive individual student information during parent conferences. Additionally, grade reports are sent to parents each quarter to show their children's progress for each grade and subject area. The school uses a secure and safe student record system called GradeSpeed, an online system for student grades, class assignments, and other useful information. Parents reported that they like being able to go online to review their children's assignments and grades. Additional records are kept in a student management system by office staff.

Parents reported that information about overall school performance is not communicated in a clear way that is well understood and easily accessible. Many times parents have to search on the website for pieces of information that they can try to put together so as to draw inferences about school-wide performance and other measures of success.

The school has access to the Department of Defense Educational Activity (DoDEA) results on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) for an overall comparison of all DoDEA schools to other states in the United States. These results are not intended for the purpose of comparing individual schools and, therefore, are not used in that manner.

Parents and faculty expressed a desire to see how Daegu American School compares to other schools within the DoDEA community.

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

- Leadership and staff have begun the process to understand the data and plan to put a process in place for ongoing review.

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

- Define clear performance targets for which the school will be assessing student progress on all assessments for the goals.
- Define a local assessment for the school improvement goal for mathematics.

**Finding:** Daegu American School has earned the overall assessment level of "Emerging" and has not met this standard for accreditation.

## Standard 5. Resource and Support Systems

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

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

The administration recruits qualified staff based on DoDEA Human Resources and Personnel regulations. Twelve local personnel have been hired in the past five years, and four staff have been hired from the continental U.S. (CONUS). Teachers have multiple certifications to meet the challenge of teaching across grade levels and disciplines in this Pre-K-12 unit school. The administration has implemented a mentor program for new teachers to ensure continuity of programs and professional development requirements.

The staff has participated in at least four school-wide professional development sessions per year, as evidenced by agendas, in addition to monthly Continuous School Improvement (CSI) goal committee meetings. The QAR team noted that while staff had participated in the Terra Nova Teacher's Guide training and were familiar with the purpose of the guide, there was little evidence to support it was being used to affect instructional practices. Administration has introduced the first in a series of modules designed to train staff on differentiated instruction.

DoDEA pupil/teacher (PTR) standards for Sure Start through grade three are one teacher to eighteen students. Currently, kindergarten and first grade are staffed at one teacher to twenty-two students, and grades two and three are staffed at one teacher to twenty students. The new manpower document reflects an increase of three teachers in the primary grades for school year 2010-2011.

The staff has indicated their classroom supply needs are met. It was reported that funds are not sufficient to meet the needs of the library and media program. Both administration and staff agree that the current budget allocation is not sufficient to meet technology needs or to make school improvements. The current funds received to date, this school year, are \$2,000.

The Government Purchase Card audit was executed February 10, 2009 with a rating of "Good." No major systemic problems or major violations of policy and regulations were cited. The Staff Assistance Visit of November 2009, provided a rating of "Good" for facilities and supply areas with some corrective actions required. It was noted by the QAR team that supply and office staff cannot access the Defense Property Accounting System, which is the system used for accountable inventory, due to password difficulties and change in staff positions. The Semi-Annual Standard Army Safety and Occupational Health Inspection conducted on January 14, 2010 indicated some safety issues, all of which have been addressed by the school through corrective actions. A standard operational procedural manual for operational safety and security is maintained in supply. The school maintains a folder with current and past work orders, complete with dates and status of actions taken. A five year maintenance and facilities plan is kept current. Approximately two million dollars have been spent on repairs and upgrading facilities since 2007. Outdated science labs have been on the priority list and moved back two years at an estimated cost of \$250,000. The school maintains a crisis management manual. The QAR team noted that the management plan did not include a current staff roster with phone numbers to include team members' contact information.

Parents, teachers, and students indicated strong support for the guidance program, as evidenced through

interview groups conducted by the QAR team. Counselors begin working with career decisions in the elementary school. They design six-year plans for middle school students and four-year plans for high school students. A college prep course is offered. A college night is held annually, and all tenth and eleventh grade students are required to take the PSAT. The PSAT is available, but it is optional for ninth grade students.

The special education staff is certified, and the special education population makes up 4% of the total school population. Records and reports are computerized and password protected for the CSC staff, as demonstrated online by the Educational Technologist. District leadership regularly monitors/audits special education practices, individualized education plans (IEPs), procedures, records, and provides training on EXCENT, the online software used for special education records and reports. The QAR team observed inclusive practices and co-teaching among the special education and regular education classroom teachers. Proper protocol is used in reviewing IEPs and special education files, which are located in locked file cabinets.

In June 2009 a questionnaire was conducted with parents, students, and staff. The survey results in the profile do not include how many students were surveyed. The number of students surveyed is critical in understanding the data with regard to scope and analysis.

Former students were surveyed, and 100% reported that they felt safe and that discipline problems were handled quickly and fairly at the school.

The results at the elementary level indicate that 85% of students feel safe at school while 79% of students at the middle and high school level agreed that they feel safe at school. It will be necessary to carefully analyze the results of these surveys to fully understand what issues are present that led to these results. While these numbers include a majority of the students, there is still a significant number of students who state they do not feel safe.

Additionally, while the team observed that an orderly environment exists in the school, the data are conflicting with what the team observed and what the survey results show with regard to whether students feel they are treated with respect and courtesy. The June 2009 survey reveals that 71% of elementary students feel that the school helps students get along with each other and that 83% of elementary students reported that "bullies do not bother me at school." At the middle and high school levels, only 65% of students surveyed reported that the students are treated with respect and courtesy, and only 60% of these students in this survey reported that they like the school. Once again, these numbers are lower than a school should have to ensure that the conditions are optimum for student learning.

The 2009 survey results must be thoroughly and completely analyzed to ascertain whether the data reveal any steps that need to be taken to improve the school.

Daegu American School has reached its capacity to serve any additional number of students. The team heard through interviews with the Base Commander and school leadership that there are plans to renovate additional existing buildings to house school programs for students in certain grade levels. It will be necessary to plan carefully for this expected increase in student population to ensure a seamless, smooth transition for students to ensure no disruption to the learning process.

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

- The guidance program provides strong support for students at all grade levels.
- Execution of the five-year facilities plan has generated nearly \$2,000,000 in funding for repairs.

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

- Consolidate the supply and facilities staff reports to better articulate their respective reports and actions, possibly centralizing these reports for communication purposes.
- Develop a process for careful facilities planning if additional students are placed at Daegu American School.
- Analyze stakeholder survey results to address concerns regarding possible safety issues.

**Finding:** Daegu American 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:**

There is a meeting at the beginning of each school year with representatives from all stakeholder groups to review the school's vision, mission, goals, and interventions. Parents, students, faculty, administration, and support staff are included in the discussions. During this meeting the assessment data are reviewed to determine if any changes to the interventions need to be made. Each year the school hosts several events that foster collaboration with the community stakeholders and students to support student learning, which include: Science and Math Night (SMAT), Literacy Night, Math Night, Read Across America, Black History Program, Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings with student programs, Commander and Administration weekly meetings, working with the Command and Armed Forces Network (AFN) to host a Parent to Parent communication evening and working with the Military, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) for student activities. During the Read Across America event, the Military Command, as well as the Single Soldiers come and read to the students. Along with the above-mentioned events, at various grade levels the school has parental involvement on study trips. One example is the fourth through sixth grade trip to the Herb Hills, an outdoor herb garden including a cultural music presentation.

The school communicates and uses formal channels to listen to and communicate with stakeholders. They have a School Advisory Council (SAC) that meets monthly and acts as an advisor to the school administration. The SAC forwards concerns to the Installation Advisory Council (IAC), where the three members of the SAC are also members of the IAC. The Military School Liaison Officer (SLO) was involved with the school and the school improvement process, until leaving for active duty, so the school is waiting for a replacement SLO to come on board. The SLO was involved in a close working relationship with the CSI chair and administration, which has been missed since the SLO's deployment.

The DoDEA stakeholder surveys were used to gather information from the school's stakeholders, with 75% of the students participating and 13% of the parents. The school also has a website (SharePoint) that has a link to the Principal's email. The website (SharePoint) is an integral part of communication for some teachers to disseminate assignments and have students submit their work. This process works well for students that miss class and keeps parents informed of the classroom expectations. The administration

participates in the military Town Hall meetings and Well Being Councils.

The school capitalizes on the knowledge and skills of its stakeholders to enhance the work of the school through various activities. Through the stakeholder surveys, the school gathered information on ways the school can improve and disseminate school information. The school offers a College Night to help students gather information on their future education opportunities. The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program offers a Professional Shadow Day for the AVID students to gather information on careers, and individual teachers have guest speakers come into their rooms to enhance the student's educational opportunities. The Career Practicum program works with the military and offers jobs for some high school students. One student works for the Armed Forces Network in the base newspaper office to highlight the school and its staff. Partnering with the military, the school participates in an Environmental Day at Camp Carroll to clean up the environment. The school has a volunteer program where volunteers come into the classroom, read to students, attend trips, and share their expertise as class guest speakers. The school works with the local Korean University through an intern program where Korean university students come into the school and partner with some of the local Korean schools to have an exchange program to view the differences and similarities between the two school cultures.

Teachers send home syllabi and the curriculum standards to communicate the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to its stakeholders. Individual teachers send home weekly packets with the curriculum standards that are being addressed in the classroom and how they relate to the classroom work that is occurring each week. Through the parent newsletter, individual teacher newsletters, parent conferences, and teacher/student/parent specific emails, communication is effective with the parents. Parents overwhelmingly shared that communication with teachers is exceptional. However, communication between the administration and Commanders should emphasize not only the various school activities but also the school's overall performance and the goals the school has set to reach its mission and vision. The administration sends multiple emails to parents each week, and the newsletter is sent to all stakeholders monthly. The office receives approximately ten emails weekly from parents and disseminates the information to the appropriate individual(s).

The school promotes clear expectations for student learning by sharing with students and parents their course syllabi and rubrics; however, stakeholders interviewed were unable to align expectations for student learning to the school's vision.

The school leadership maintains and implements a master calendar and daily class schedule that promotes and protects instructional time in an effort to maximize student/teacher contact. The school provides various brochures and pamphlets regarding the different programs that are offered at the school for the students. The Parent Handbook is given to all parents and has the school information included. Parents and students were fully involved from the very beginning of the CSI processes and took part in the goal and interventions. The general expectations for students are very evident in the school's displays of samples of the interventions being implemented and were corroborated through interviews with various students. Student behavior in the halls and classes demonstrates high character expectations.

The school identifies the newsletter, GradeSpeed for grades four through twelve, Gaggles accounts, teacher emails, and the school's website as important tools used to provide information about student performance and the school's effectiveness. The parents responded enthusiastically regarding GradeSpeed and appreciated the benefits of the program and teacher input to stay informed of their students' academic progress.

The Information Center is working on a program where Spanish students are using video-taped reading books to be available for the elementary students to view as an enhancement to their regular class

readings. The counselors have a program called the “Information Loop” where email contact lists are made up by grade level to disseminate grade level information quickly to parents’ and students’ email accounts. The school newsletter highlights student work, student activities, health information, schedules, grade level reports, and PTO and AVID information. The newsletter is sent out to all stakeholders, the Military Command, the District Superintendent's Office, AFN, and is posted on the website.

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

- Various methods of communication are used between teachers and parents such as sending academic packets home correlating the lessons for the week with the curriculum standards and the school improvement goals which help create a greater understanding of the school's academic expectations.
- Teachers respond quickly to parent emails and communicate student progress in classes. The support that parents feel from the teachers is exceptional. They feel that the staff is very willing to listen to parents and work with the students and parents to solve any problems.

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

- Provide additional information to the Military Command which addresses the school’s focus on school improvement and overall performance.
- Disseminate comparison information on how the school is doing on TerraNova scores compared to other DoDEA schools.
- Publicize administration information to parents/stakeholders in a more evident manner; the impression of the parents was that they received most of the school’s information from the individual teachers and not administration.
- Offer a separate New Student/Parent Orientation for elementary and secondary students. Students and parents felt overwhelmed with the massive amount of information presented at one combined orientation.
- Review how new students and continuing students are assigned on the buses to ensure new students are not intimidated.

**Finding:** Daegu American School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" 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 engages all stakeholder groups in the continuous process of school improvement that consistently links the vision, mission, and purpose through school-wide daily announcements, class and school newsletters, and posters throughout the school. The plan links the vision and expectations for student learning and teaching during in-services for the faculty and interested parents. The documentation on the School Management System, school profile, and Standards Assessment Report captures a diverse student population, their academic performance, and the success of the school’s implementation of the

standards.

Parents communicated through interviews that they are informed and participated in the process of continuous school improvement. Parents, as stakeholders, collaborated with teachers to complete the Capacity Assessment Instrument. Parents, who attended the School Advisory Committee meeting, received the stakeholder survey and Continuous School Improvement assessment results; however, the results were not communicated to all stakeholders. The results should be shared through parent newsletters and the website.

Agendas of professional development training validated that opportunity is provided to all staff members and includes parents on the implementation of interventions. Due to the lack of additional professional development days, the school improvement leaders creatively implemented training of the faculty through the use of district-provided professional development days, faculty meetings, and after school meetings. A strong mentor program is available to train new teachers to understand, embrace, and implement the continuous school improvement goals and interventions. The agendas show differentiation for participants according to the level of implementation and understanding of the interventions.

Artifacts from “Looking at Student Work” show that all staff participated in the reflection of student work. The process for evaluating the strength of the interventions is in the beginning stage. Teachers examine the implementation of the intervention and are finding its relevance across the curriculum. Through interviews and observations, students are readily using the interventions to organize thoughts and solve problems. Data should be collected to document the growth and progress of students in their comprehension of non-fiction text and problem solving.

The end of the year Algebra assessment used in Grades 7-12 was not available after the first year of the Continuous Improvement Plan. The school reported that it had been advised to continue with the Terra Nova in both elementary and secondary and to use the McGraw Hill Final Math Assessment in Grades K-6. The school improvement plan should include an additional local assessment for the mathematics goal in the secondary grades in order to triangulate the data for evaluation of its effectiveness.

Some teachers, through interviews, reported that they use the results of the “Looking at Student Work” discussion to inform and change practice.

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

- The elementary grades are implementing the interventions for both the reading and mathematics goals with consistency and fidelity.
- Students are using the school-wide mathematics interventions without teacher direction to solve problems.

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

- Select an additional local assessment for the mathematics goal at the secondary level to triangulate data.
- Collect, review, and analyze data regularly to assess student progress.
- Use the school improvement process as more than a process checklist. It should be used to guide decision-making on a continuous basis to promote on-going improvement and effectiveness for the school and in the classrooms.

**Finding:** Daegu American 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 NCA-CASI-DODEA accreditation with AdvancED.

# Appendix

## Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Dr. Annette Bohling, Chair (AdvancED)
- Joe Simpson, Vice Chair (Wyoming Department of Education)
- Dr. Deborah Carlson, Team Member (Amelia Earhart Intermediate School)
- George Man, Team Member (Ernest J King High School)
- Ms. Naomi Mayer, Team Member (DoDEA Pacific Area Office)
- Shawn Knudsen, Team Member (Osan High School)
- Ms. Susan Nordell, Team Member (Kadena Elementary 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](http://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.