



# Accreditation Progress Report

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# 1.0 About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

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

## **The Accreditation Process.**

To earn and maintain accreditation, schools must:

### **1. Meet the AdvancED Standards for Quality School Systems.**

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

### **2. Engage in continuous improvement.**

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

### **3. Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.**

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

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

## 2.0 Introduction to the Accreditation Progress Report

### **Purpose**

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

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

### **Structure of the Report**

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

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

### **Conclusion**

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

Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito hosted a Quality Assurance Review team on 03/15/2009 - 03/19/2009. Through interviews with school stakeholders, classroom observations, and a review of school documents and student performance results, the team developed a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) report detailing its findings from the visit. The full report can be viewed at [www.advanc-ed.org](http://www.advanc-ed.org).

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

## 3.0. Required Action 1

**Source:** QAR

**Date:** 2009-04-06

### **Required Action:**

Review extra-curricular activities to meet the interests of students to further supplement the curricular offerings in fulfillment of the school's mission of producing well-rounded individuals.

### **Evidence:**

As evidenced by interviews with stakeholders, particularly the parents and students, the expressed common interests centered on enhancing and expanding extra-curricular opportunities in some areas, such as athletics and drama.

### **Rationale:**

This is an extension of the current school focus on liberal arts as related to the school's mission and purpose.

## 3.1. School Response

**Progress Status:** In Progress

**Response:** There have been two major initiatives in the area of Extra Curricular activities. There was an initial change to the activity schedule, adding forty-five minutes to the activities, to allow for more time for student participation and development of the program. This has permitted an extension of our sports participation in the formation of a new local league, Quito International Schools Sports Association (QISSA). Requirements to participate in QISSA include fielding teams in sports that have not been a part of the Colegio Menor program. We have now formed Junior Varsity and Varsity squads for both boys and girls in volleyball and basketball. Colegio Menor has also begun to participate in international competitions through our affiliation with the Association of American Schools in Colombia and the Caribbean. This participation produced positive results to further promote soccer as we have won the Bi-National Championships in both divisions of girls soccer. In addition to these changes in the sports program, we have included a greater variety of activities including drama, our first theatrical production Oh

Limbo! by a local playwright received a number of accolades. We have also added French and the program has grown in numbers over the last two years. Though tangible evidence of change exists, we still need to work on the quality and consistency in these programs as satisfaction surveys still demonstrate the area of extra curricular activities as an area of opportunity. Next weekend, we will host a training for Destination Imagination Team Managers and we will add this creative problem solving program to our extra curricular activity offerings for the next school year. We will also continue to add various levels of dance classes to the program. This summer we will host a joint Soccer Summer Camp with Kennesaw State University, which will include the participation of university level coaches and athletes who will evaluate and train Menor students and coaches. We believe that to adequately address the QAR Team recommendation Colegio Menor will need to engage in a process to continuously add activities, evaluate reception of activities in terms of interest and involvement (for example last year we attempted to offer swimming as part of the program but for logistical reasons, we do not have the facilities, it was difficult to manage the program), and constantly proposing new activities in order to increase the breadth of the Extra Curricular offerings.

## 3.2. Reviewer Response

**Progress Response:** Completed

**Comments for Institution:** Information included in the APR indicates the school has added and expanded the extra-curricular activities program resulting in the program meeting the needs of an increasing number of students. While the school felt when completing the APR this required action was still "in progress", for the purpose of this report the status for this required action should be "completed" and I am indicating such. The school must still strive to further expand the extra-curricular program to meet the needs of an even greater number of students.

## 4.0. Required Action 2

**Source:** QAR

**Date:** 2009-04-06

**Required Action:**

Review policies and job descriptions currently established to provide clear definitive roles with respect to instructional leadership to maintain cross divisional collaboration for sequential instruction.

**Evidence:**

The team found evidence through interviews with the general director, academic leadership team, area heads, and other personnel in leadership positions that there is not a clear and consistent implementation of the roles and responsibilities as outlined by the organizational chart. A review of the organizational structure may be needed in order to provide all staff with clear job descriptions to foster greater institutional effectiveness.

**Rationale:**

Having job descriptions, providing clear definitive roles for administrators, coordinators, and lead teachers, will ensure consistency throughout CMSFQ's programs, thus resulting in increased effectiveness of instructional supervision. For example, at the middle school level, the teaching responsibilities of the coordinators do not allow ample time for observations and assurance of quality instruction.

## 4.1. School Response

**Progress Status:** In Progress

**Response:**

Since the QAR visit, all job descriptions were evaluated by the Human Resource Director, General Director and the individual performing the position. Alterations to the descriptions were made after this review to better reflect the reality of the position and to clarify responsibilities of each position. Performance evaluations corresponding to each unique position were also designed to more clearly define and establish expectations for each position. The review of job responsibilities inspired a redesign of the organizational structure. The Coordinator position was eliminated and an Instructional Facilitator (IF) was added to each academic division. The IF does not assume teaching responsibilities but rather provides instructional support for teachers through observations, modeling in demonstration classes, training in instructional practices, etc. The IF's also meet on a regular basis to discuss the scope and sequence of curricular areas, This position was piloted in the Middle School and was quite successful. For this school year, the position is in place in all sections. Staff evaluations of the position, administered in February and March, demonstrated some initial areas of success and the need, of course, to further clarify expectations for IF teacher evaluations and training responsibilities. The organizational structure will be further redesigned for the next school into an Upper School (Grades 7-12) and Lower School (grades 1-6) model with each section having a principal. In assessing the current structure, it was found that having four academic divisions created inconsistency in responsibilities, policies and procedures. The challenge in implementing this new structure will involve the creation of an institutional mindset, moving people away from allegiance to their academic section and establishing school wide thinking as a fundamental aspect of the Menor organizational culture.

## 4.2. Reviewer Response

**Progress Response:** In Progress

**Comments for Institution:** It appears the school has taken significant steps to address this required action and the fact the school wants to create a new institutional mindset promoting school-wide thinking is commendable. The school is encouraged to pursue this goal until realized.

## 5.0. Required Action 3

**Source:** QAR

**Date:** 2009-04-06

**Required Action:**

Establish institutional thinking as central to the sections culture.

**Evidence:**

Colegio Menor is in its infancy stage of establishing institutional thinking. Sectional Improvement Plans are aligned to the Institution's Improvement Plan, but the interconnections of elements across the sections appear to be under construction. The needs are very different within the sections, but fostering systematic improvements related to policies and coherent structures will allow the institution to support sections, staff, and students with varying needs.

**Rationale:**

Institutional effectiveness depends on the connectedness of the sections, structures, and culture.

## 5.1. School Response

**Progress Status:** In Progress

**Response:** Colegio Menor is a relatively young institution that is refining its goal setting process. The QAR Team report provided clear parameters for an institutional approach establishing system wide priorities as the parameters for defining goals. Prior to the report there was a more organic, less data driven, aspect to goal setting from the classroom teacher, department, or grade level and then to the academic division, goals were established divorced from an institutional perspective and informed by anecdotal accounts. The QAR Team visit provided recommendations that served as clear guidelines for establishing our five year institutional objectives. We are now writing specific and measurable annual goals connected to the intutional objectives which then provide a focus for the development of goals in each section. Therefore, institutional priorities set the focus for the goals in each of the divisions. These goals emphasize two essential themes of continuous school improvement: a commitment to the application of resources to support initiatives that positively impact student learning and designing approaches to promote a cohesiveness in organizational operations to promote institutional effectiveness.

The strength of the culture of each academic division managed by a separate head created unique challenges to establish a sense of institutional thinking related to policies, procedures, events and processes. During these past two years, we have worked to produce a unified parent and student manual in order to retire the four separate, distinct and at times contradictory, manuals that we had in operation. The common comment heard a few years ago was that there was four schools and not an institution. The changes addressing this situation are in motion, including the redesign of the organizational structure mentioned in the previous Accreditation Progress Report response, but to cultivate a unified organizational culture and inculcate institutional thinking with a single unified policy and operations manual and a new organizational structure will require patience, fortitude and time. The new structure being implemented for the next school

year will need be evaluated for its effectiveness but there is a general belief that this change will facilitate a higher level of collaboration between the academic sections.

## 5.2. Reviewer Response

**Progress Response:** In Progress

**Comments for Institution:** The school is commended for its desire to pursue a unified organizational culture in such a deliberate manner; and the fact the school recognizes this change will require patience, fortitude, and time is important. The school should continue its efforts to realize this significant transition in thinking and behavior.

## 6.0. Required Action 4

**Source:** QAR

**Date:** 2009-04-06

### **Required Action:**

Evaluate all instructional practices through an institutional-wide process to determine instructional effectiveness.

### **Evidence:**

In an effort to achieve consistency in the evaluation of the effectiveness of instructional practices, institutional-wide evaluation tools should be implemented. Evaluation tools should focus primarily on determining the amount of student achievement. These tools should have the capability of being correlated to instructional objectives. Disaggregation and utilization of all assessment data should be published in a consistent manner that allows for school implementation at the classroom level.

### **Rationale:**

By implementing this process the needs of students will be better identified and met.

## 6.1. School Response

**Progress Status:** In Progress

**Response:** This recommendation area has received a significant amount of attention. Human resources were adjusted, the staff evaluation program changed and the delivery, management and sharing of assessment data impacted. A new position was created, the Instructional Facilitator (IF). The IF position, now implemented at all levels, was designed to have a team of instructional leaders responsible for evaluating and assisting teachers in the area of instruction. The IF reviews lessons, provides observation feedback, team teaches, designs workshops and suggests instructional practices aligned with our revised All School Essential Agreements, a document created to promote institutional agreements on instruction, classroom management, curriculum and community involvement. This effectiveness of the position is being monitored through teacher surveys.

The All School Essential Agreements are also being used as the primary evaluation tool for teachers. This permits a more transparent focus on teacher expectations across the institution and assists in developing a greater level of consistency in institutional practices. Teacher professional goals are being written to these agreements and classroom observations are being designed around the agreements as well. The Academic Leadership Team will evaluate the effectiveness of these changes at the end this school year.

In terms of assessment data, we have moved to an electronic administration of the Stanford exams initially with the four grades we had been testing and now this year extending to grades 3 through 10. The electronic administration facilitates the delivery of results in a more timely manner, providing the classroom teacher an opportunity to review results and make classroom adjustments. With expansion of the test this year, we have designed what we believe to be more effective formats to report to teachers. This should promote a more solid use of disaggregated assessment data at the classroom level. We have also initiated the process of uploading prior and current year student assessment data to our student administration data base with the idea that we will be able to monitor and utilize data to address individual student needs over time. Our greatest challenge in the area of assessment use is in developing a greater level of institutional competence in using data to create appropriate interventions to impact student learning. We believe we are still in the developmental stage in this area and are currently considering further training to develop this competency.

## 6.2. Reviewer Response

**Progress Response:** In Progress

**Comments for Institution:** Information provided in the response to this required action provides clear evidence the school understands what is required to develop and implement institutional-wide process to determine institutional effectiveness focused on student achievement. The school should continue to development and implementation its present plan.