

Report of the  
Quality Assurance Review Team  
for  
Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito

Andrew N. Sherman, Superintendent

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Review Dates: 03/15/2009 - 03/19/2009



*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 the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA) 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 2006, NCA CASI, SACS CASI, and the research and development arm of the accrediting associations, the National Study of School Evaluation, unified to form AdvancED. Dedicated to advancing excellence in education, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 23,000 schools in 65 countries, serving 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 for Quality Schools.** Schools demonstrate adherence to the seven AdvancED standards 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 recommendations to help the school improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school and a written report detailing the team's recommendations. The school acts on the team's recommendations 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.
2. Assess the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and recommendations 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 recommendations for improvement.

**Using the Report - Acting on the Recommendations.** The school uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school is held accountable for addressing the recommendations identified in the report. The NCA CASI/SACS CASI State Office is available to assist schools in addressing the recommendations. Following the Quality Assurance Review Team visit, the school must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress the school has made on the team's recommendations. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school is addressing the recommendations.

**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 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), a division of AdvancED, visited the Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito in Quito, All States/Provinces (Ecuador) on 03/15/2009 - 03/19/2009.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed the Superintendent, 10 members of the administrative team, 124 students, 29 parents, and 85 teachers. In addition, support staff 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:

- Vision and Purpose
- Governance and Leadership
- Teaching and Learning
- Documenting and Using Results
- Resource and Support Systems
- Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
- 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 recommendations.

### 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 has implemented educational improvements at a progressive pace.**

During interviews with various stakeholders, it was brought to the attention of the Quality Assurance Review Team that most of the current practices were initiated one year ago, upon the arrival of the new superintendent. The capital building campaign was approved, a major thrust for enhancing technology was initiated, curriculum mapping and formative assessments were under construction, and professional development opportunities were provided. The term, “unbelievable growth” was used repeatedly in regards to educational improvements.

Designing, implementing, and monitoring continuous improvement efforts can result in positive school

effectiveness and increased student performance.

- **The school level leadership is exemplary and models a collaborative work culture, a commitment to student success, and dedication to continuous improvement.**

As evidenced by statements from stakeholders' interviews and through school visits, the team noted a culture that supports a collaborative network that in turn supports the improvement process. A culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership is promoted by providing internal stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process. By providing support, resources, and focus, the leaders demonstrate a commitment to student success and a willingness to engage in an aggressive and continuous improvement process.

Encouraging self-reflection and analysis of results furthers the improvement process and fosters an environment that values continuous improvement.

- **The focused allocation of resources support the school's vision and purpose.**

Colegio Menor has made the commitment to strategically provide the personnel and material resources necessary to support the instructional initiatives. This was evidenced during the artifact review and stakeholder interviews. The development and maintenance of the curriculum center is commendable.

This infusion of dedicated resources contributes to a deep implementation of the school's commitment to school improvement.

- **The school demonstrates openness to ideas and contributions of other educators, and seeks external perspectives regarding improvement.**

The school's decision to seek accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement indicates a dynamic desire to be "the premier educational provider in the region." The review will provide the school with additional information from an external source and will assist it in identifying what areas are highly effective in the school and suggest areas where improvement and changes may be made.

When schools are open to both internal and external reviews, progress in the improvement process is greater.

- **The school climate is safe and nurturing.**

Students, parents, and teachers all consider their school to be a warm, welcoming, safe, and nurturing environment that enhancing learning for students. The school has a systemic safety protocol for its school and regular drills are conducted so that students and staff know the procedures. Staff and parents said that Colegio Menor is a great place to live and work. Parents and students credit the strong, caring, and dedicated staff for the inviting school climate. Also, students are respectful, well-disciplined, and self-motivated.

Students learn best in an environment that is invitational, safe, and secure.

- **The vision and beliefs of the institution are clearly communicated and supported throughout the school**

The vision and beliefs are visible throughout the school and all stakeholder groups articulated a clear understanding of and expressed support for a shared vision and purpose.

A shared vision and belief statements provide the focus and support necessary for school-wide high student achievement.

- **The process for developing the Standards Assessment Report (SAR) can be used as a model for other schools – extensive internal and external stakeholders contributed.**

Interviews, observations, and the SAR confirmed a true collaborative process. The school used administrators, teachers, parents, and students in the development of the SAR. The SAR as a product is data rich and provides an exemplary artifact/product for the school.

Even without the QART being a part of the process, the SAR development supports leadership, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

- **The utilization of diverse modes of communication provide stakeholders access to information about student performance, school activities, and upcoming events.**

This was evidenced by interviews with stakeholders, parents, teachers, and administrators. Examples of tools used for communication include: the website, email, telephone calls, newsletters, open door policy, open house, literacy week, school presentations, progress reports, and parent-teacher conferences.

An increase in parent participation has been the result of these efforts to better communicate with parents.

- **The school fosters a climate of caring relationships where students are provided value-added experiences.**

With “goodness, beauty, and truth” as the foundational principles inspiring the creation of the school, the curriculum offers students a well-rounded education that focuses on liberal arts. Parents, students, and other stakeholders cited the care and concern offered to each child in the school. Those interviews alone indicated that the school is interested in the whole child and endeavors to make certain students are cared for through a host of avenues to perpetuate the positive relationships which exist between students and staff.

This focus supports the school’s vision of producing life-long learners.

## Recommendations

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

- **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.**

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.

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

- **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.**

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.

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.

- **Establish institutional thinking as central to the sections culture.**

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.

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

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

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.

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

**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 recommendations made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the recommendations.
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 team's recommendations. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the recommendations. 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 SACS CASI 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 recommendations 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.

## Standards for Accreditation

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito demonstrates that it meets the seven standards for accreditation. The findings of the Quality Assurance Review Team regarding the standards for accreditation are summarized on the following pages.

### Standard 1. Vision and Purpose

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

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

The school establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school. Representatives from Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito (CMSFQ) established an inclusive process for the revision of the school's vision and mission statements. Through various meetings, newsletters, and emails, stakeholders were given the opportunity as the vision and mission statements were developed. The vision statement expands on the original mission of the school created by the founders of the school, therefore strengthening the quality of its liberal arts education. The school's vision, mission, and beliefs are focused on student learning and include the worthwhile goals of lifelong learning, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and personal responsibility in regards to the environment and the betterment of society.

CMSFQ staff has demonstrated a commitment to continuously working to achieve the vision and mission of the school through the development of a Five-Year Institutional Plan and Annual Goals with the goals of the school aligned with the mission's guiding principles of "Goodness, Beauty, and Truth." The priorities of the school's mission emphasize strong values and a liberal arts education and are student focused. In developing the mission, stakeholders decided that the students of CMSFQ should be "grounded locally before they go global." Although the leaders want their students to be able to function in a global society, they also want the students to value the culture of Ecuador. The goals address student learning using a dynamic academic model, building a strong sense of community, and adhering to a code of honor. The goals of the school were determined by a comprehensive analysis of school's mission, the aspirations of parents and the school community, and uphold the founding principles of the school. Clearly, the goals define the work that is expected. Data from an analysis of assessments are used to plan strategies that support improving student learning and to identify strengths and limitations in the effectiveness of the school's curriculum, instruction, and assessment programs.

Visible throughout the school facilities and on all communications, the mission is shared with the school's community. Programs and procedures are put in the context of the school's vision, and the vision is maintained in the daily activities of the school. For example, CMSFQ uses the mission to guide all decisions about the educational process by asking, "How will this decision help us achieve our mission?" In doing their reflections on unit plans, the teachers are asked to explain how the unit has contributed to the mission. Even on requests for materials, the teachers have to explain how the purchase will contribute to the mission. The school's vision, developed with input from all stakeholder groups, is clear and positive and supported by the school community.

Involvement of stakeholders through school-wide initiatives such as the community service project Techo Para Mi Pais and instructional expeditions to study the culture of Ecuador contributes to the mission of preparing the students to be successful and live harmoniously in a diverse world while being proud of their own culture.

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

- The school's website is an effective means of communicating the school's vision and mission to parents and community stakeholders.
- The vision and mission of the school has strong support from the school community.
- The school plan defines worthwhile goals focused on achieving the school's vision and mission.
- The school's planning process is inclusive and involves members of the school community in nurturing and accomplishing the mission.
- The school community participates in defining and reviewing the school's mission and beliefs and has expanded its scope while retaining the principles of the school founders.

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

- Provide for additional extracurricular activities that are aligned with the vision, mission, and goals of the school in the areas of creating students who are well-rounded individuals.
- Adopt a policy to review the vision and mission on an annual basis.

**Finding:** Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

## Standard 2. Governance and Leadership

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

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

The school operates under policies which seek and encourages involvement from all stakeholders of the school community. Policies are made by referring to the mission and vision statements and feedback is regularly sought through focus groups and the School Improvement Council. Through the establishment of these policies and procedures effective operation of the school takes place overseen by the general director and the academic leadership team. Additional input is also encouraged through participation by each division and staff members in leadership positions.

The school has recently developed a school policy manual with an organizational/staffing chart, job descriptions for the general director and administrative director, student/parent handbooks, and personnel handbooks. The school leadership is in the process of administering surveys and the use of standardized and common assessment data on student performance to create plans for school improvements.

Throughout the school the team found evidence where stakeholders were given opportunities to provide leadership and to contribute in meaningful roles to promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership. Committees such as the school improvement council, discipline committee, security committee, etc. in addition to the numerous student organizations of student council, community forum, Model United Nations, and peer counseling demonstrate opportunities for leadership.

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

- There has been an establishment of the School Improvement Council involving administration, teachers, parents and students.
- The success of the Program for Academic Support (PAS) is evident.

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

- Review policies and job descriptions currently established to provide clear definitive roles with respect to instructional leadership and supervision of student performance and school effectiveness.
- Review organizational charts to establish direct lines of supervision that relates to school wide programs.
- Establish Institutional thinking as central to the sections' culture.

**Finding:** Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

### Standard 3. Teaching and Learning

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

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

Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito is a private, bilingual school whose mission is to “inspire students to be lifelong learners and to guide them, through a liberal arts education, to be creative, well-rounded individuals, and critical thinkers who are proud of their culture, advocates of freedom, and prepared to be successful and live harmoniously in a diverse world.” The school’s student population of slightly more than 1300 is divided into four sections: early childhood (three year olds to second grade); elementary (three-five grades); middle school (six-eighth grades); high school (nine-12 grades).

With a goal of having its students proficient in both English and Spanish, the school begins its bilingual program with English immersion for students from playgroup to kindergarten. Then the students transition to a bilingual program with English instruction in all core classes from first grade to twelfth.

With “goodness, beauty, and truth” as the foundational principles inspiring the creation of the school, the curriculum offers students a well-rounded education that focuses on liberal arts. The students complete a set of core courses and develop their knowledge and skills in art, music, and a variety of elective subject areas. The school offers a strong music program with ensembles, band, orchestra, piano and guitar. Because of the University of San Francisco at Quito’s partnership with the Berklee School of Music of Boston, the students of CMSFQ also benefit from Berklee’s mission to “educate, train, and develop students to excel in music as a career.” Students from all grade levels participate in the music program. For example, the third graders recently performed a musical celebration of our planet called “Heal the World.” The art program has annual exhibits and over 30 student murals decorating the campus.

As part of its mission, the school also stresses core values as part of its curriculum and requires each student to be accountable for his or her own actions. Community service projects such as Techo Para Mi Pais, which is similar to Habitat for Humanity, contribute to the mission of preparing the students to be successful and live harmoniously in a diverse world while being proud of their own culture. Other projects include family food packages and support of libraries in two neighboring communities. All students are required to complete 200 community service hours as part of their graduation requirements. However, many students go beyond these requirements as they discover that the neediness of the world around them.

Instructional strategies require student participation and promote both exploratory discovery and the application of concepts. Strategies used by teachers include learning centers, hands-on activities, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and integrated thematic units.

The school strives to cultivate good teaching and has developed the supervision, development, and evaluation instrument (SD&E). It is based on the five core standards of effective teaching from the US National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. According to the policy, the area head of each school is the principle observer and is responsible for managing the observation schedule and ensuring that all documentation occurs. Although formal and informal observations are frequent, some grade levels do not have the instructional support to provide sufficient training and mentoring of teachers to ensure innovative instructional delivery. Furthermore, the leadership should provide on-going evaluations of the many practices to determine their effectiveness in improving student achievement because progress is occurring quickly with many changes in programs and practices.

To allow for different learning rates, Colegio Menor provides special programs. At the early childhood, elementary, and middle levels, the special needs department and counselors evaluate students’ development. In high school grades, the students’ grades are monitored by the Programs of Academic Support (PAS) coordinator who works directly with students who are unsuccessful in one or more academic subjects. At the middle and high school levels, departments have assigned days in which their teachers stay after school to provide tutoring. The high school also provides peer tutoring programs in which the tutor and the tutee receive extra credit. Advanced Placement courses are offered in calculus, statistics, English language, Spanish language, Spanish literature, studio art, world history, and biology for students who want more challenging courses.

The all-school curriculum coordinator maintains a global vision of the curriculum, which encourages the integration of many cross-curricular activities such as research, communication, values, and thinking skills. The Spanish department organizes Globalizarte, an annual event in which literacy, art, drama, speaking, dance, and Ecuadorean culture are integrated.

Materials and resources are plentiful through the curriculum resources area and the library. Material is catalogued clearly and available to instructors. Although the school provides some access to technology, the number and age of computers does not always ensure that students and staff members have regular and ready access. When asked about technology being used during instruction, students mentioned overhead projectors

and the occasional use of LCD projectors, indicating that teachers are not integrating technology into their teaching practices on a regular basis.

Through regular meetings, a systematic procedure for unit plan development, the documentation into Atlas, and the support of the all-school curriculum coordinator, the curriculum plan is continually being monitored and revised to ensure that instructional strategies are research-based and reflective of best practice. As the school improvement process continues, changes in goals, instructional activities, and assessments must continue to be entered into Atlas. The QAR team feels very strongly that the school is headed in the right direction and encourages CMSFQ to “keep on keeping on.”

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

- The SD&E program ensures an ongoing and consistent process of supervision, evaluation, and professional growth for teachers.
- Interdisciplinary activities provide opportunities for high order thinking.
- The systematic development of unit plans and timelines ensures curriculum alignment.

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

- Seek ways to develop classroom utilization of technology resources for instruction, assessment, and student learning.
- Develop systemic measures to ensure that curriculum and instruction decisions are data-driven at the institution, school, and classroom levels.
- Encourage innovation in all classroom delivery to engage student learners.
- Provide on-going evaluations of the many initiatives to determine their effectiveness in improving student achievement.

**Finding:** Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito 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:**

Colegio Menor has made improving student learning a priority and has taken a proactive and comprehensive approach to identifying its strengths and areas where improvements are needed. The school uses both internal assessments and external evaluations through a variety of common assessments (internal) and standardized assessments (external) to monitor student performance and to guide program development and improvement. After “testing the test” and evaluating several standardized assessments to determine the most reliable for its students, the staff chose Stanford and is in the fourth year of using it as the standardized assessment for most grade levels. Although Stanford has been a reliable measure, the staff is concerned that all grades are not tested and feedback is not timely. Currently, only grades two, three, five seven and nine are tested with the Stanford; furthermore, the results are not returned quickly. Classroom teachers are guided to use daily, weekly, and monthly assessments to make instructional decisions. These assessments allow teachers to check for

understanding and to identify strengths and weaknesses of their students. More formal common assessments include writing prompts and running records. Other assessments include PSAT for all eleventh graders and Advanced Placement (AP) tests for eleventh and twelfth graders. Instructors use item analysis for PSAT to determine areas in which their students need more instruction. AP scores are used to determine whether specific AP course offerings should be continued. PSAT and AP scores allow the teachers and administrators to compare their students to external norms.

As the school develops and strengthens its curriculum and instruction, data collection will be important in identifying the changing needs of students, responding to the results of the assessments, and making adjustments in the school's programs. In order to manage and monitor the school's assessment data, the school is in the process of implementing Power School, a data warehouse, at all levels to compile, disaggregate, and communicate data in ways that are meaningful to the school community.

Data from surveys of students, teachers, and parents are also used to modify instructional plans. These surveys are a main source of information that allows the school leaders to monitor the level of satisfaction in the community.

An assessment policy has been developed to provide clarity for all stakeholders about the purpose of assessments, the types of assessments used, and the analysis and to ensure better communication about data to parents. Now, each student's result on Stanford is communicated by letter to the parents with an explanation of the results. According to the Assessment Policy, effective assessment should enable teachers to determine prior knowledge, ascertain degrees of understanding, identify strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles, plan the next steps, and monitor and modify instruction.

The all-school curriculum coordinator, area heads, department coordinators, and lead teachers use a process of collecting, analyzing, sharing, and using the results from the school's assessments and using the data to review, develop, adjust, and evaluate the results of the school improvement plans. The school improvement plan is reviewed and assessed periodically to ensure that the school is achieving its mission and goals.

Although emphasis is being placed on the use of data to guide instruction throughout the institution, the incorporation of new goals and assessments will require further training of teachers for them to be able to create reliable assessments and then use consistently the data to guide instruction.

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

- An institutional assessment policy has been developed to provide consistency in collecting, archiving, and analyzing all data.
- Data from stakeholder surveys are used to make decisions about school improvement.

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

- Implement systemic measures to ensure that student achievement data are consistently used to guide instruction and to compare CMSFQ to external norms.

**Finding:** Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito 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:**

School provision of resources and support systems is foundational for enabling all students to ultimately meet expectations for learning. Through a series of facilitated community sessions, school stakeholders participated in the review of human, material and fiscal resources to ensure that they were sufficient to support the school's mission and vision in accordance with applicable regulations. During meetings and interviews, stakeholders identified specific resources and school services that had merited attention in attending to students in their learning. Active and engaged in their learning, students were witnessed making use of the resources, systems, and services intentionally planned for and provided by the school.

The stakeholder committee for resources and support systems presented a thoughtful reflection regarding their compliance with this standard. In addition to this reflection, the Quality Assurance Review team reviewed the supporting documents made available through the school's offices, intranet and the data within the functional software of Rubicon Atlas and Powerschool. The team appreciated the quality and dedication of the staff and faculty and their commitment to CMSFQ in the parallel development of professional development towards improved student learning goals. The quality and number of professionals performing their assigned roles and responsibilities appeared ample in attending to the relatively small, personal class sizes. Appropriate support and services were found to be given to students with special needs and interests. Of equal importance in attending to the well being of the students was the evidence of attention to personal security. The grounds were found to be attractive and inviting upon entering the school, though some areas further inside the complex will benefit from the future scheduled work as outlined in the school maintenance plan.

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

- School leaders and staff have identified goals for school improvement and dedicated resources in the work towards the fulfillment of them in the form of training qualified staff who believe in and support the school's mission and vision.
- CMSFQ is practicing forward thinking in the incorporation of such tools as Rubicon Atlas, community intranet, and Powerbook to systematize and sustain complex handling of data and communications at various levels amongst the stakeholders.

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

- Develop plans to meet the students' and teachers' growing demands for incorporating technology into the instructional-learning sequence, given the demands placed by the current use of the school's technological facilities with the likelihood of this increasing in the near future.
- Strengthen the role and services of the library in serving as the "center" of the school in supporting student learning.
- Build upon the liberal arts education components in offering a wider selection of activities in support of the school's mission and vision and providing avenues for achievement for all students.

**Finding:** Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito 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:**

Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito (CMSFQ) as a school has taken the challenge of stakeholder communications and relationships with seriously. The school recognizes that the vision and mission can only be accomplished through effective and widespread communications. CMSFQ has demonstrated a commitment to modernizing its communication system both internally and externally.

The communication system includes a myriad of methods of information delivery such as multiple surveys of all groups (parents, teachers, students), websites, parent conferences, open house sessions, progress reports, email, ad hoc committees, and on-line communication portals. Involvement of external stakeholders along with internal is also provided through family day activities, Literacy Week, academic fairs, Globalizarte, music concerts, and community service projects. The School Improvement Council provides for representation of students, teachers, and parents, allowing the Academic Leadership Team to consider the expectations of all stakeholders when evaluating the progress and modifying the school improvement plans for achieving the goals.

CMSFQ also provides personnel for public relations and communications. Technology-based data programs and a comprehensive School Improvement/Strategic Plan are evidence of the commitment of the school to communications and relationships with the participants of this "professional learning community." At each level of the institution, there is understanding, support, and commitment to an open-door culture and school transparency. Parents, students, and teachers voiced their appreciation of the availability of school personnel.

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

- All stakeholders were represented on standards teams and were actively involved in the school's self assessment, which provided an increased awareness of the process.
- Multiple forms of information delivery and internal organizational structures are used to promote and ensure frequent opportunities for collaboration and dissemination of information.

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

- Quantify and analyze data to offer a more precise picture of where improvements in communication need to occur such as determining which stakeholder group needs improved communication from the school.
- Identify and administer one comprehensive climate survey to capture the perceptions of stakeholders concerning the effectiveness of all functions and operations of the school (as opposed to multiple area-specific surveys).

**Finding:** Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito 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:**

As a standard that encompasses all the diverse practices of any school, the commitment to continuous improvement, when rated "Operational/Highly Functional", represents a systemic organizational priority to work collaboratively for genuine improvement which positively affects all members of the school. Colegio Menor San Francisco De Quito, by working intently to improve instruction, the use of data, professional development, communication, and collaboration, does indeed demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement.

Communication channels, as described by stakeholders, are now multiplying and becoming more effective. The leadership of the school, particularly with regard to the General Director, appears to be associated with these recent improvements. Reflecting this more open environment, the school has significantly improved its vision and mission to invite teachers, parents, and students to work together for the betterment of the school as a whole. Further dissemination and commitment to this vision appears promising based on these recent improvements.

Linked with improved communication and collaboration is the potential for significant improvements in the reach and depth of professional development programs which support school priorities of using data and improving student engagement. The team collected evidence that opportunities are open for continuing to press for positive change with regard to data-driven instruction and student-centered, engaging instruction that should improve the academic performance of all students.

These efforts are supported by the schools development of an Institutional Five Year Plan and Annual Goals based on three areas of improvement:

- Promote a shared understanding within our community of what the mission and vision mean and ensure that these beliefs drive our daily activities.
- Optimize the use of technology, assessment tools, and data to monitor and guide curriculum and student learning.
- Foster a community of informed and active participants.

Each area was required to develop area and personal goals that were aligned with the institutional goals to ensure continuous progress toward achievement of these goals.

As a result of the efforts described throughout this report, it has been made clear to the team that continuous improvement is one of the school's highest priorities.

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

- The school has opened effective channels of communication between the school and stakeholders
- There is a commitment to improving delivery of timely data to the schools
- The school is dedicated to improving training regarding understanding and using data for positively affecting instruction.
- The school is increasing the use of data for evaluating effectiveness of programs
- The school is developing and disseminating a revised vision and mission that reflect the needs of the school

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

- Ensure continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of school programs and improvement efforts through collaboration, communication, and data analysis.
- Build on the growing trust of school leadership to help the stakeholders better understand and internalize the school's vision and plans for improvement.
- Review, refine, and implement the school monitoring process related to the continuous improvement process to ensure a consistent implementation.

**Finding:** Colegio Menor San Francisco de Quito has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

## **Conclusion**

The commendations and recommendations 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 recommendations 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 several recommendations 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 recommendations.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to Andrew N. Sherman, 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 accreditation with AdvancED.

# Appendix

## Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Dr. Billy Floyd, Chair (AdvancED)
- Dr. George Koonce, Team Member
- Jeffery Fifield, Team Member (Colegio Maya)
- Mrs. Judy Wesley, Team Member
- Mr. Robert Werner, Team Member (Escola Americana do Rio de Janeiro)

## 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.