

# Report of the Quality Assurance Review Team for Escuela Bella Vista

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*AdvancED is the unified organization of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE).*

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# 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 two years 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. Two years 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.

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## 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 Escuela Bella Vista in Maracaibo, All States/Provinces (Venezuela) on 03/30/2008 - 04/03/2008.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed the Superintendent, 4 members of the administrative team, 36 students, 29 parents, and 28 teachers. In addition, team members of Support Staff and Board of Directors 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 is filled with a kindly spirited and respectful student body that reflects the school citizenship values through its interactions with faculty, staff and peers.**

The QAR members observed and interacted with students who were positive, openminded, and respectful regarding all aspects of the school environment. They demonstrated an understanding of the school's vision and were actively involved and committed to making EBV the best of schools.

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Students who are feel secure and successful lin the school environment will perform at their highest level of overall performance.

- **Escuela Bella Vista continually provides opportunities to meet the needs of all students.**

The school has implemented the Optimal Learning Center to better meet the needs of students experiencing learning difficulties; an English as Second Language program to support learners with limited English; the Citizenship Code to address respect and values of all on campus; and extra-curricular activities, including community service activities, to involve students in the community. The classroom size and the use of TA's further enhance the ability to address individual needs.

The implementation of these opportunities contributes to increased student performance and demonstrates the school's focus on its vision to develop students that will become citizens of the world.

- **The school exhibits a commitment to the concept of continuous improvement not only in those areas that immediately impact student performance but also in those that support and enhance its overall educational program.**

Interviews and discussions revealed that the allocation of time, effort, and monies are designed to move the entire curriculum to one that is standards based. This includes the beginning of a curriculum mapping process aimed at further aligning the work done by teachers and students alike. It also includes the expansion of best practices throughout the school. This commitment has been further evidenced by the ongoing renovations to the physical plant and the concern for the security of the entire school family.

This has resulted in an atmosphere where thoughtful change and improvement are an integral part of the school's planning process

- **Faculty and staff at EBV are well qualified, positive, and dedicated to producing high achieving students.**

From classroom observations, the team was able to observe environments conducive to learning with teachers using instructional practices that actively engaged students in the learning process. In interviews with the different stakeholders, comments were made that teachers made themselves available before and after school for extra help, sponsor many clubs and activities and work together toward the betterment of the school and of all students.

This has resulted in students who are self-assured effective communicators, critical thinkers and successful, contributing citizens.

- **The superintendent demonstrates resiliency, vision, tireless dedication, and significant degrees of strong professional competencies. The principals show impressive diligence, steadfast leadership qualities and genuine compassionate attitudes.**

All constituencies recognize thorough data analysis and continuous verbal expressions, and the values provided by this triumvirate of administrative leadership. Their performances have permitted rigorous improvements to evolve in the areas of morale, academics, extra-curricular activities, and general strands of envisioned school improvements.

Under the leadership of the superintendent and principals, Escuela Bella Vista is poised to reach higher levels of excellence throughout the programs.

- **The board of directors have made an extremely unique commitment to each component of the various constituencies and the general welfare of the entire operations. Their unselfish sentiments and actions, sacrifices, and resolute continued performance of fulfilling challenging governance responsibilities are worthy of emulation throughout the entire Latin American Region.**

The school experienced serious operational complications during the last few years related to severe fiscal complicities, abnormal staffing and enrollment patterns, local and regional insecurities, and other major forms of potential encumbrances which are not prudent to be illuminated due to sensitivities. No period in the school's rich heritage has experienced greater challenges, or a great need for firm and fair-minded governance. The board of directors has fulfilled its roles above all normal expectations despite the most convoluted types of situation.

Their unselfish sentiments and actions, sacrifices, and resolute continuance performance of fulfilling challenging governance responsibilities and providing direction for EBV and are worthy of emulation throughout the entire Latin American Region.

## 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. Two years following this review, the school will be asked to submit a progress report on these recommendations.

- **Engage in a process of collaborative planning activities designed to continue developing aligned curriculum maps. Ensure accessibility to a variety of research-based instruction and assessment, optimizing technology and multimedia as learning tools.**

The current curriculum, based on expectations for students learning at all levels and subject areas, was available to team members. From interviews with faculty and teachers and from the school improvement plan, the QAR members observed that a need for revision of standards and benchmarks for each grade level is imperative planning to ensure alignment. The implementation of the Rubicon software will aide in the monitoring of alignment of core content and required student performance(s). Research-based instruction practices with some use of technology were evident during teacher observations. The team recommends that teachers continue optimizing

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technology and multimedia as learning tools.

By providing an aligned, balanced, comprehensive PreK – 12 curriculum and providing school-wide training to improve instruction and assessment, EBV will ensure quality teaching and learning throughout the school. in order to maintain consistency in light of teacher transition.

- **Carefully analyze the various elements of Action Plan C (Technology) in the School Improvement Plan and formulate an expanded set of timelines, incorporating benchmarks, where applicable, to the identified elements.**

Through discussions and interviews, the team found that the School Improvement Plan was only recently completed, perhaps, thus impacting the degree of specificity and detail.

By adjusting the timelines and expanding the scope and sequence of the technology plan to include both short-term and long-term elements, the school more fully enhances the potential for a successful completion of all of the desired results.

- **Enhance recruiting strategies to be certain that the institution remains competitive in attracting and retaining only the highest caliber of host national and in international educators.**

Every international school has experienced recent serious problems with new staff recruitment and the retention of strong professionals currently under contract. The nation of Venezuela and the city of Maracaibo have encountered more than its fair share of recruitment impediments. The school prides itself on having attracted the highest quality of professional educators. New types of recruitment approaches including new recruitment sources/sites and benefits packages need to be incorporated if the school is to maintain its commitment to the highest of standards.

New types of recruitment approaches will help the school maintain its commitment to the highest standards for implementing a quality program.

**Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools:** The team reviewed the school's adherence to each of the AdvancED standards. The findings from this review are provided in the next section of this report.

## Next Steps

The school should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the commendations section to maximize their impact on the school.
3. Develop action plans to address the 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.

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5. Two years 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 logo is available through the SACS CASI website for schools to post on their website and in school communications. Flags, door decals, diploma seals, and more 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.

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# Standards for Accreditation

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the Escuela Bella Vista 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 current school's vision, mission and philosophy was renewed by EBV's board and other stakeholders through a collaborative process in 2003/2004. Most recently, a Citizenship Code was crafted to support both the vision and mission of the school. Through interviews with staff members, students, and parents, the team was able to observe that everyone was supportive of the Citizenship Code and of the school's vision and mission that states that EBV will prepare students to become multilingual, global citizens by displaying values of respect, optimism, fairness, responsibility, and honesty. Staff members and students consistently revealed that these traits were providing direction to guide the teaching and learning process as well.

Plaques have been posted in classrooms, hallways, office area, and the cafeteria to promote understanding and commitment among school community members of EBV's vision, mission and Citizenship Code. They have also been printed in The Lighthouse, the school newsletter, the school's website, the Student/Parent Handbook, and student agendas to continue building understanding and support. In addition, school faculty members are required to participate in monthly faculty meetings, monthly department meetings, and monthly grade level meetings to collaborate about matters pertaining to school goals and objectives.

The QAR team was not able to clearly find evidence that EBV's mission and vision statements and recently defined Citizenship Code served as a focus for assessing student performance and school effectiveness. Even though school stakeholders believe that the vision and purpose of the school should remain current, they expressed the need for it to be aligned with the school's expectations for student learning and school effectiveness defining what is meant by the usage of 21st century skills.

The QAR team thoroughly reviewed and examined the school's profile data which was available on the school's website, in the comprehensive folder QAR team members were given, and in other documents and reports compiled at the school. The data available included student registration and admission documentation, teacher demographics, graduation requirements, standardized test scores, and student college acceptance information. Stakeholder surveys were also reviewed; however, accurate graphs registering the information were not included in EBV's 2007 Profile. Some areas to be considered for inclusion in the profile may include: an accurate track of EBV graduates post-secondary education and career choices; and student performance

and participation in clubs, competitions, and extracurricular activities. The team did not find evidence that this information is continuously maintained and revised as the student population is monitored each year to support school improvement efforts.

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

- The school has begun the process of engaging its stakeholders to commit to a shared purpose and direction in defining its vision, mission and values.
- The Citizenship Code recently developed to support student expected learning outcomes has been well disseminated among faculty, staff and students and all three school groups demonstrated extensive support of these values and beliefs.
- The school's faculty and staff actively reinforce school values and beliefs during meetings, school gatherings, and through daily interactions with students and staff.

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

- Revisit the EBV's vision and mission statements on a regular basis. This process will ensure all programs, such as the Citizenship Code, are aligned with the revised school vision and mission statements.
- Ensure not only that the school continues to set goals related to improving teaching and learning, based upon current research and context, but also that it comes together as a community at least once a year to peer-assess its progress in relation to the stated mission and beliefs.
- Ensure that survey information, data relevant to alumni's post secondary and career choices, student performance and participation in extracurricular activities, among others, are considered for inclusion in the school profile to provide a more enriched document.

**Finding:** Escuela Bella Vista 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:**

It is extremely edifying to detect that the leadership at the site which has evolved systematically during recent historical evolution and is exceptionally strong and cohesive. These vital components of the operations are spearheaded by a gifted and unusually dedicated superintendent, a very skilled, unselfish and dedicated board of directors, and two very competent divisional principals. It is further encouraging recognizing the fact that the board of directors strictly and under all circumstances respects the board's prerogative of establishing policies and the implementation of such policies by the administrative leadership. The vital primary feature for successful management permits the essential flow of operations throughout the entire educational system. Therefore, all constituents, including the faculty, parents, and students recognize the existence of a proper flow of functional circumstances without ineffective and counterproductive management interferences. Adherences to the correct pathways for the implementation of the multi-faceted components of the program were validated by interviews conducted, personalized observations, and pertinent documentation which was scrutinized.

It is recognized that the governance body and the leadership of the institution are not currently operating under optimal circumstances. Special encumbrances include national and regional economic turbulence, perceived insecurities, significant difficulties related to the attraction and retention of the highest caliber professional educators, a lower student population in some segments of the secondary school division, logistical and cost impediments related to the acquisition of resource materials, and other special features which are not deemed prudent to state in this document.

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

- Despite the aforementioned administrative and operational challenges the governance body and the leadership are recognized and applauded for the creation and utilization of an effective series of policies;
- There is support for maintaining a strong adherence to the accreditation responsibilities provided within the structure and under the auspice of the Southern Association of Colleges and schools and the Parent Organization, AdvancED;
- The vision and the support for a strong commitment to the continuous school improvement planning, including all positive action which has been achieved since the previous Quality Assurance Review which was conducted March 12-15, 2001; and
- The tenacious conveyance of unselfish and tireless spirit and actions permeates all the major and peripheral components of the program.

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

- Continue to provide meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote alternatives to the special encumbrances identified in the narrative.

**Finding:** Escuela Bella Vista 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:**

The school provides a well defined and articulated curriculum for instruction of students throughout the school, from the Pre-K through grade 12. Curricular materials include a mission statement for each subject area and grade as well as a matrix which outlines the various goals and objectives, instructional activities, assessment strategies and resources required to master the curriculum. Classroom visitations revealed students are actively involved in the lessons of the day, using higher-order thinking skills and exhibiting enthusiasm for their activities. Those students who exhibit special needs are provided instructional assistance from the staff of the Optimal Learning Center (OTC). Teachers reported that the regularly scheduled meetings among and between grade levels help ensure a degree of articulation and alignment of instruction. The school has recently administered a series of NSSE based surveys and polls aimed at providing insight into the school climate on the part of all major stakeholders. Additionally, students were asked to complete an "end-of-year" teacher satisfaction survey, the results of which were used to help focus in on those teacher strategies and behaviors that were viewed as most helpful as well as those that were perhaps most problematic. The school supports an extensive use of technology including digital cameras, video beam projectors and roving television sets. There are several computer labs with Internet access as well as a wireless, internal network which supports the instructional program. While the program is extensive, attention is being directed to further enhance its effectiveness for both learning and instruction.

Over the past number of years, staff have taken time and effort to revise each curricular area, thus allowing for a relatively up-to-date instructional program. Through interviews and discussions, the team learned that this year the school is embarking on a review and revision of the total curriculum. This revision will include the electronic mapping of each area of instruction as well as the conversion of the school's major subjects to a standards-based curriculum.

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

- There is school-wide effort to revise and update the curriculum to an aligned, comprehensive PreK-12 standards based curriculum.
- An extensive, networked based computer system is available for educational and instructional purposes.

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

- Review the Action Plan timelines related to curriculum and to technology in an attempt to create a better articulated effective set of action steps, activities, and timelines, thus helping ensure successful completion of the anticipated outcomes.

**Finding:** Escuela Bella Vista has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met

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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:**

Teaching with a purpose is one of the main focuses a teacher should engage in. For a teacher to know that his teaching has been purposeful, he must document the results of his actions. EBV employs multiple types of assessments and evaluation instruments and procedures to evaluate student learning. Standardized tests include Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), PSAT, SAT, ACT, and EXPLORE. The administration meets with the faculty as a whole to share the strengths and weaknesses reported by the standardized testing results. School-wide testing data is reported in the Lighthouse and to the Board Education Committee.

Standardized test score data has generally been used to evaluate individual student performance. However, from interviews the team had with faculty and staff it was observed that this data has had limited use for program evaluation and for providing a basis for school-wide curriculum development.

EBV has engaged in gathering opinion data from all stakeholders using the National Study of School Evaluation Survey. The data was collected and reviewed by the administration and the school improvement team. Nevertheless, the team was not able to monitor if this data had been used to improve school's organizational effectiveness.

EBV, especially at the elementary level, is involved at the moment in expanding results gathering and usage efforts, and the visiting team feels that this is leading to a fair deal of excitement among the teachers. Teachers know that they will be able to see, visually through clear and strong data, that their efforts are having an effect or not. If not, then these same teachers realize that they will have the information needed in order to affect the instructional program so that students will be able to achieve at yet even higher levels.

In the elementary, the following assessments are used to measure the progress as well as overall performance for all students: Running records are available from the Reading A-Z program, writing assessments based on the 6+1 Traits, and common math assessments from the Every Day Math Program. Based on the results, students are placed in their appropriate reading level and skills are reinforced as necessary. Parents receive information through progress reports, report cards, and parent conferences, both formal and informal.

Comprehensive testing protocols employed by the OLC prior to student enrollment generate data that is used for appropriate placement and also as entry-level benchmarks against which future progress can be measured.

Recently implemented ESL testing for all middle school students has provided necessary information to implement interventions early each school year for those students in need. At the end of the last school year the ESL department undertook the testing of all middle school

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students to identify strengths and areas of weakness of their English language skills. The results were used to modify teaching objectives in the language arts classes. Continuation of this practice is planned on a yearly basis to ensure that optimum language support is given to middle school students.

In high school, IB Exam and mock-exam results are used by IB teachers to determine strengths and weaknesses of the program, for curriculum and instructional practice review, and to determine the direction of future course development. IB exam results (including the breakdown into component results) as well as the feedback on internal assessments are made available to the concerned IB teachers at the beginning of each school year. One-on-one meetings between the IB Coordinator and teachers are used to analyze results and establish objectives to handle perceived areas of weakness, even as the strengths are reinforced.

The school has developed a scheduled reporting system for the purpose of providing parent stakeholders with information about student progress. This reporting system includes progress reports distributed at mid-quarter or at any time a teacher feels the need to communicate with parents about a student's progress. Report cards are distributed at the end of each quarter. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled immediately following report card distribution at the end of the first and third quarters. Certain low achieving students obtain weekly progress reports for signature by teachers and parents.

Although assessments are in place, the team noticed little evidence of a school-wide process of ongoing data analysis and use of data to improve student performance. The team found through teacher interviews and a review of the school's assessment system that assessment information is reported to administrators, but relevant data about student performance is not impacting instructional strategies in the classroom. By improving the methods in which student performance data is shared with teachers, EBV can make better use of its assessment data for the purposes of improving instruction and individual student performance.

The school has begun to use data to steer continuous school improvement; however, the school needs a comprehensive assessment system that measures progress of all learners using a greater variety of valid and reliable measures. The collection of longitudinal data is limited. Yet, staff members have begun to analyze instructional and organizational effectiveness with the data currently available.

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

- There is evidence of EBV's initiative of implementing usage of 6+1 Traits, as well as Everyday Math and Reading A-Z; and
- EBV's continued practice of sharing results of student performance with the community members is well documented. The fact that there are teacher conferences at report card time as well as mid-term progress reports and that ITBS and IB scores are shared is important so that the community feels there is transparency.

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

- Provide a systematic and articulated process for identifying, collecting and analyzing student data on an individual and class basis, both formally and informally;
- Provide feedback of improvement in instructional practices and student performance; alignment of assessment with student expectations; and
- Ensure training of faculty and staff in gathering, analyzing and using data for purposes and instructional.

**Finding:** Escuela Bella Vista 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:**

Escuela Bella Vista has resources and services supporting its vision and purpose to ensure achievement for all students. The administration has demonstrated a commitment to recruiting and employing high quality and qualified teachers. Recruitment activities include: advertisement in publications and on websites, administrative attendance at recruiting fairs for international educators, and online document review and phone interviews. Induction activities for new teachers begin with a two-day orientation followed by the staff work week during which professional expectations, school procedures and policies are reviewed as well as scheduled in-service workshops. Professional development activities continue throughout the year with onsite faculty-led workshops, onsite masters degree program, attendance at VANAS conferences, attendance at other professional workshops/conferences, and a teacher exchange program with Woodward Academy. In compliance with board policy, the teacher evaluation process is completed by the principals and include: one formal annual evaluation for new teachers and two formal evaluations for new teachers, goal setting classroom observations, and weekly walk-throughs by all administrators. The administrators are evaluated by the superintendent and the support staff is evaluated by the appropriate administrative staff.

All financial transactions are monitored through a recognized, annually audited accounting system. An annual six-month budgeting process is utilized to review the financial needs of the entire school environment, including foreign hire housing and facility improvements. Following this review, funding is approved. Additionally, board finance committee meetings are scheduled on a monthly basis to review the current and projected financial status of the school. Resources to support the educational programs are allocated to the teachers with all purchases being

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approved by the principals and the superintendent.

EBV provides a safe, orderly environment for all including a written crisis management plan, a supervision schedule for students during non-instructional times, trained maintenance and security personnel, and twenty-four hour campus surveillance with security cameras and lighting system. The security measures implemented throughout EBV demonstrate the leadership's commitment to organize the educational environment for the benefit and safety of students. Although there have been numerous facility improvements accomplished over the recent past years, the team suggests additional attention could be given to the general upkeep of the buildings including painting and storage.

The school has organized services within the OLC to better support students with special learning needs. Personnel within the OLC include a guidance counselor, a psychologist, a special needs coordinator, and ESL coordinator, and two teaching assistants. OLC services include academic coaching/tutoring, entry-level testing for appropriate student placement, orientation about the referral process; and development of IEPs. ESL testing occurs for all middle school students to determine if students are in need of intervention strategies. Additionally, the guidance counselor implements a comprehensive college placement program for students seeking university entrance.

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

- The school has anticipated and addressed the challenge of compliance related to various currency issues within the national environment.

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

- Expand general maintenance. Although there is evidence of facility improvements, the team suggests additional additional attention to general upkeep, such as painting and storage.

**Finding:** Escuela Bella Vista 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:**

Throughout all of the Quality Assurances Review interrelationships and examination of pertinent documentation, it is obvious that the school has the extreme good fortune of being in possession of extremely vibrant and compassionate stakeholder relationships. This premise was solidified at every level of observation despite some slight pockets of limited communication opportunities.

Within the parameters of the institution's formal objectives it is clearly expressed that the school aspires to: maintain effective lines of communications among parents, students faculty, and administration; create a positive atmosphere for the development of interpersonal relationships among members of the school community whereby parents and teachers are partners in educating our students; encourage a proper appreciation of the host country, Venezuela; and to contribute something to the community through promoting student involvement in community service projects and activities. It is noteworthy to convey that all formal and informal sessions conducted with various constituencies and careful examination of support documents ,including community questionnaires and other related data, revealed that attainment was not universally achieved. A few parent limited credence gatherings where presentations were prepared revealed extremely impressive levels of positive feedback on school community spirit, sharing, and respectful co-mingling. It was further detected by various visitation contacts that considerable strategizing has been forthcoming which has resulted in more effective all inclusiveness with various modalities of communication and potential participation.

Evidence becomes profoundly transparent that all constituencies were fundamentally, and in most instances, dramatically satisfied with all major components of the operations. Most paramount of which were the commitments and high quality deliveries of the leadership, the high levels of English instruction, the depth of extra-curricular activities, energies being directed to contemporary and future school improvement planning and essences of student performances, recent physical plant enhancements, and effective community service.

More intensive focusing revealed strong appreciation for the evolutionary sustaining and intensification of strong communication through the personalized attention received from the superintendent, the principals, teachers, and support staff. Effective instruments such as the Lighthouse, e-mail, WebPages, weekly teacher informational documents, through quarterly progress reports; the EBV Citizenship Code and strong adherence to the integral features contained within the mission statement were evident. There is an uniquely strong manifestation of community service provided by the students, faculty, and administration.

The entire campus is permeated by a special ambiance predicated upon trust, love, respect, and purposeful scholastic and extra-curricular opportunities. Unfortunately, not all global educational entities reflect such commendable and unique environmental qualities. Much credit is directed to this special educational community for the creation and sustaining of a profoundly special environment.

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

- There is a special ambiance predicated upon trust, love, respect, and purposeful scholastic and extra-curricular opportunities.

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

- Continue the present venues of communication and relationships among stakeholders.

**Finding:** Escuela Bella Vista has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

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## 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's commitment to continuous improvement is made evident in a variety of ways. Perhaps the most noteworthy is the degree to which the entire instructional staff was involved in the development and eventual implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Ten small school improvement work groups, consisting of teachers, teacher assistants, students and a parent, with School Improvement Team (SIT) members serving as chairs, met regularly to create the Self Assessment Report (SAR) and the associated School Improvement Plan. A review of the school's vision and mission helped ensure alignment with the SIP and SAR. Results from climate surveys and teacher polls were also studied, the results of which helped with the creation of the schools reports and plans. Following each meeting of the SIT, completed report components were shared with the staff, community and board. The result was a SIP with four major goals relating to curriculum, assessment, technology, and an analysis of school effectiveness.

A review of the most recent Quality Assurance Report (QAR) revealed that the major recommendations were appropriately addressed and accomplished. Additionally, major goals created by the school which related to capital improvements and facility upgrades have also been addressed and completed. The school has a variety of instructional teams that meet on a regular basis to discuss individual students, study test results and formulate plans designed to address problems and improve instruction.

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

- The entire instructional faculty, together with other stakeholders, were involved in the creation of the schools Self Assessment Report. The concept of continuous improvement extends beyond that related solely to academic improvement; it also involves an ongoing attempt to upgrade and improve the school's facilities.

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

- Review and revise the School Improvement Plan to help ensure that appropriate and realistic action steps and timelines are in place.

**Finding:** Escuela Bella Vista 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. Two years 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 Stephen E. Sibley, 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.

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# Appendix

## Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Patricia Woodruff, Chair
- Cortland McKee, Team Member
- Frank Anderson, Team Member
- Peter Zeitoun, Team Member
- Priscilla De Vergara, Team Member

## 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.