



## **External Review**

# **Paschal Sherman Indian School**

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## Introduction to the External Review Process

Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance developed more than 100 years ago by American universities and secondary schools, and designed primarily to distinguish schools adhering to a set of educational standards. Today the accreditation process is used at all levels of education, and is recognized for its ability to effectively drive student performance and continuous improvement in education.

Institutions seeking to gain or retain accreditation must meet AdvancED standards specified for their institution, demonstrate high levels of or improvement of student performance if applicable, and provide evidence of stakeholder satisfaction with the operation of the institution. The accreditation standards focus on conditions and processes within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards, student performance, and stakeholder feedback.

Institutions participate in an External Review by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the accreditation criteria. The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation as it energizes and equips the leadership and stakeholders of an institution to achieve higher levels of performance and address those areas that may be hindering efforts to reach desired performance levels. External Review is a rigorous process that includes examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

The AdvancED External Review Team used the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards, but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality.

Using the evidence at their disposal, the AdvancED External Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report. The report is presented in three sections: Findings, Conclusion, and Addenda.

## **Part I: Findings**

The Findings section presents the External Review Team's evaluation of the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators. It also includes Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement identified by the External Review Team, observations of the Learning Environment, as well as Required Actions.

### **Accreditation Standards and Indicators**

Standards help to delineate what matters. They provide a common language through which an education community can engage in conversations about educational improvement, system effectiveness, and achievement. They serve as a foundation for planning and implementing improvement strategies and activities and for measuring success. AdvancED's Standards for Quality were developed by a committee comprised of effective educators and leaders from the fields of practice, research, and policy who applied professional wisdom, deep knowledge of effective practice, and the best available research to craft a set of robust standards that ensure excellence and continuous improvement. The standards were reviewed by internationally recognized experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research.

This section contains an evaluation of each of AdvancED's Accreditation Standards and Indicators, conclusions concerning Powerful Practices and Opportunities for Improvement related to each of the standards, and a description of the evidence examined by the External Review Team. Indicators are evaluated and rated individually by the External Review Team using a four-level performance rubric. The Standard Performance Level is the average of indicator scores for the standard.

**Standard 1: Purpose and Direction**

Purpose and direction are critical to successful institutions. A study conducted in 2010 by the London-based Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) reported that "in addition to improving performance, the research indicates that having a sense of shared purpose also improves employee engagement" and that "...lack of understanding around purpose can lead to demotivation and emotional detachment, which in turn lead to a disengaged and dissatisfied workforce."

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the institutions' vision that is supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.		2.33	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.1	The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Minutes from meetings related to development of the school's purpose</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Examples of communications to stakeholders about the school's purpose (i.e. website, newsletters, annual report, student handbook)</li> <li>•Observations</li> <li>•Communication plan to stakeholders regarding the school's purpose</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Purpose statements - past and present</li> </ul>	2

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
1.2	The school's leadership and staff commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Agendas and/or minutes that reference a commitment to the components of the school's statement of purpose</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Observations</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•The school's statement of purpose</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li></ul>	2
1.3	The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Observations</li><li>•Agenda, minutes from continuous improvement planning meetings</li><li>•Communication plan and artifacts that show two-way communication to staff and stakeholders</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•The school continuous improvement plan</li></ul>	3

### ***Opportunities for Improvement***

### ***Indicator***

1. Establish a regular process to review and reinforce the mission of the school. The review team found evidence that most stakeholders were able to articulate the school's mission statement and indicated that there is fidelity in the application of that mission to the work of the school. The mission statement is not, however, being reviewed and reinforced on a regular basis.. Establishing a process for doing so may emphasize and help maintain the central focus of the organization and provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to reflect upon how that mission and vision is being realized throughout the school year.

1.1

**Standard 2: Governance and Leadership**

Governance and leadership are key factors in raising institutional quality. Leaders, both local administrators and governing boards/authorities, are responsible for ensuring all learners achieve while also managing many other facets of an institution. Institutions that function effectively do so without tension between the governing board/authority, administrators, and educators and have established relationships of mutual respect and a shared vision (Feuerstein & Opfer, 1998). In a meta-analysis of school leadership research, Leithwood & Sun (2012) found that leaders (school and governing boards/authority) can significantly "influence school conditions through their achievement of a shared vision and agreed-on goals for the organization, their high expectations and support of organizational members, and practices that strengthen school culture and foster collaboration within the organization." With the increasing demands of accountability placed on institutional leaders, leaders who empower others need considerable autonomy and involve their school communities to attain school improvement goals. Leaders who engage in such practices experience a greater level of success (Fink & Brayman, 2006). Similarly, governing boards/authorities that focus on policy-making are more likely to allow school leaders the autonomy to make decisions that impact teachers and students and are less responsive to politicization than boards/authorities that respond to vocal citizens (Greene, 1992).

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution has leaders who are advocates for the institution's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The institution's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and school effectiveness.		3.0	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Governing body policies, procedures, and practices</li> <li>•Staff handbooks</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Communications to stakeholder about policy revisions</li> <li>•School handbooks</li> <li>•School Board Policies and Board Minutes</li> </ul>	3



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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Governing body minutes relating to training</li><li>•Communication plan to inform all staff on code of ethics, responsibilities, conflict of interest</li><li>•Assurances, certifications</li><li>•Governing body policies on roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest</li></ul>	3
2.3	The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•School improvement plan developed by the school</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Communications regarding board actions</li><li>•Agendas and minutes of meetings</li><li>•Interviews</li></ul>	3
2.4	Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Examples of collaboration and shared leadership</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Observations</li><li>•Examples of decisions aligned with the school's statement of purpose</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Examples of decisions in support of the school's continuous improvement plan</li></ul>	3
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Minutes from meetings with stakeholders</li><li>•Survey responses</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Interviews</li></ul>	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Governing body policy on supervision and evaluation</li><li>•Supervision and evaluation documents with criteria for improving professional practice and student success noted</li><li>•Interviews</li></ul>	3

### ***Opportunities for Improvement***

### ***Indicator***

1. Develop a plan to keep students enrolled at PSIS through their 9th Grade year and increase efforts to develop and strengthen the academic and social skills necessary for students to transition successfully to the next level of their educational careers.

2.1

At present, a relatively large number of students leave Paschal Sherman before the end of their 9th grade year. Of course, there are a variety of reasons for that mobility, many of which the school does not have the resources to address. A closer, more detailed examination of the reasons that students leave the school may nevertheless be in order. Deeper analysis and better understanding may help the school develop an action plan to keep those students and better prepare them for the next steps in their educational careers. At the same time, it may prove revealing to more closely examine and understand the challenges PSIS students face as they approach the transition from PSIS to other schools. Have they developed the academic and social skills they will need in order to be successful? How do you know? What data are you collecting to inform your understanding of how students manage these transitions and how they fare once they leave the school?

2. Collectively explore opportunities to increase parent and community member involvement and participation in the life of the school. While some parents are very involved in Paschal Sherman Indian School's activities and programs, a large number are not. Of course, increasing parent involvement in a school with Paschal Sherman's particular demographics and unique status as a residential boarding school is a significant challenge, but that does not mean the situation can't be improved. Continue to create opportunities where messages home are positive and supportive, where celebrations and gatherings are frequent and meaningful, and where student successes and achievements are featured and reinforced.

2.5

**Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning**

A high-quality and effective system has services, practices, and curriculum that ensure teacher effectiveness. Research has shown that an effective teacher is a key factor for learners to achieve to their highest potential and be prepared for a successful future. The positive influence an effective educator has on learning is a combination of "student motivation, parental involvement" and the "quality of leadership" (Ding & Sherman, 2006). Research also suggests that quality educators must have a variety of quantifiable and intangible characteristics, which include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The school's curriculum and instructional program should develop learners' skills that lead them to think about the world in complex ways (Conley, 2007) and prepare them to have knowledge that extends beyond the academic areas. In order to achieve these goals, teachers must have pedagogical skills as well as content knowledge (Baumert et al, 2010). The acquisition and refinement of teachers' pedagogical skills occur most effectively through collaboration and professional development. These are a "necessary approach to improving teacher quality" (Colbert et al, 2008). According to Marks, Louis, & Printy (2002), school staff that engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, & Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective schools, "supports teachers by creating collaborative work environments." Institutional leaders have a responsibility to provide experiences, resources, and time for educators to engage in meaningful professional learning that promotes student learning and educator quality.

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

Standard			Standard Performance Level
The school's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning.			2.17
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.1	The school's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lesson plans</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Representative samples of student work across courses</li> <li>•Observations</li> <li>•Descriptions of instructional techniques</li> </ul>	2

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Observations</li><li>•Common assessments</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li></ul>	2
3.3	Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Observations</li><li>•Student work demonstrating the application of knowledge</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li></ul>	2
3.4	School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Observations</li><li>•Recognition of teachers with regard to these practices</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li></ul>	2
3.5	Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Common language, protocols and reporting tools</li><li>•Agendas and minutes of collaborative learning committees</li><li>•Calendar/schedule of learning community meetings</li><li>•Observations</li><li>•Interviews</li></ul>	3
3.6	Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Observations</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Examples of learning expectations and standards of performance</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Samples of exemplars used to guide and inform student learning</li></ul>	2

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Observations</li><li>•Professional learning calendar with activities for instructional support of new staff</li><li>•Interviews</li></ul>	2
3.8	The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keeps them informed of their children's learning progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Observations</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•List of varied activities and communications modes with families, e.g., info portal, online, newsletters, parent centers, academic nights, open house, early release days</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li></ul>	2
3.9	The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student's educational experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Observations</li></ul>	3
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Observations</li><li>•Interviews</li></ul>	2
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Observations</li></ul>	2
3.12	The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Observations</li><li>•Interviews</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li></ul>	2

**Powerful Practices**

**Indicator**

1. Although a formal structure of adult advocacy and support has not been created in the school, a large majority of PSIS students report they feel safe, supported, valued, and known by adults in the school. The visiting team interviewed a large number of students, many of whom reported that they loved the adults in the school, teachers as well as residential school staff. "My friend family is here", one student said, meaning that although his biological family was not close by, he felt cared for and loved at PSIS. Every student reported that he or she had a trusted adult to talk to at the school. Relationships at PSIS are strong and deep.

3.9

Still, even within the climate of caring support that presently exists, opportunities for improvement should be considered. Establishing a formal structure for tracking and providing intervention and support for every student in the system should be examined. (Westside High School's CPR program might provide one example of how to proceed in this regard). Giving students a stronger leadership role throughout the system should also be considered. Building future leaders is a strong component of the mission of the school, but there does not presently seem to be a formal structure for identifying and supporting student leaders throughout the system. Students also reported that they very much enjoyed participating in events like "Rachel's Challenge" and wish they had more opportunities to participate in programs of a similar nature. (Perhaps student leaders could play a stronger role in bringing such programs to the school).

**Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems**

Institutions, regardless of their size, need access to sufficient resources and systems of support to be able to engage in sustained and meaningful efforts that result in a continuous improvement cycle. Indeed, a study conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Pan, 2003) "demonstrated a strong relationship between resources and student success...both the level of resources and their explicit allocation seem to affect educational outcomes."

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staffs who are well qualified for their assignments. The institution provides a safe learning environment for students and staff. The institution provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. The institution ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard		Standard Performance Level	
The school has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.		2.57	
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.1	Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school's purpose, direction, and the educational program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Observations</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Assessments of staffing needs</li> </ul>	2
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Examples of efforts of school leaders to secure necessary material and fiscal resources</li> <li>•School schedule</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Observations</li> <li>•School calendar</li> </ul>	3

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.3	The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Observations</li> <li>•Documentation of compliance with local and state inspections requirements</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Documentation of emergency procedures such as fire drills, evacuation and other emergency procedures.</li> <li>•System for maintenance requests</li> <li>•Maintenance schedules</li> </ul>	3
4.4	Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Observations</li> <li>•Schedule of staff availability to assist students and school personnel related to finding and retrieving information</li> </ul>	2
4.5	The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Technology plan and budget to improve technology services and infrastructure</li> <li>•Assessments to inform development of technology plan</li> <li>•Survey results</li> <li>•Policies relative to technology use</li> </ul>	2
4.6	The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Student assessment system for identifying student needs</li> <li>•Agreements with school community agencies for student-family support</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Social classes and services, e.g., bullying, character education</li> <li>•List of support services available to students</li> <li>•Observations</li> </ul>	3



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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
4.7	The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•List of services available related to counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Budget for counseling, assessment, referral, educational and career planning</li><li>•Description of IEP process</li><li>•Description of referral process</li></ul>	3

### **Powerful Practices**

### **Indicator**

1. Residential and school building facilities are beautifully designed, well-maintained, and a source of pride to students, staff, and community. Facilities can either detract from or support the mission of the school. They are the context in which everything happens, and at Paschal Sherman, they support a climate in which students and staff feel safe, supported and valued. In interviews, many students expressed pride in the beauty and cleanliness of their school and, if they were residential students, in the order and cleanliness of their living quarters. Several mentioned the lack of graffiti in the buildings, and many mentioned a shared sense of pride. Staff and community members expressed many of the same sentiments.

4.3

### **Opportunities for Improvement**

### **Indicator**

1. Insure that highly qualified staff are teaching in their areas of strength in all classrooms in the school. In interviews and observations, external review team members learned that no system seems to exist at PSIS to insure that all teachers are being placed in classes that most effectively utilize their areas of strength and training. In addition, in one specific instance, team members learned that there does not appear to be a specific 9th Grade English curriculum aimed at developing the content area understanding and literacy skills students will need as they transition from Paschal Sherman Indian School to the next stage in their educations. The team recommends that these areas of concern be investigated and addressed.
2. Develop a plan to provide staff the training, support, and skills necessary to use technology more effectively to improve teaching and learning throughout the building. Through interviews and classroom observations, team members found evidence that technology resources presently available to students and staff at PSIS are not being used as effectively as possible to improve teaching and learning at the school. The team recommends that leadership and staff collectively explore the present reality in terms of classroom use of technology at Paschal Sherman and develop plans to more effectively use technology to increase student engagement and learning.

4.1

4.4

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**Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement**

Systems with strong improvement processes are moving beyond anxiety about the current reality and focusing on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, that is, data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, & Wohlstetter (2007) from the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California indicated that data can shed light on existing areas of strength and weakness and also guide improvement strategies in a systematic and strategic manner (Dembo et al., 2005). The study also identified six key strategies that performance-driven systems use: (1) building a foundation for data-driven decision making; (2) establishing a culture of data use and continuous improvement; (3) investing in an information management system; (4) selecting the right data; (5) building school capacity for data-driven decision making; and (6) analyzing and acting on data to improve performance. Other research studies, though largely without comparison groups, suggested that data-driven decision making has the potential to increase student performance (Alwin, 2002; Doyle, 2003; Lafee, 2002; McIntire, 2002).

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in 30,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine strategies to improve student performance. The institution implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained, and the institution demonstrates progress in improving student performance and institution effectiveness.

Standard			Standard Performance Level
The school implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and school effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.			2.6
Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.1	The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Brief description of student assessment system including range of data produced from standardized and local assessments on student learning and school performance</li> </ul>	2
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze, and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> </ul>	2
5.3	Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Interviews</li> <li>•Accreditation Report</li> </ul>	2

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Indicator		Source of Evidence	Performance Level
5.4	The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Description of process for analyzing data to determine verifiable improvement in student learning</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•Examples of use of results to evaluate continuous improvement action plans</li><li>•Evidence of student readiness for the next level</li><li>•Evidence of student growth</li><li>•Observations</li><li>•Evidence of student success at the next level</li><li>•Interviews</li></ul>	3
5.5	Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Observations</li><li>•Minutes of board meetings regarding achievement of student learning goals</li><li>•Communication plan regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders</li><li>•Survey results</li><li>•Sample communications to stakeholders regarding student learning, conditions that support learning, and achievement of school improvement goals</li><li>•Accreditation Report</li><li>•School quality control procedures for monitoring information about student learning, conditions that support learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals</li><li>•Interviews</li></ul>	4

**Powerful Practices**

**Indicator**

1. Leadership and staff communication with stakeholders is frequent and comprehensive.

5.5

In interviews, several parents mentioned that Paschal Sherman's "open door" policy means that parents and community members feel welcome in the school and, as important, they feel that communication flows both ways. Both leadership and staff send information and updates home to parents on a frequent basis, and the school's website is inviting and accessible. Invitations to celebrations and events at Paschal Sherman are widely disseminated in the community and beyond. Paschal Sherman's spring Sunflower Festival, for example, is attended by students and adults from schools and locations as far away as the Methow Valley.

The annual spring Sunflower Festival is another significant way the school develops and nurtures regional connections, communicates and shares native culture and values, and builds bridges to the larger community. In addition to the festival, school leadership and staff have made other efforts to build relationships and open lines of communication to the larger community as well. Two examples of this are the strong connections recently made to the Methow Valley Interpretive Center and the supportive relationship developed with the Methow Valley Arts Alliance.

## Learning Environment

Every learner should have access to an effective learning environment in which she/he has multiple opportunities to be successful. The Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (ELEOT) measures the extent to which learners are in an environment that is equitable, supportive, and well-managed. An environment where high expectations are the norm and active learning takes place. It measures whether learners' progress is monitored and feedback is provided and the extent to which technology is leveraged for learning.

Observations of classrooms or other learning venues are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes per observation. External review team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a 4 point scale with 4=very evident, 3=evident, 2=somewhat evident, and 1=not observed. The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the 7 learning environments included in ELEOT.

### ELEOT

<b><i>Environments</i></b>	<b><i>Level</i></b>
A. Equitable Learning Environment	2.36
B. High Expectations Environment	2.3
C. Supportive Learning Environment	2.67
D. Active Learning Environment	2.62
E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	2.24
F. Well-Managed Learning Environment	2.83
G. Digital Learning Environment	1.77

## Part II: Conclusion

### Summary of the External Review

In off-site and on-site review sessions, the AdvancED External Review Team examined artifacts and evidence provided by the institution. During the on-site portion of the review, the team reviewed additional artifacts, collected and analyzed data from interviews, and conducted observations.

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The external review team lead evaluator met with the school principal a number of times in the months before the actual review, and he returned after the review to present Exit Report findings, first to the school superintendent and principal and then to all staff members at the end of the school day.

Extensive communications with team members took place electronically before the day of the external review visit, but the team met as a group for the first time on Friday, April 12th. Team members spent the entire day at the school, from 7:30 in the morning until after 4:00 PM in the afternoon, observing classrooms and programs, conducting interviews, reviewing documents, gathering evidence, and reaching consensus on the final report.

Paschal Sherman's principal, leadership team, and staff were well-prepared for the review. All stakeholders connected to the school had been involved to a greater or lesser degree in the internal review process prior to the external review team's arrival. The principal and building leadership team led the internal review process in the school and did the majority of the work themselves, but they shared their work sought feedback from staff and stakeholders along the way.

During the course of the external review, team members observed in 20 classrooms for a period of no less than 20 minutes each. They interviewed 30 students, 13 certificated staff, 7 classified staff, three parents, the school superintendent, the building principal, the residential facility manager, and participants on the school's leadership team. Since Paschal Sherman Indian School is a relatively small school, by the end of the day team members felt they had gained a good overview of the school's culture, climate, practices, and programs, and they felt the feedback provided in the Exit Report and in the final report to the school was accurate and grounded in evidence.

Using the evidence collected, the team engaged in dialogue and deliberations concerning the degree to which the institution met the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and Indicators.

A number of themes and patterns emerged during the external review visit that the team attempted to capture in Promising Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Required Action statements. The

review team's overarching finding is that staff members at Paschal Sherman Indian School know their students well and care about them deeply. Students reported feeling safe, supported, valued, and known. All students interviewed reported that they could identify at least one adult in the school with whom they had a connection and with whom they could talk.

Because a large number of Paschal Sherman students board at the school during the school year, the relationships formed with adults at the residential facility provide another opportunity for adults to get to know students more deeply than might happen in a traditional public school. As a result, the team found evidence that students felt loved and supported in that arena as well. One student reported that although his biological family lived some distance away, his "friend family" surrounded him at the school and in the residential facility.

Team members found evidence that residential leadership and staff are experienced, committed, and deeply involved in the lives of the boarding students. Seven days a week, residential staff is involved organizing activities, providing tutoring and supervised time for homework, providing personal and social support, and connecting students to in-house and outside support services as needed.

Overall, the connection between the regular school staff and the residential staff seems strong. One area of possible improvement that emerged in interviews was the need to strengthen communications and mutual support between some members of the regular school staff (particularly those who have recently been hired) and the residential school staff. Thought should be given to developing an induction process for newly-hired certificated and non-certificated staff members so they better understand from the beginning of their employment the mission, vision, and culture of the school and the residential facility. As part of that process, staff in the residential facility and school could continue to explore opportunities to develop systems of communication and mutual support to benefit Paschal Sherman students.

In addition to a positive school climate, the team noted the impact of beautiful, well-kept facilities on the climate of the school. Students, staff, parents, and community members all expressed pride in the cleanliness and beauty of the buildings and the grounds, and that pride is evident in how well even the students contribute to maintaining the cleanliness and appearance of the physical plant. One student noted that one rarely sees graffiti in the school, and there is collective resentment when, on rare occasions, it does appear. The physical plant is another indicator of the strong commitment that tribal and school leaders and the Paschal Sherman community have made to the young people in their school, and it is another reason that students feel valued and cared for.

In addition to providing a high-quality physical plant, the Paschal Sherman school community have also made a strong commitment to providing extraordinary staffing and support resources to students at PSIS. Class sizes are relatively small, and the counseling, nursing, and psychological support provided to students is unusual in a school of this size. AmeriCorp volunteers at Paschal Sherman Indian School also augment the professional staff and provide invaluable assistance to staff as well as to students.

Maintaining the balance between providing support and holding students accountable for behavior and academic performance is not always easy. And that struggle was apparent at Paschal Sherman as well. Because of demographics and a number of other factors, Paschal Sherman leaders, staff, and students



face a number of challenges, not least of which is to improve the levels of student learning in a number of academic areas. In the last two years, time has been allotted for teachers to begin working collaboratively in professional learning communities to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the building. Initial positive trends in student academic performance are a hopeful indicator that progress is being made.

Still, much work remains to be done in identifying priority standards, aligning curriculum, and developing common assessments to measure and improve teaching and learning in the school. Review team members noted that raising expectations for student learning and increasing academic rigor throughout the school is a significant opportunity for improvement for leadership and staff at the school. Connected to that challenge, the team specifically mentioned the need for leadership and staff at Paschal Sherman to develop and use formative assessment data more effectively to adjust curriculum and drive instruction. They further recommended that teachers more frequently and intentionally use research-based instructional strategies in their classrooms to increase student engagement and learning in all content areas in the school..

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team evaluated the learning environment by observing classrooms and general operations of the institution. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology.

During the on-site review, members of the External Review Team conducted twenty classroom observations, all of which lasted a minimum of twenty minutes. Using data from these observations, the team evaluated the quality of instruction and learning that took place classified around seven constructs or environments: equity, high expectations, support, engagement, progress monitoring and feedback, management, and use of technology. The strongest patterns that emerged among these were that classrooms were orderly well-managed, many students were actively involved in their learning, and students were receiving teacher attention and support as needed. Areas receiving the lowest scores included the use of technology to support teaching and learning, progress monitoring and feedback, and establishing high expectations for learning. While all of these areas deserve ongoing attention and effort, obviously those constructs with the lowest rankings deserve special consideration as areas of needed improvement.

These classroom observations, combined with evidence gathered throughout the day from interviews and school documents, led team members to cluster the majority of their recommendations for improvement and required actions around the need to raise expectations and strengthen the academic core of the school so that students have the skills and knowledge needed to be successful at each stage of their educational careers. Recent commitments to provide leadership, time, and structures of support for staff to meet and work collaboratively to improve the quality and depth of teaching and learning in the school is a commendable first step.

In all ways, the school was prepared for the visit. Team members were made to feel welcome and

appreciated; the

workspace and support provided was excellent (with special thanks to Katie, the AmeriCorp volunteer, for her assistance to the team). Students, as well as leadership and staff, were friendly, honest, supportive, and genuine in their interactions with team members throughout the entire day.

The morning overview provided by the principal was a well-prepared, honest, and helpful introduction to the school which team members appreciated. Added to that, the warm, personal welcome extended by the school superintendent to team members at the beginning of the day made everyone feel comfortable and quite at home.

Documents provided online and in hard copies in binders in the workroom allowed team members to more deeply explore and find answers to questions that arose as they worked. The team workspace and food provided made the team's visit a pleasant experience and made an intense job a little bit easier.

The AdvancED External Review team recommends that the AdvancED Accreditation Commission grant Paschal Sherman Indian School in Omak, Washington, a new five-year term of accreditation.

## Required Actions

1. Create an action plan and provide staff training to increase the use of research-based instructional strategies aimed at raising expectations, more deeply engaging students, and increasing the level of academic rigor and performance in classrooms throughout the school .

Primary Indicator or Assurance: 3.3

In interviews, observations, and reviews of data and documents, the external review team determined that the level of student engagement and learning at PSIS could, in all probability, be raised by developing and implementing a systemic, focused plan to raise expectations and increase levels of student engagement and learning in classrooms throughout the school. Increasing levels of student engagement and improving academic outcomes is not a small challenge, however, and the plan may involve adjusting the work of the PLC's, using formative data more effectively and implementing embedded, ongoing staff development training in the use of high yield instructional strategies.

2. Develop and implement a plan to more effectively use formative and summative data to adjust curriculum, increase instructional effectiveness, provide feedback to students, develop interventions, and improve student learning in all classrooms and content areas.

Primary Indicator or Assurance: 5.3

The heart of the work of professional learning communities is to develop assessments based on established priority standards, to administer those assessments regularly and frequently throughout the school year, and then to collaboratively analyze the data collected and use it to revise curriculum, adjust instruction, and provide feedback support to students as they strive to meet their learning targets.

Professional learning communities have been established at Paschal Sherman Indian School, and teams appear to have made much progress in a relatively short period of time. That said, the external review team found evidence that some staff members are unclear about how to use data to improve teaching and learning in their classrooms and content areas, and the systemic use of data does not appear to be embedded to any great extent in school improvement efforts and PLC work presently underway at PSIS. Developing and implementing a plan to improve professional practice in the use of data has the potential of moving teaching and learning at the school to a higher level.

## Part III: Addenda

### *Next Steps*

The institution 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 Powerful Practices section to maximize their impact on the institution.
3. Develop action plans to address the Required Actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the Required Actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
5. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Required Actions. Institutions are required to respond to all Required Actions. The Required Actions should be completed before the Accreditation Progress Report is submitted. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to monitor and ensure that the system has implemented the necessary actions to complete the Required Actions. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the completion of the Required Actions and the resulting improvement.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

### *Celebrating Accreditation*

Following the External Review, the Team submits the final report to AdvancED for review and for action by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and upon the institution. Upon receiving its accreditation, the institution should share its achievement with internal and external communities.

### *About AdvancED*

In 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), both founded in 1895, along with the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form AdvancED: one strong, unified organization dedicated to education quality. In 2011, the Northwest Accreditation Commission (founded 1917) joined NCA CASI and SACS CASI as part of AdvancED. AdvancED is the world's largest education community, representing 30,000 public and private schools and systems across the United States and in 75 countries worldwide and educating 16 million students. The Northwest Accreditation Commission joined the AdvancED network in 2011.

## External Review

Paschal Sherman Indian School

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Today, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI, NWAC, and SACS CASI share research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help educational institutions continuously improve.