

Rapid City Catholic School System

Oral Exit Report

**Quality Assurance Review Team
District Accreditation**

A Picture of AdvancED



World's Largest Educational Community

- 23,000 public and private schools
- 30 states and Navajo Nation
- Department of Defense Education Activity
- 65 countries
- 15 million students
- 18,000 volunteers
- 3 million plus teachers

A Picture of AdvancED

Dedicated to Advancing Excellence in Education through:

Accreditation

- Standards, continuous improvement, quality assurance
- **NCA CASI and SACS CASI** are the accreditation divisions of AdvancED

Professional Services

- Professional development, technical assistance, conferences, consulting

Research and Innovation

- Publications, resources, tools, evaluation
- NSSE serves as our research and innovation division of AdvancED



District Accreditation

A national protocol for school systems committed to systemic, systematic, and sustainable improvement

- Builds the capacity of the system and its schools to increase and sustain student learning
- Stimulates and supports improvement and effectiveness throughout the system

District Accreditation

- Ensures all people, processes, departments and operations of the system work in concert
- Strengthens efforts to meet accountability requirements
- Encourages growth beyond compliance to achieve excellence
- Promotes continuous not episodic improvement

Systems Approach

District Accreditation applies a systems approach to improvement. It examines how all elements of the school system work in concert for the benefit of student learning. It looks for examples of systemic, systematic, and sustainable improvement.

- **Systemic improvement** – using and aligning the interdependent functions within and across the district to produce improvement
- **Systematic improvement** – fostering improvement efforts that are regular and predictable at all levels of the district
- **Sustainable improvement** – maintaining improvements over time

Pillars of Accreditation

To earn and maintain District Accreditation, districts must:

1. Meet the **AdvancED Quality Standards**
2. Engage in **Continuous Improvement**
3. Demonstrate **Quality Assurance** through Internal and External Review



Expectations

District

- Meets the *AdvancED* Standards for Quality Systems
- Identifies and guides the implementation of a systemic continuous improvement process
- Monitors its schools through a quality assurance process
- Prepares and hosts a QAR visit every five years

Schools

- Meet the *AdvancED* Standards for Quality Schools
- Implement the district's continuous improvement process
- Participate in the district's quality assurance process

Purpose & Role of the Quality Assurance Review Team

1. Determine the extent to which the district meets the *AdvancED* standards.
2. Assess the efficacy of the district's improvement efforts.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the district's methods for quality assurance.
4. Provide high-quality feedback with clear recommendations and actionable next steps.
5. Make an accreditation recommendation.

Activities of the Quality Assurance Review Team

- Artifacts/documents review
- Interviews
- School visits
- Observations
- Professional deliberations

Interviews with Stakeholders

- During the on-site Quality Assurance Review, team members interviewed:
 - 7 Administrators
 - 82 Teachers
 - 20 Support Staff
 - 37 Parents, community, and business partners
 - 78 Students
 - 9 Board members

TOTAL of 233 stakeholders

Criteria Used to Arrive at the Team's Findings

- When reviewing evidence to arrive at its findings, the team:
 - Sought a district perspective;
 - Pursued evidence that could be corroborated through multiple sources;
 - Examined the context and capacity of the district in relation to its vision, mission, and beliefs; and
 - Applied the criteria for accreditation.

Structure of Team's Findings

Strengths

- Strong and effective practices, processes, or systems which benefit the school district

Commendations

- Significant accomplishments in meeting and/or exceeding accreditation standards and requirements

Challenges

- Limitations and/or barriers that may be impacting (or have the potential to impact) the district's performance and effectiveness

Recommendations

- Actions that will enhance district effectiveness and improve student learning

Strengths

- Shared respect between students and staff.
- Collaboration is evident between all stakeholders
- Catholic identity is heard, seen and lived
- There is a strong sense of community with high expectations for learning.
- Stakeholders have numerous opportunities to be involved in the school.
- Commitment to faith based services

Commendations

The Quality Assurance Review Team commends Rapid City Catholic School System for:

- **All stakeholders are committed to the successful fulfillment of the systems mission to develop personal and academic excellence in the catholic tradition.**
- **Strong leadership from the Governing body and system administrators provide direction and support for the achievement of the system's strategic design plan.**

Commendations

- A family like culture supports the mission of the system and promotes collaboration among and between students, staff, parents, and community stakeholders to build a community of learners.
- Open and effective communication enhances the relationship between the system and its stakeholders.
- The students live the mission of the school.

Challenges

- **Managing growth and movement to Terra Sancta.**
- **Adequate resources to fund system programs and activities.**
- **Managing enrollment in challenging economic times.**

Recommendations

The Quality Assurance Review Team recommends that Rapid City Catholic Schools System :

- Gather, analyze and use data designed to measure the effectiveness of system programs, departments and processes
- Expand the disaggregation and analysis of student achievement data to monitor and guide decisions related to curriculum and instruction
- Monitor the implementation of the technology plan and prioritize goals to most effectively meet the technology needs of students and staff.

Next Steps

- Written report of findings submitted within 30 days
- After receipt of the report, the district is expected to:
 - Review and communicate the findings.
 - Address the recommendations.
 - Monitor accreditation standards on ongoing basis.
 - Monitor strategies for improvement.
 - Submit the Accreditation Progress Report.

Accreditation Recommendation

- The Quality Assurance Review Team recommends to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that the Rapid City Catholic School System be awarded District Accreditation as a quality school system.
- Once reviewed and approved by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, the district and all its schools are granted a 5-year term accreditation.

Final Thoughts

- On behalf of the Quality Assurance Team, I extend:
 - Our **appreciation** for your hospitality, support, and professionalism;
 - Our **respect** and acknowledgement of the quality of the school district; and
 - Our **congratulations** for your progress toward achieving District Accreditation as a quality system.

*AdvancED District Accreditation
for Quality Systems
www.advanc-ed.org*

*...helping schools
and school systems
improve student
learning*

