

# Report of the Quality Assurance Review Team for Foundations for the Future

Lynn McKinnon, Owner

---

---

Review Dates: 03/10/2008 - 03/14/2008



*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).*

# Quality Assurance Review Report

## Contents

About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI .....	3
Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review .....	4
Summary of Findings .....	5
Commendations .....	5
Recommendations .....	7
Next Steps .....	7
Standards for Accreditation .....	9
Standard 1. Vision and Purpose .....	9
Standard 2. Governance and Leadership .....	10
Standard 3. Teaching and Learning .....	11
Standard 4. Documenting and Using Results .....	13
Standard 5. Resource and Support Systems .....	14
Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships .....	15
Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement .....	16
Conclusion .....	18
Appendix .....	19
Quality Assurance Review Team Members .....	19
AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools .....	19

## 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.

---

## 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 Foundations for the Future in Kennesaw, Georgia on 03/10/2008 - 03/14/2008.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed the Owner, 4 members of the administrative team, 7 students, 14 parents, and 2 teachers. In addition, team members of Community members (2) were interviewed. The team also reviewed documents, student performance data, and other artifacts provided by the school. Specifically, the team examined the school's systems and processes in relation to the seven AdvancED standards:

- Vision and Purpose
- Governance and Leadership
- Teaching and Learning
- Documenting and Using Results
- Resource and Support Systems
- Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
- Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED standards focus on systems within a school and systematic methods of attaining high student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of the standards lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards. The Quality Assurance Review team used the AdvancED standards to guide its review of the school, looking not only for adherence to individual standards, but also for how the school functions as a whole and embodies the practices and characteristics of a quality school.

Through its examination of the school's adherence to the standards, the Quality Assurance Review team identified the following commendations and recommendations.

### Commendations

The Quality Assurance Review team commends the school for the following strengths and accomplishments. While additional strengths are noted in the detailed review of each standard that appears later in this report, the commendations listed below are the strengths that the team believes are most deserving of being highlighted.

- **The school has exemplary communication processes and collaborative relationships with stakeholders that support continuous improvement.**

Through interviewing administrative staff, parents, teachers, and students, it was evident that all parties had a clear understanding of the operation of the school because of the quality of communication and collaboration among stakeholders.

Effective communication builds and supports mutual understanding essential for achieving the school's goals. Further, quality schools have a high level of meaningful collaboration and communication with parents and other stakeholders.

- **Foundations facilitates learning for each student by implementing the objectives and activities set forth in a research-based curriculum as well as incorporating standards set by the National Association for the Education of the Young Child and the state of Georgia.**

Information about effective curriculum implementation was made evident through interviews with parents, administrative staff, and teachers. These stakeholder groups articulated a thorough and comprehensive understanding of Creative Curriculum and the benefits it affords students, parents, and staff.

The implementation of the Creative Curriculum has resulted in teachers being more confident and competent in using teaching strategies with students and excellent communication practices with parents to share students' learning experiences.

- **Staff have in-depth knowledge about the Creative Curriculum, resources to support the curriculum, and assessment tools and data so that results are used to promote a high level of learning for students.**

Interviews with staff revealed the level of their information about the curriculum, use of assessment results, expectations of students, and communication with stakeholders. The QAR team noted that the library had curricular resources that teachers use in addition to a comprehensive set of online curriculum and assessment resources while parents confirmed receipt of assessment results through conferences, Discovery Reports, and online information.

Teachers have content knowledge and instructional skills to deliver high quality curriculum.

- **Foundations utilizes its resources to provide a warm, welcoming environment that is excellent for teaching and learning and suited for the needs of its learners so that they excel in their learning.**

Through interviews with stakeholders, the QAR team learned intricate details about the school's resources and their use to support student learning.

The school manages its resources responsibly and efficiently to provide a productive and effective learning environment.

- **The school incorporates excellent security procedures on all school property for staff, parents, and other stakeholders.**

Upon entering the school facility, the Quality Assurance Review team received firsthand knowledge about how the security systems within the school operated. While touring the school, staff made the team aware of other security measures.

The school takes security precautions to provide a safe, warm, and welcoming school environment in which the needs of the whole child are paramount.

- **The school uses technology effectively to support instructional and operational procedures.**

The QAR team observed the availability of technology and its use to support instructional and operational procedures.

The use of technology resources maximizes support for teaching, learning, and organizational effectiveness.

- **Foundations provides extensive professional learning opportunities for all staff.**

The QAR team reviewed the professional learning calendar in addition to interviewing stakeholders.

By providing extensive professional learning, Foundations is building a quality staff to provide quality care for children, thus supporting student learning and parent satisfaction. Quality schools provide sufficient opportunities for staff to participate in professional learning activities.

## 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.

- **Design a comprehensive School Improvement Plan with a more in-depth profile that provides information to guide student learning.**

Through interviews with stakeholders and a review of the School Improvement Plan, assessment data, and reports, the QAR team discovered the availability of substantive data that would enrich the content of the School Improvement Plan to support continuous improvement.

By designing a comprehensive School Improvement Plan, the school can better serve stakeholders on a long-term basis. The profile serves as an information source for guiding teaching and learning.

- **Refine the mentoring program so that it is clearly delineated with sufficient details – clarifying how it works and eliminating ambiguities for staff.**

Interviews with stakeholders revealed that the mentoring program needs further clarity so that all staff understand how it works.

Research shows that productive mentoring, peer relationships, and team building support the implementation of school improvement initiatives.

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

## Next Steps

The school should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the commendations section to maximize their impact on the school.
3. Develop action plans to address the recommendations made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the recommendations.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the school's efforts to improve student performance and school effectiveness.
5. 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.

---

# Standards for Accreditation

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the Foundations for the Future 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:**

Foundations for the Future's vision, mission, and values are evident throughout the school. Stakeholders provided the QAR team input and feedback that the school used to develop its direction. Stakeholders interviewed had considerable knowledge about the vision. During interviews, the team noted that stakeholders referred consistently to the school's vision and purpose. And, Foundations for the Future has plaques throughout the school on which the vision and mission statement are printed.

Aligned with the school's vision for student learning, the Creative Curriculum provides teachers, families, and community with a strong, organized system for teaching children. The QAR team reviewed student assessment data that show the progress of students in mathematics, reading comprehension and writing, as well as guide the teaching and learning process.

Foundations collects its data in two systems: CreativeCurriculum.net online and ProCare customer and employee data system. The CreativeCurriculum.net site tracks the educational performance of individual students, classes, and the entire school through quarterly assessments. ProCare keeps basic contact information data on parents and children. Using these substantive data sources to develop a comprehensive profile would provide information to guide school improvement.

Communication between teachers and families sustains their shared vision to maintain a high quality of education and keeps parents actively involved in their children's learning. As a collaborative team, staff and families have a vision of high standards for learners as the school moves in a direction to meet stakeholders' expectations. The staff envisions continuing to share ideas about varied teaching strategies to improve learning experiences.

The QAR team reviewed Foundations for the Future's website and school handbook for parents and staff which serve as communication tools for conveying the vision and mission. And, teachers email a Discovery Report daily to parents to provide information about their children's activities. Also, just outside each classroom is a file box with a folder for each child wherein teachers store information for parents.

The QAR team noted several successful tools that support the vision including the Creative Curriculum used for education and learning through play, computer laboratory, and online information, email messages, and newsletters for parents. In addition, the leadership reinforces

---

the school's vision and mission through meetings and professional learning opportunities.

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

Parent and staff communication is a definite asset to the program. The school has a strong hold on the Creative Curriculum. Teachers use assessment results to adjust learning experiences to meet the needs of each student. Families, staff, and other stakeholders thoroughly understand and support the vision and mission of the school that is aligned with the curriculum. Further, representatives from various stakeholder groups provided input into the formation of the vision and mission.

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

- Develop a more comprehensive profile that provides in-depth information to guide student learning.

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

## Standard 2. Governance and Leadership

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

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

Foundations for the Future has a management team that designs and monitors operating policies and procedures to ensure the effective operation of school improvement efforts. To provide effective leadership, the management team meets weekly to review relevant issues. The team consists of six staff members: head of school, business director, admissions director, front desk administrators (2), and classroom advisor.

Interviews with stakeholders revealed that initially two staff members served in leadership roles. Increasingly over the past four years, these roles have been realigned and assigned to an administrative staff of six. The school views the expansion of staff positively in terms of strengthening the quality of services available to stakeholders. For example, the director of admissions is solely responsible for admissions policies and procedures that are well-defined and published. With the assistance of the admissions director, parents are at liberty to make numerous observation visits in preparation for enrolling their children in the school. Parents applauded the school for its openness and promptness in scheduling appointments for visits both during the admissions process and after enrollment.

Along with having a precise admissions process, the school ensures its accountability for student performance and school effectiveness. Interviews revealed that parents have had extremely positive experiences that they were thrilled to share. Generally, each parent felt that his or her child receives experiences that complement the child's developmental level and that student learning has soared. Additionally, parents indicated that the online daily Discovery Report expanded their involvement in their child's learning and interpersonal communication. Parents and community representatives felt that they have a sound partnership with the school. The

school now has a Parent Partnership Group that had its initial meeting in January, 2008, with record attendance. The group's focus is assisting with classroom activities, special events, and fundraisers for projects like the new computer laboratory. Community building is a major priority for this school year and will continue as a viable focus for the school.

With support from the administrative team, the head of school performs the executive, administrative, and leadership roles. While having primary responsibility for the overall operation of the school, she has a strong team that shares responsibilities such as personnel and financial management. Personnel practices are an essential area of focus. Interviews revealed that the quality of the staff has continually improved over the past four years. Administrators and teachers have moved to a more cohesive, supportive, collegial level of functioning where staff members feel valued and empowered. Hiring procedures focus on strategies to more precisely select candidates who will make a smooth transition as a staff member.

Additionally, the management team provides stakeholders with meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership. The mentor teacher program provides ongoing opportunities for leadership, and the individual talents of teachers lead to changes in assignments and responsibilities commensurate with their abilities and skills. For example, one teacher will become a co-teacher in the elementary program. The comprehensive evaluation system provides useful data for the management team to make decisions about assignment changes, promoting staff, and awarding bonuses.

The administration provides resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs including the Creative Curriculum for its preschool programs and Georgia Performance Standards for kindergarten through grade three. The school controls school-sponsored curricular and extracurricular activities such as martial arts and gymnastics. Every child has an opportunity to participate in age-appropriate learning activities, depending on his or her developmental level. The learning environment consists of an attractively designed facility that serves children in preschool through grade three. In the regular program, the vision is to serve elementary students through grade five. Currently, provisions are made in the afterschool program for elementary students through grade five.

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

The school is readily responsive to incorporating changes that result in school improvement. The leadership makes a concerted effort to incorporate research-based practices into the culture of the organization so that management components become systemic.

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

None.

**Finding:** Foundations for the Future 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:**

Foundations uses research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students by providing for differing levels of ability, development, and learning styles. The scope and sequence of Creative Curriculum provides objectives and methodologies that are age-appropriate and progress from the earliest stages of development through the pre-school years. Georgia Performance Standards are the foundation for the school-age curriculum.

Through classroom observations, the QAR team noted that student-teacher ratios met the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC) and Bright From the Start standards, and children were engaged in age-appropriate activities. Adjacent to classrooms is a common space with a home-like environment that separates the school into three communities. The space has a living room/kitchenette area that permits children to have homestyle meals and small group activities such as storytime and cooking. Teachers shared that their schedules allowed for planning before and after school or during naptime. The director of family services checks lesson plans weekly and assists teachers and parents in their support of children with special behavioral, social, physical, or academic needs. The curriculum fosters the active involvement of students in the learning process with opportunities to appeal to individual interests, strengths, and needs, including students with special needs. The school demonstrates an appreciation for, and sensitivity to, the diversity in the school community.

Foundations has a schoolwide plan for professional learning, planning, and support; administrators have the capacity to document professional learning completed by teachers. The school requires its teachers to earn 10-20 hours of professional learning each school year, an expectation that exceeds the minimum state requirement. And, the school will schedule three days next school year for teacher instruction in addition to regularly scheduled inservice that is a facet of staff meetings.

As stated during interviews with teachers and administrative staff, Foundations provides an array of services. It offers various in-house professional learning opportunities for teachers. Teachers select mentor teachers who are assigned to help new teachers. Creative Curriculum benefits: 1) students, by meeting them at their performance level; 2) parents, by giving them comprehensive feedback about their child's daily activities, growth, and needs through the use of daily Discovery Reports and regularly scheduled parent/teacher conferences; and 3) teachers, by helping them feel secure in the implementation of the curriculum with its comprehensive scope and sequence.

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

Through the use of Creative Curriculum resources and reporting processes, Foundations offers support to all students, teachers, and parents within the school family. The school uses all aspects of the curriculum to enhance student learning. Daily feedback from the school permits parents to receive, discuss, and reinforce what students learn.

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

None.

**Finding:** Foundations for the Future has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional"

---

and has met this standard for accreditation.

## Standard 4. Documenting and Using Results

**Standard:** The school enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and school effectiveness.

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

The QAR team reviewed numerous documents showing the progress of students. There is a precise system for documenting and reporting the progress of children and staff. The school has demographic data, online access to student performance data, and findings from the Bright from the Start program. Teachers use the format presented in Creative Curriculum to document students' progress in the classroom, and the team viewed assessments used to measure student progress. The school communicates regularly with staff, students, and parents to share student progress. Reports clearly describe what students know so that staff can determine what needs to be done to improve student learning.

Additionally, the team viewed the school's policy on keeping staff and parents informed about what is going on at the school, including any changes. The team observed different ways that the staff communicates with parents including using the Discovery Report. To consistently provide information for staff, Foundations has weekly and monthly meetings and three in-house professional learning sessions aligned with the instructional program and the assessment process.

In reviewing other procedures, the QAR team found that through updating the child's files and progress, the school shows its staff the strengths and growth of each child and adapts its program to accommodate challenges in the class to meet those needs. Class sizes are small, and children get more one-on-one attention from the teacher to assist students with growth in their performance. The program maintains a focus on instructional goals, and it has a culture that honors learning.

Further, the team observed that tools are being used to reinforce a clear-cut understanding of the curriculum, resources, and assessment. The school has an efficient system for keeping track of student progress, reporting information to stakeholders, and using results to guide student learning.

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

Having a strong hold on the Creative Curriculum and keeping progress reports up-to-date are positive features of the program. The school documents parent and staff communication, student progress, and classroom changes and adjustments made to meet the needs of students.

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

None

**Finding:** Foundations for the Future has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional"

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:**

Foundations has resources and services to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students, including those with special needs. It has invested in a research-based curriculum that provides instructional methods to meet and support learning for all students. A school-wide plan includes an excellent process for reporting student progress to parents and for providing professional learning, planning, and support for teachers.

With more than sufficient staff, the school meets or exceeds NAEYC and Bright From the Start standards for classroom ratios; the school focuses on maintaining student-teacher ratios to meet its vision and purpose. The QAR team observed that the school allocates ample resources to provide an effective educational program. Technology is an integral part of the instructional and operational programs. Computers are in every room, making online tools available and accessible for every teacher and student. Having recently installed a computer laboratory, computers are available for students in kindergarten through grade three.

In relation to financial resources, the school has a business manager who budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs, plans for improvements, and monitors the use of resources and financial income and expenditures. After considerable research, planning, and allocation of resources, the school was a specially designed facility for preschool and elementary school-aged children. With a supportive environment for student learning, Foundations is a facility that is attractive and well maintained, both indoors and outdoors, with sufficient resources for its safe, orderly, and effective operation.

The school provides handbooks with written security information and crisis management procedures for stakeholders and for notifying parents if needed. The school incorporates excellent security procedures for staff, parents, and other stakeholders. Building access is coded and permits entry to a lobby area where parents can network and the school has meetings and informal gatherings. Leaving the lobby area involves additional security measures for entering the classroom area. Playground areas are safe and secure with ground covers, fencing, and locks as applicable to limit open access by both adults and children. Stakeholders practice safety measures during drills to prepare for an emergency.

The director of family services provides guidance services for the school. Being in every classroom twice weekly teaching the ExpressYourself Communication and Music programs, she is familiar with the children and their needs. Teachers request her support with classroom management ideas, and she models strategies and techniques when she is in the classroom. Moreover, she provides appropriate support for students with special needs and makes referrals to community resources. The school uses state and local school district resources for students who need special services. The family services director also assists parents in their support of children with special behavioral, social, physical, or academic needs.

---

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

The school demonstrated strengths in numerous areas: use of Creative Curriculum resources and reporting processes; teacher hiring and professional learning processes; meeting NAEYC and Bright From the Start standards; and the investment of fiscal resources to continually improve all areas of the school's programs and environment.

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

None.

**Finding:** Foundations for the Future has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" 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:**

Foundations fosters an exceedingly effective communication process and relationship with its stakeholders. The school provides a variety of means for parents to obtain meaningful and timely information about the school and student progress. Strategies include Discovery Reports, weekly staff and operational meetings, newsletters, and daily documentation of children's learning progress. Teachers provide child-specific information to parents on a daily basis and to other teachers on a regular basis.

The website, brochures, and Bright Side (a community newspaper), provide information to the community about the school. A major priority is making children's learning visible to children and parents. Discovery Reports are emailed to parents daily with photos and comments so parents can follow their children's learning experiences and communicate with teachers about student learning. These reports serve to document the child's learning activities as well as being a communication tool.

In addition to online parent communication, the school conducts parent conferences twice a year in November and May when parents meet with teachers to review the Progress Checkpoints report for their child. Conferences facilitate keeping parents informed about the child's progress and partnering to plan future learning goals. To further facilitate interaction, the school provides surveys for stakeholders' input, and it has formed a Parent Partnership Group for communicating with stakeholders for feedback, suggestions, and parental involvement.

Another aspect of the school's communication is its visibility among stakeholders that involves branding and promoting its image through using a public relations plan and forming partnerships. An impressive systemic process supports communication with stakeholders focusing on the vision, purpose, student learning expectations, student progress, support services, and goals for improvement.

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

Parents receive detailed information about their child's progress through daily reports, one-on-one parent communication, along with providing parent survey feedback to give their perceptions of the school.

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

None.

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

## Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

**Standard:** The school establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

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

Foundations is committed to a continuous process of improvement by maintaining high standards for employee professional learning. The school has developed a system that allows extensive professional learning for all staff. Along with having sessions as a part of staff meetings, the school will schedule three days next school year for professional development opportunities to facilitate strengthening performance-related knowledge and skills.

The kindergarten through grade three program is preparing for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Testing will be conducted in the spring. Standardized testing will provide data to allow public notification about test results and effective parent communication about the specific progress of students. The school has organized the Parent Partnership Group to facilitate communication with stakeholders.

Interviews with stakeholders revealed that the leadership, teachers, and parents support the vision and purpose of the school with a high value on student learning. Leadership shares decision-making, problem solving, and leadership opportunities with stakeholders. The staff meets weekly to deal with issues that arise.

Additionally, the school supports the work of teachers through the mentoring program. Mentors are available to assist teachers in their efforts to manage the teaching-learning process. During interviews, teachers stated that they value their relationships with other stakeholders and they have respect and concern for each other as they work collaboratively to enhance student learning.

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

Foundations provides extensive professional learning for staff.

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

- Improve the teacher mentoring program to clarify how it works and eliminate ambiguities

for staff

- Refine the School Improvement Plan.

**Finding:** Foundations for the Future has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" 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 Lynn McKinnon, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for their hospitality throughout the visit. The team wishes the school and its students much success in the quest for excellence through SACS CASI accreditation with AdvancED.

# Appendix

## Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Pat Summers, Chair
- Bridgett Tolbert, Team Member
- Libby Jackson, Team Member
- Marsha Banks, 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.