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Standards Assessment Report

Ord Jr-Sr High School

1800 K Streets Ord, Nebraska 68862-1602

Prepared for the AdvancED Quality Assurance Review

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Standards Assessment Report

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Introduction & Purpose of the Report

Introduction

The Standards Assessment Report is designed to serve as a valuable self-assessment and as a tool to help schools prepare for their Quality Assurance Review. The report is based on the AdvancED standards, which serve as the foundation of the accreditation process. In order to earn and maintain accreditation, schools must meet the AdvancED standards, engage in a process of continuous improvement, and host a Quality Assurance Review at least once every five years.

The Standards Assessment Report engages the school community in an in-depth assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. In completing the report, the school identifies the data, information, evidence, and documented results that validate that it is meeting each standard. This self assessment helps the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

The Standards Assessment Report also serves as the primary resource for the Quality Assurance Review Team, which uses the report to prepare for the visit to the school. The team uses insights gathered from the report and information obtained during the on-site visit to provide feedback to the school and to make an accreditation recommendation.

Structure of the Report

The Standards Assessment Report is organized by the AdvancED standards. For each standard, the report includes four sections: 1) considering the evidence; 2) indicators rubric; 3) focus questions; and 4) overall assessment. Each section reinforces the other sections by asking a question that builds on the prior section.

The section entitled "considering the evidence" allows school personnel to think about the practices and/or processes being implemented and identify evidence that will support its responses to the indicators rubric and focus questions. This section helps school stakeholders engage in a discussion about how it knows it is adhering to the standards. The section is not intended to engage the school in a collection of evidence, but rather in thoughtful dialogue about how it can demonstrate that quality practices, conditions, and results are occurring in the school. The section asks, "What practices/processes are being implemented, and are they effective?" or said another way, "How do we know we are doing what we say we are doing?"

The indicators rubric enables the school to assess the degree to which practices and/or processes are in place that indicate adherence to the standard and indicators. For each indicator, the school may check if the practices and/or processes are highly functional in the school, operational, emerging, or not evident. The school should use the rubric as an opportunity to ask itself challenging questions and to respond with accurate answers geared toward self-improvement. After completing the rubric, the school can quickly see areas of strength and opportunity. The section asks, "To what degree are the noted practices/processes in place?"

The focus questions allow the school to expand on and think more deeply about the responses to the indicators rubric. The focus questions provide an opportunity for the school to describe the systematic and systemic processes that are in place to support its ability to meet the indicators. The section asks, "How are the practices/processes implemented?"

The overall assessment describes how well schools are implementing practices and/or processes and the impact these practices and/or processes have on student results and overall school effectiveness. The overall assessment helps schools judge where they are in relation to each standard. The "operational" level is required in order to demonstrate meeting the standard. The section asks, "How well are we meeting the standard overall?"

Demographics

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Public/Non-public: | Public |
| School Type: | AdvancED - High School |
| Charter School: | N/A |
| Enrollment: | 283 |
| Gender at School: | Co-Ed |
| Beginning Grade: | 7 |
| Ending Grade: | 12 |
| Alternate Beginning Grade: | |
| Alternate Ending Grade: | |
| Location Type: | Rural |
| Gender at School: | Co-Ed |

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.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it commits to a shared purpose and direction. The school establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the school's vision that is supported by school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school effectiveness. The school's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Not Evident | Little or no evidence exists |
| Emerging | Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice |
| Operational | Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented |
| Highly Functional | Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented |

Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

1.1 Establishes a vision for the school in collaboration with its stakeholders:

Operational

1.2 Communicates the vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support:

Operational

1.3 Identifies goals to advance the vision:

Operational

1.4 Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the school, its students, and the community:

Operational

1.5 Ensures that the school's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process:

Operational

1.6 Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate:

Operational

Focus Questions:***1. What is the process for establishing and building understanding of and commitment to the vision statement among stakeholders?***

The process for establishing and building understanding of and commitment to the vision statement began during the spring semester of 2007 when the entire K-12 staff identified three specific target areas for school improvement. The process is ongoing, particularly our attempts to build commitment to our school's vision statement. Stakeholders are encouraged to promote our vision by modeling those characteristics we aspire to, and what we intend to represent as a school community. Maintaining a high level of involvement amongst stakeholders is critical, it is achieved by maintaining an active steering committee, which includes members that represent a cross section of our administration, faculty, and community. The steering committee is largely responsible for reviewing, updating, and promoting our school's vision. Ord Jr./Sr. High School has a very active student council. This group supports our school improvement efforts by providing the student body with rewarding experiences that build confidence, camaraderie, and representation that offers our administration with valuable feedback. Over the course of the last two years our steering committee has recognized the importance of communicating our purpose, our vision, and our "happenings" to the public. Great strides have been made, we now circulate a newsletter that details important projects happening in our classrooms. Our website is heavily promoted and constantly updated. Our Journalism class creates, and distributes a weekly flier for students and community members. We have an orientation process that includes an Open House/Curriculum Night for parents and students. Each parent and student are to adhere to our "Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Learning". The "Bill of Rights" serves as a foundation to clearly define the high standards of conduct and achievement expected of members of our school community.

2. What is the school's process for developing a profile and systematically maintaining and using information that describes the school, its students, and their performance?

Member's of our steering committee have the primary responsibility for reviewing and maintaining our school profile. Information obtained from our stakeholders, the State of the Schools Report, and the Nebraska Department of Education's guide to continuous improvement serve as the backbone of our school profile. Development and maintenance of our profile begins in the summer months prior to the beginning of the Fall Semester. Over the course of the year as new data becomes available the profile is updated and systematically reviewed. Our school profile is maintained to provide an accurate picture that reflects our program data, demographics, student achievement, and perceptual data. The profile is made available on the Ord Jr./Sr. High School website for our stakeholders, and general public's viewing pleasure.

3. How does the leadership ensure that the school's vision, purpose, and goals guide the teaching and learning process?

Our school's leadership ensures that the school's vision, purpose, and goals guide the teaching and learning process by placing a premium on the following:

First and foremost high quality instruction is at the heart of making our vision statement a reality. We strive to strategically place our instructors in assignments where they add the most value to our school community. Our teachers are committed to a collaborative team teaching/learning approach that operates from the premise all students are capable of learning, and high standards of conduct and achievement will be met. Furthermore, our teachers readily accept the role they play in our students success and failure. It is our belief that instructors must be willing to go the extra mile to prompt student success. To this end the Administration uses formative, and summative evaluations that are aligned with our school's vision statement. Respectful, substantive, honest teacher evaluations are viewed not as a hoop to jump through, but as an opportunity to improve instruction.

Secondly, our staff is committed to our shared vision. Our theme for the 2008-2009 school year is "We're On The

Same Team.” Our vision statement acts like glue, and provides our school community with a strong foundation that shows us the way. Our school’s vision statement places emphasis on personal and professional growth, developing leadership capacity amongst our staff and students, and adding value to others.

Finally, the administration and faculty members work in tandem while pouring over the data that drives our school improvement process. As an educational team we are continually seeking ways to improve instruction, ultimately improving student achievement. Not only do we seek to identify trends, but also seek ways to utilize individual data to personalize learning/instruction.

4. What process is used to ensure that the vision and purpose of the school remain current and aligned with the school's expectations for student learning and school effectiveness?

The process to ensure that the vision and purpose of our school remains current and aligned with the expectations for student learning and school effectiveness include an annual audit of our school’s vision and mission statement by our steering committee. Prior to the beginning of each school year the steering committee systematically reviews learning environment feedback received from school community stakeholders through professional development, surveys, and observations. The Ord Jr./Sr. High School educational team is committed to providing our students with a learning environment that is safe, inclusive, and utilizes cutting edge instructional practices to get the most out of each and every student.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school has committed to a shared purpose and direction. The school has clearly defined expectations for student learning aligned with the school's vision that is supported by school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school effectiveness. The school's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 2. Governance and Leadership

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

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has leaders who are advocates for the school'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 school's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

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Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school operates under the jurisdiction of a governing board that:

2.1 Establishes policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the school:

Operational

2.2 Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership prerogatives of the administrative head of the school:

Operational

2.3 Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations:

Operational

Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school has leadership that:

2.4 Employs a system that provides for analysis and review of student performance and school effectiveness:

Operational

2.5 Fosters a learning community:

Operational

2.6 Provides teachers and students opportunities to lead:

Operational

2.7 Provides stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership:

Operational

2.8 Controls curricular and extracurricular activities that are sponsored by the school:

Operational

2.9 Responds to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction:

Operational

2.10 Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel:

Operational

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for establishing, communicating, and implementing policies and procedures for the effective operation of the school?

Ord Jr./Sr. High School is a public school that is authorized and maintained by laws of the State of Nebraska applying to Class III districts. The public school ultimately belongs to the people. The people elect a school board to represent them and determine local educational policy, goals, and objectives. Those policies, goals, and objectives are outlined in the Ord Board of Education policy book, teacher handbooks, and individual student handbooks. The administration is responsible for communicating, and implementing policies set forth by the local board of education. Administrative duties and functions are evaluated in terms of the contribution made to improving instruction, student achievement, and the learning environment. However, the mere execution of policy and directives is not viewed as quality administration. Vision, initiative, resourcefulness, and communication are the essential elements of quality governance and leadership.

Throughout the school year staff members are encouraged to provide feedback to the administration specifically targeting educational policies, and operational procedures that will improve student achievement. The Ord Jr./Sr. High School administration maintains an open door policy that encourages open, honest, and respectful communication. Furthermore, faculty meetings, content area meetings, and daily announcements provide the Ord Jr./Sr. High School administration ample opportunities to emphasize policies, goals, and objectives necessary for effective operation of our school.

Annually staff members are required to checkout/sit down with the administration and review student performance data, perceptual data, professional development plans, personnel evaluations, and discuss specific educational policies and procedures that work, need amended, or done away with entirely. The administration appraises the information provided and makes recommendations to the Ord Public Schools Board of Education for consideration. The Board then determines whether or not the recommendations, changes, or additions merit further consideration.

Recommendations deemed worthy of consideration are then referred to the appropriate committee for more in depth analysis.

2. What process does the school's leadership use to evaluate school effectiveness and student performance?

To evaluate school effectiveness, the leadership team at Ord Jr./Sr. High School utilizes a wide variety of formal and informal instruments. Documentation that enables the leadership team to evaluate school effectiveness include: formative and summative teacher observations, post-graduate surveys, percentage of students involved in extra-curricular activities, dropout rate, number of students pursuing higher education, and perceptual data gathered from questionnaires distributed to stakeholders. When possible, information gathered from these various sources is reviewed by our steering committee and then information determined to be constructive is passed along to the staff. It is critical for the administration and staff members to work collaboratively to enhance our school's effectiveness. Staff members that participate in the decision making process regarding school effectiveness feel empowered, and are much more likely to take ownership of suggested initiatives. However, the administration does reserve the right to make executive decisions when and where necessary to improve the learning environment and ultimately student achievement.

The process to evaluate student performance is continual. First, students' individual marks are monitored weekly, parents of students that are performing below desired levels are notified and plans are set in motion to help students reach desired levels of achievement. Second, "snapshots" are taken throughout the year to evaluate student performance such as: Terra Nova Standardized Tests, State Reading and Writing Assessments, Assessments of State and Local Standards, ACT Scores, Accelerated Reader, and STARS. It is our belief when evaluating student performance we must consider the comprehensive picture. Thirdly, our SAT (Student Assistance Team) is very active as we take a proactive approach when concerns arise regarding student classroom performance. Finally, we are just beginning to train a team of teachers in RTI (Response to Intervention). We feel this will allow our educational team to take our goal of providing ALL students with a quality education to the next level.

3. In what ways are stakeholders, including staff, given opportunities to provide leadership and to contribute to the decision-making process?

Stakeholders, including staff are given opportunities to provide leadership, and contribute to the decision-making process on a daily basis. Our small supportive staff, close proximity to one another, and open door policy all add value when including stakeholders in the decision-making process. Examples of staff members providing leadership and contributing to the decision making process include: Curricular adjustments that sometimes involve changes in requirements for graduation, peer coaching for reading across the curriculum, meaningful leadership roles delegated throughout the school community, active participation of the student council and other student groups in planning school events, and mentoring of new teachers. All stakeholders are viewed as valuable contributors to our school mission and vision on a daily basis. Stakeholders are continually reminded that their suggestions for improving our school community are always welcome. Developing leadership capacity amongst our staff members is an ongoing process that takes the best selfless efforts of everyone to become a reality.

4. What policies and processes are in place to ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation?

The policies and processes in place to ensure equity of learning opportunities include: the establishment of local assessments aligned with the state standards that are free of bias, placing special needs students in the least restrictive environment, encouraging all students to take a college prep course load, meeting with parents to discuss their students' future plans and devising a class schedule that meets their needs, and following all federal, state, and local mandates.

Innovation within our school community is certainly promoted. Staff members efforts to grow professionally are continually supported. Individuals participating in professional growth activities are encouraged to share new and innovative teaching strategies that improve student achievement with the entire staff. Finally, educational team players that demonstrate a commitment to innovation in the classroom are recognized through formal celebrations, and informal tokens of appreciation.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school has leaders who are advocates for the school's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and systematically 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 school's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation. While these processes and conditions are being implemented, the implementation is not systemic across the school, and the results are varied. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 3. Teaching and Learning

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

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it 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.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

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| Not Evident | Little or no evidence exists |
| Emerging | Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice |
| Operational | Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented |
| Highly Functional | Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented |

Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

3.1 Develops and implements curriculum based on clearly defined expectations for student learning:

Operational

3.2 Promotes active involvement of students in the learning process, including opportunities for them to explore application of higher-order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning:

Operational

3.3 Gathers, analyzes, and uses data and research in making curricular and instructional choices:

Emerging

3.4 Designs and uses instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that are research-based and reflective of best practice:

Operational

3.5 Offers a curriculum that challenges each student to excel, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity:

Operational

3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning:

Operational

3.7 Provides for articulation and alignment between and among all levels of schools:

Operational

3.8 Implements interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning:

Operational

3.9 Monitors school climate and takes appropriate steps to ensure that it is conducive to student learning:

Operational

3.10 Provides comprehensive information and media services that support the curricular and instructional programs:

Operational

3.11 Ensures that all students and staff members have regular and ready access to instructional technology and a comprehensive materials collection that supports the curricular and instructional program:

Operational

Focus Questions:

1. How does the school ensure that the curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments are aligned and articulated across grade levels in support of the expectations for student learning?

Ord Public Schools has created and incorporated a regular School Improvement Steering committee and has all faculty and staff involved. Formal efforts include the application of all standards from state testing processes, from which curricular and strategic adjustments are made. Departmental and Subject area discussions occur, including both elementary and secondary personnel. Ord Public Schools is actively working with our consortium and consultants to accurately demonstrate implementation of all State Assessment requirements.

Stakeholder involvement has had various forms, from direct parent/taxpayer involvement to various data-gathering survey formats.

On a less formal note, both professionalism and collegiality are integral to the system. Senior High, Middle School, and Elementary faculty and administration converse in a wide range of venues, from casual conversation to organized formal meetings, which critically examine expectations and student success. The high level of staff professionalism, and the support and encouragement of administration, make the alignment and articulation of “across grade level” support for student success a continual and

Evidence:

Examples of evidence that the curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments are aligned and articulated across grade levels are best demonstrated by discussions in light of our specific SIP goal of Reading Improvement.

Curriculum:

Initially the faculty explored reading as a cross-curricular activity, but specifically we focused on several targets. Our goal at the senior high was to be preventative instead of reactive, so we targeted the 7th and 8th grades particularly, and all levels in general. We added a “FAME” reading project to intervene with junior high groups whose STARS, terra nova tests, and teacher informal assessments indicated a deficiency. We have changed the class schedule for junior high students to allow for more instructional minutes in core areas. The seventh grade, for example, receives

25% more instructional time in the reading-intensive areas of English and Social Studies. It is our desire that the increased teacher exposure in classes that read intensively will help emphasize, create productive guided practice, and make teacher assessment easier and more accurate.

All English classes have doubled the amount of Accelerated Reading requirements as well as allotted significant class time for reading while under teacher supervision. Since the principles of AR include addressing student need based on tested reading abilities, the program allows for individualized mastery level challenge, and the testing process is significant and immediate feedback.

ongoing process. We added two elective classes to the curriculum; one entitled Reading Enhancement and the other, Writing Enhancement. Not intended to be remedial in nature, a cross section of abilities is represented and diverse lessons are an attempt to address growth for all levels of readers and writers.

As the faculty reviews state standards and other data such as the Terra Nova scores, we have been flexible in curriculum design in an effort to address weaknesses as they occur in given grade levels and class groups.

We believe that school climate that emphasizes the critical nature of reading, and simply holds students accountable to improved reading has helped to validate reading as a critical life skill.

Our media center has a very diverse collection of research materials, both on the shelves and in technological media, and our Accelerated Reading program continually increases in book offerings and interest-area diversity.

We are currently exploring an "Instructional Technology Specialist" project which we hope will enhance our ability to utilize modern technology to address reading improvement, as well as all other curricular areas.

Our media center is open to students and rarely, if ever, has a student been unable to enter and access any and all materials that might enhance the reading experience.

Instructional Strategies. Since teaching of reading is traditionally an elementary school focus, we recognized early on that secondary faculty was probably deficient in their ability to apply instructional strategies to teach reading, as our college preparation did not address this area. We did note that we have several faculty members with a high degree of expertise in the area, primarily in the elementary school. We arranged for those reading experts to meet with secondary faculty to discuss ideas to be more successful at the teaching of reading.

Assessments:

State required language arts assessments have provided concrete accessible data to align our measurement instruments to our reading improvement goal.

In addition, we consult the STARS and Terra Nova data as well as peripherals such as the ACT testing scores.

Inherent in the Accelerated Reader program is a testing and assessment component which helps add a piece to the puzzle. Our adjustments in the implementation of the Accelerated Reader program are a case in point. The numbers didn't indicate clear, measurable growth, so we have enhanced the curricular approach and will watch closely to see if we can discover significant reading improvement as time passes. Since improved reading is a goal that can and is influenced by factors other than curriculum and school decisions, our mission is to consider as much concrete data as possible to reduce the likelihood that our general observations are founded and our adjustment decisions are fact-based.

2. In what ways does the school ensure the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that facilitate achievement for all students?

Again, the climate at Ord Public Schools involves a professional interest and administrative support of such information. In formal implementation, depending upon target issues, we self-incorporate and self assess regularly. A case in point is that the SIP has focused on student reading skills improvement as a specific target. To that end, members of the faculty with expertise in the teaching of reading, as well as contemporary strategies and research

indicators, presented materials to all faculty, to validate the importance of the mission, and to give specific classroom activities to all levels and subject areas. This endeavor put practical, effective tools in the hands of all faculty and those tools were incorporated.

A second case in point is a regular meeting of the faculty who teach middle school children. Our system has a K-6 building, and a 7-12 building, so informed and involved faculty from both regularly meet to discuss assessment results, student needs and achievements and expectations, and possible transitional challenges.

In less formal incorporation, our faculty demonstrates professional inquiry and collegiality—we share the things that work, both in our own discovery processes, and in data garnered from workshop attendance, etc.

3. What processes are implemented to ensure that teachers are well-prepared and effectively implementing the curriculum?

Ord Public Schools has made great efforts to formally encourage, support, implement, and assess the application of all state standards items, and that data supports the assertion that a well-prepared faculty is succeeding. Our faculty has 100% of endorsed teachers presenting in and endorsed area. The system also encourages and supports attendance of educational workshops and other opportunities to continue to enhance faculty preparation to teach specific materials. The small nature of our system allows for the practical daily application of shared strengths and concerns on an informal basis. For example, the three members of the Senior High Language Arts faculty confer almost daily with ideas, questions, observations and curricular materials. The same is true of the math, history, business, and science departments, as well as elementary and secondary exchange. Again, this is a testament to the professional commitment of the faculty and administration.

In addition, our faculty has systemic processes that facilitate the inclusion of general curricular areas with the array of Special Education and learning disabilities needs. Teacher inclusion in daily instruction, Special Education personnel time with needy students, and formal IEP discussions contribute to prepared faculty, both in curricular mastery and in student needs modifications.

We have capitalized upon our preparation skills. For example, Nancy Welniak has taken the personal initiative to broaden her expertise in reading instruction, and we have incorporated her instruction at the target areas, particularly the 7th grade. Historically we did the same with Elaine Novotny. In other words, we arranged for faculty with the most preparation at the critical 7th and 8th grade juncture.

4. How does the school provide every student access to comprehensive information, instructional technology, and media services?

Ord Public Schools not only provides opportunities for student information and technology access, but also systemically requires it. Classes such as history, English, speech, science, business, and debate regularly immerse students in the world of informational technology. The Language Arts classes all require Media Center use, ranging from reading with Electronic Bookshelf in the Elementary and reading Accelerated Reader in the Secondary. All curricular levels incorporate information and instructional technology that is curricular-specific.

The computer labs are a busy place, and most curricular areas immerse classes into it from time to time.

Certainly, in an unlimited-budget-world, there is more that could be done, but given financial constraints, the system has dedicated itself to making this available, and immersing students in it regularly.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school 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. The school demonstrates evidence of alignment between the curriculum and instructional practices with systematic implementation across the school. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students regular feedback to improve their performance. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

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.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it 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 interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

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Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

4.1 Establishes performance measures for student learning that yield information that is reliable, valid, and bias free:

Operational

4.2 Develops and implements a comprehensive assessment system for assessing progress toward meeting the expectations for student learning:

Operational

4.3 Uses student assessment data for making decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning processes:

Operational

4.4 Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness and uses the results to improve student performance:

Operational

4.5 Communicates the results of student performance and school effectiveness to all stakeholders:

Operational

4.6 Uses comparison and trend data of student performance from comparable schools in evaluating its effectiveness:

Emerging

4.7 Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance:

Operational

4.8 Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations:

Operational

Focus Questions:

1. How is the assessment system currently used in your school to analyze changes in student performance?

Our school utilizes a combination of assessment systems, both formal and informal to determine student progress in Reading and Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies.

Sources: Terra Nova and ACT (norm-reference tests)

STARS State Standards (criterion-referenced tests)

Grade Point Accumulative (GPA)

Classroom Assessments (teacher-made)

Classroom Assessments (textbook-based)

Teacher Observation

School Profile

Internal assessments and teams meetings such as the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process determine the need for parent contact or placement. Progress reports and regular grading periods allow for consistent data analysis and tracking of student progress. Computer based grading systems are used by the entire faculty to track student grades in real time.

2. What are you doing to ensure that assessment results are timely, relevant, and communicated in a way that can be used by teachers, students, parents, and external stakeholders to aid the performance of individual students?

Teachers provide regular student progress communicated to parents every 5 weeks in the form of progress reports. Also, teachers communicate via e-mail and telephone to parents concerning student progress. Our Power School computer program allows parents and students to access grades and progress at any time. A student “down” list is made available to teachers each week.

On an annual basis, the Ord High School Report card is published with test results and includes our school profile. State Writing Assessment results are currently made available to stakeholders.

3. How are data used to understand and improve overall school effectiveness?

Data are used to understand and improve school effectiveness in several ways. Guidance prepares a student profile to help understand student interests and backgrounds while developing their courses. This is a piece that could be shared with teachers as well.

Both external (ACT, Terra Nova) and internal (teacher-generated) assessments are used to measure student achievement. Also, graduates of OHS are surveyed to determine program strengths and weaknesses. Graduation rates are one final measure.

4. How are teachers trained to understand and use data in the classroom?

Teachers must take a Statistical Methods class as part of the process to earn a teaching degree. There is no formal training as in-service for teachers, so teachers do not rely on this type of training. Rather teachers use their individual area of expertise to assist each other in various aspects of data interpretation and use in the classroom.

Teachers form our “data team” and they have ongoing discussions about student performance in the classroom. The data collected from the various measures listed in Standard 4, Question 1 works to inform changes in the curriculum map. We do not have the resources to make any major detours in the map with regard to reading skills. Ideally we would be able to create one-on-one opportunities for struggling readers. When irregularities in data occur on the individual level, then teachers work together to address the needs of the particular student.

Data is used to drive decisions regarding course structure, class pacing, mode of instruction and content delivery.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

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.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it 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 school employs and allocates staff that are well qualified for their assignments. The school provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. The school ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Not Evident | Little or no evidence exists |
| Emerging | Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice |
| Operational | Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented |
| Highly Functional | Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented |

Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

5.1 Recruits, employs, and mentors qualified professional staff that are capable of fulfilling assigned roles and responsibilities:

Operational

5.2 Assigns professional staff responsibilities based on their qualifications (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience):

Operational

5.3 Ensures that all staff participate in a continuous program of professional development:

Operational

5.4 Provides and assigns staff that are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school:

Operational

5.5 Budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement:

Operational

5.6 Monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system:

Operational

5.7 Maintains the site, facilities, services, and equipment to provide an environment that is safe and orderly for all occupants:

Operational

5.8 Possesses a written security and crisis management plan with appropriate training for stakeholders:

Operational

5.9 Ensures that each student has access to guidance services that include, but are not limited to, counseling, appraisal, mentoring, staff consulting, referral, and educational and career planning:

Operational

5.10 Provides appropriate support for students with special needs:

Operational

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for recruitment, induction, placement, development, evaluation, and retention of qualified teachers, administrators, and support staff?

All job openings are posted on the Ord Public Schools website, Omaha World Herald Print and Online versions, Teach In Nebraska website, and the University of Nebraska Career Connection website. Job descriptions, qualifications, and credentials necessary are all listed within the job posting. Furthermore, the administration actively recruits potential employees by placing phone calls to individuals that might be interested in advertised openings. The pool of applicants are reviewed by the administrative team and interviews are set up with candidates that meet the stated criteria. The individual that distinguishes his or herself is chosen and placed in the position where he or she adds the most value to our educational team. New employees are mentored by veteran staff members that exemplify the values our educational team has identified as being fundamental to our cause. Staff members are evaluated formally and informally throughout the year, feedback regarding job performance should be characterized as being open, honest, and respectful. The administrative team works hard to retain new staff members by providing leadership opportunities, and creating a work environment that promotes collegiality.

2. How does the leadership ensure that the allocation of financial resources is supportive of the school's vision, educational programs, and its plans for school improvement?

The leadership team at Ord Jr./Sr. High School ensures that the allocation of financial resources is supportive of the school's vision, educational programs, and its plans for school improvement by requiring staff members to identify goals for their instructional programs. When identifying goals for instructional programs, teachers are asked to focus primarily on student achievement, and school improvement. In the spring when budget requisitions are due, staff members are asked to align stated goals with budgetary requests, and explain how purchases will enable them to achieve their stated objectives.

3. How does the leadership ensure a safe and orderly environment for students and staff?

The Ord Jr./Sr. High School Principal serves as the educational leader responsible for enforcing the policies, guidelines, and procedures that ensure that all students and staff members feel safe and welcome at Ord Jr./Sr. High School on a daily basis. To accomplish this, the Ord Jr./Sr. High School Principal must:

- Establish and promote high standards and expectations for all students and staff for academic performance and responsibility for behavior.
- Manage, evaluate, and supervise effective and clear procedures for the operation and functioning of the school consistent with the philosophy, mission, values and goals of the school including instructional programs, extracurricular activities, discipline systems to ensure a safe and orderly climate, and emergency procedures.
- Supervise in a fair and consistent manner effective discipline and attendance systems with high standards. Ensure a safe, orderly environment that encourages students to take responsibility for behavior and creates high morale among staff and students.
- Establish a professional rapport with students and staff that has their respect. Serve as a role model for students, demonstrating the importance and relevance of learning, accepting responsibility, and demonstrating pride in the education profession. Encourage all staff members to do the same.
- Establish procedures that create and maintain attractive, organized, functional, healthy, clean, and safe facilities.
- Assume responsibility for the health, safety, and welfare of students, staff, and visitors.
- Develop clearly understood procedures and provide regular drills for emergencies and disasters.
- Organize and supervise procedures for identifying and addressing special needs of students including health related concerns, physical and emotional needs.
- Supervise the exclusion from school of any pupil who demonstrates a departure from normal hygiene, whose presence may be detrimental to the health of other pupils.

4. What process is used to ensure and monitor that each student has access to guidance and resource services that meet the needs of the student?

Our Jr./Sr. High School Guidance Counselor maintains an open door policy that applies to each and every student and staff member on campus. Teachers are encouraged to refer students, or send students to the guidance counselor when social/emotional problems are suspected and the need arises for intervention.

The guidance counselor has the primary responsibility for organizing New Student Tours prior to the beginning of each new school year. This provides the guidance counselor with an opportunity to greet students on an informal basis and acquaint them with our guidance program. All members of the Ord Jr./Sr. High School student body will meet with the guidance counselor annually to determine class schedules. Furthermore students will meet with the counselor in several group settings. First, the guidance counselor presents a career planning unit during the second semester to all eighth grade students. Second, small group meetings are held with all tenth grade students to discuss progress towards post-secondary goals. Thirdly, a more extensive career planning unit is presented to all eleventh grade students to discuss post-secondary options, financial aid, and scholarship application procedures. Finally, a follow up meeting is held with all seniors to formalize post-secondary plans, including the presentation of financial aid opportunities.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school has 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 school employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The school provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness, including both professional and support staff. The school ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

STANDARD: The school fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. School personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

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Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning:

Operational

6.2 Has formal channels to listen to and communicate with stakeholders:

Operational

6.3 Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the school:

Operational

6.4 Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders:

Emerging

6.5 Provides information about students, their performance, and school effectiveness that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders:

Operational

Focus Questions:

1. How does the school's leadership ensure that the school is responsive to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction?

The administration conducts a school climate survey annually during parent/teacher conferences and reports the findings to the Ord Public Schools Board of Education. Recommendations are made, programs are implemented to address legitimate concerns members of the school community have expressed. Furthermore, school employees have served on the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and Valley County Economic Development Board.

Teachers have taken an active role in community activities through:

FFA programs and leadership training. Advanced Electronic Media classes joint effort for E-bay Taxidermy Project. FCCLA sponsors Halloween parade for children.

Football players assisted with Valley County Courthouse renovation by removing old radiators.

Very active and effective school-to-work program. 24 students enrolled in 15 businesses.

Principal and select students participated in neighboring school's entrepreneurship forum.

Principal's support and encouragement of students to tour local businesses for jobs and career development.

School Board held community forums to assess existing school structures and provide input to proposed building plans.

18th Street Singers perform at local nursing home, Grandview Assisted Living, Winterfest, and other local events

2. How does the school's leadership foster a learning community?

To specifically foster a learning community, the principal provides many opportunities for students, staff members and stakeholders to work collaboratively towards school improvement. (Many of those efforts are listed above)

Moreover, the leadership team places a premium on continuing education/professional growth to identify strategies that will improve the learning environment.

3. What avenues are used to communicate information to stakeholders about students, their performance, and school effectiveness?

School website www.ordps.org

e-mail addresses of teachers so stakeholders can communicate at any time

Oracle - weekly news publication from students

Daily Bulletin (also on website)

Quarterly Newsletter mailed to stakeholders

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Local newspapers

KNLV radio - press releases, sports, and Party Line II

Sports Boosters on KNLV radio

Pictures of events in Ord Quiz, e.g. Sports, FFA, FCCLA, Quiz Bowl, Speech, Drama

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. School personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts and can demonstrate good participation by some stakeholder groups. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it 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 school demonstrates progress in improving student performance and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

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Indicators: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

7.1 Engages in a continuous process of improvement 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):

Operational

7.2 Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement:

Operational

7.3 Ensures that plans for continuous improvement are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school and expectations for student learning:

Operational

7.4 Provides professional development for school personnel to help them implement improvement interventions to achieve improvement goals:

Operational

7.5 Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders:

Emerging

7.6 Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement:

Operational

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for continuous improvement used by the school and what are the results that this process is delivering for student performance and school effectiveness?

Ord Junior-Senior High School utilizes the steps in the North Central School Accreditation process to serve as a guide to ensure continuous improvement. This model keeps us mindful of the necessity in gathering and analyzing data in order to increase student achievement. We have an active School Improvement Team supported by the administration. The team is comprised of faculty and the building principal and supported by the superintendent. In the fall of 2008, stakeholders from the community were added to the team, therefore the extent to which the school improvement goal has been widely discussed among stakeholders is limited. We have not yet included students on the team as we struggle with time commitments and in defining their specific role. We would like their involvement to be meaningful rather than token.

Our next school improvement cycle will begin in the fall of 2009, and we plan to include community members and students in the initial planning stages of our next goal. We need to check with other schools to see how they have successfully included students in the school improvement process.

While we realize that we did not obtain involvement from a broad range of stakeholder groups in designing our school improvement plan, we feel that we have had better buy-in from our faculty than in previous improvement plan cycles. This teacher buy-in is a result of all teachers having input. The process for earning teacher buy-in is outlined in Standard 7, question #4.

The school profile description of students is not one that changes drastically from year to year as our population is small, yet fairly stable. We have noticed a slight change in cultural diversity with an increase in a Hispanic population. This change has created a need for reading intervention strategies. This need reminds us that we have to look at changes in the profile, even if they are small, in order to evaluate and incorporate strategies as needed.

With regard to our school profile, we probably do a better job pulling individual student results rather than making changes based on overall results. When students fall below the proficient level, that is one form of information our staff members can use to provide assistance.

We now have a school webpage, principal and superintendent newsletter, weekly Oracle curriculum night, Power Grade/Power School, and the annual Ord Public Schools Report Card.newsletter distributed throughout the community,

2. What steps are taken to ensure that the improvement goals reflect student learning needs that are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school?

The first step in identifying student learning needs is to examine both norm-referenced test scores and criterion-referenced test scores. We administer the Terra Nova norm-referenced test in March of each school year to grades 7 – 10. In addition, students in grades 7 – 11 complete criterion-referenced STARS assessments throughout the school year.

Even though our comprehensive test scores are usually at or above state average, we have individuals who are not proficient. Our school improvement goal is designed so that we are constantly working to improve ALL reading scores and not just scores of those that struggle.

3. What process is used to ensure that the school personnel are provided professional development and technical assistance to implement interventions and achieve improvement goals?

Our administration provides in-service time during the school year. They also provide resources for staff to attend workshops at locations other than our school. This training can take place both during the school year and during the summer months. We realize that not every staff member chooses to take advantage these resources. And although a “one-size-fits all” approach does not always work for in-service, we are continually searching for training to offer both during the school year and during the summer. We could do a better job in communications from staff regarding the impact of the professional development activities as they relate to school improvement strategies. This could work as a self-reflection strategy whereby teachers ask themselves, “What did I bring back?” “How will this impact my teacher behavior?” “How will this impact the students in my classroom?”

The technical assistance aspect has greatly improved in the last two years with the addition of Mike Bechtold as our Technology Coordinator. Mike has strengthened our capabilities by adding hardware and software when possible. Jen Remmeried is also willing to share her tech savvy in a “Technology ala Carte” setting for both teachers and students. Both Mike and Jen do an efficient job in answering questions, solving technology problems, and researching new avenues for technology use in the classroom.

In addition, Ord High School is a member of the Sandhills Curriculum Consortium where Ginger Land is the coordinator of the state standards assessment data. She is able to compile data and run reports specific to our reading goal. As a result, we have access to individual and group data to better inform our staff members and administrators as to student needs. Because this process will be changing as we transition to the new state tests in Language Arts, Math and Science, we can more accurately compare our group data with other schools across the state. While gaining this increased ability for comparison, we will also need to compensate for the lack of feedback throughout the school year that was provided by the STARS Assessments.

4. How does the leadership ensure that the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated to stakeholders?

The process for continuous improvement at Ord Junior-Senior High School has changed noticeably in the last two years under the leadership of our new principal. In the fall of 2007, our school improvement committee spent time examining what was missing in our school improvement process. Our frustration was with teacher buy-in, or the lack thereof. Our building principal launched a survey of teachers asking them to identify their needs. Based on results of the survey, we decided to maintain not only the Reading Committee, but also form the Communications and Technology Committees.

Perhaps one of the biggest changes involves communicating to teachers our vision and purpose. We feel that this communication has increased the buy-in of the teachers. All staff members are encouraged and have an opportunity to express their concerns and see some real changes. For the first time, perhaps, staff members really feel as if they are

being heard.

While we realize we are gaining ground in sharing vision and purpose within the building and with stakeholders, we know we need to continue to target and strengthen this area, particularly with non-certificated staff and stakeholders, because communication is vital to our school improvement plan.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns most functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the school demonstrates progress in improving student performance and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Conclusion

The following focus questions reflect the school's overall analysis of its internal evaluation of the accreditation standards.

Focus Questions

As you review your responses to the standards, what major trends, themes, or areas of focus emerge that cut across the seven standards?

A major theme that cuts across the Seven Standards is the need to collect, organize, and analyze data so informed decisions can be made where resources are allocated. In addition, the mission and vision statements of the school community must be clear and incorporated into planning efforts at all levels so that staff, students and stakeholders come to embrace what our school community aspires to become.

Based on your review of these cross-cutting themes/trends and each of the seven standards, what would you consider to be your school's greatest strengths?

Our greatest strength is our staff's firm desire to help each individual student achieve academic success. This emphasis on the individual student is supported through communication, collaboration, and commitment. Furthermore, the administrative team is determined to maximize each student's, and staff member's potential which clearly demonstrates a commitment to the mission and vision of Ord Jr./Sr. High School. A second area of strength is our staff's yearning to improve teaching/learning and improve our school culture continually.

What would you consider to be your school's greatest challenges?

An area that challenges our district is our ability to organize data so that the data can be made useful and aid the decision making process. All administrative and instructional initiatives should be based on information gathered on a continuous and consistent basis. All decisions and adjustments in scheduling, curriculum, activities, counseling should be made only after analyzing the available data objectively.

How will you use the insights gained from this self-assessment to inform and enhance your quality assurance and continuous improvement efforts?

The amount of reflection and analysis involved with the Standards Assessment Report has afforded our educational team the opportunity to objectively evaluate ourselves. The accreditation process with specific emphasis on the Seven Standards has allowed our team to take a detailed look at how we generate curriculum and instruction, assess our students, work with our parents, schedule our time, and communicate with all our stakeholders. That self-reflection has identified strengths that will be built upon and challenges that will be addressed.