

Report of the Quality Assurance Review Team for Monteagle Elementary School

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

Quality Assurance Review Report

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About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

Background. Founded in 1895, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) accredit public and private schools and districts in 30 states, the Navajo Nation, Latin America, and the Department of Defense Schools worldwide.

In 2006, NCA CASI, SACS CASI, and the research and development arm of the accrediting associations, the National Study of School Evaluation, unified to form AdvancED. Dedicated to advancing excellence in education, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 23,000 schools in 65 countries, serving 15 million students.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI and SACS CASI have defined shared, research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help schools continuously improve.

The Accreditation Process. To earn and maintain accreditation from NCA CASI or SACS CASI, schools must:

1) Meet the AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools. Schools demonstrate adherence to the seven AdvancED standards which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.

2) Engage in continuous improvement. Schools implement a continuous improvement process that articulates the vision and purpose the school is pursuing (vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school effectiveness, and the school community (profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (results).

3) Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review. Schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, schools host an external quality assurance review team once every five years. The team evaluates the school's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and recommendations to help the school improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school and a written report detailing the team's recommendations. The school acts on the team's recommendations and submits a progress report two years following the review.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI accreditation engages the entire school community in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help schools be the best they can be on behalf of the students they serve.

Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review

Purpose. The purpose of the Quality Assurance Review is to:

1. Evaluate the school's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards.
2. Assess the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and recommendations to improve the school.
4. Make an accreditation recommendation for review by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

A key aim of the quality assurance review is to verify that the school is operating with institutional integrity - that it is fulfilling its vision and mission for its students.

School Preparation. To prepare for the Quality Assurance Review, the school community engages in an in-depth self assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. The school identifies and describes the evidence that demonstrates that it is meeting each standard. Through this internal review, the school examines how its systems and processes contribute to student performance and school effectiveness.

Summary of Team Activities. The Quality Assurance Review team is led by an AdvancED certified team chair and comprised of professionals from outside the school. The team reviews the findings of the school's internal self-assessment, conducts interviews with representative groups of stakeholders, reviews student performance data and other documentation provided by the school, and observes practices and daily operations. The team engages in professional deliberations to reach consensus on the school's adherence to the standards for accreditation. The team provides an oral exit report and prepares a written Quality Assurance Review Team Report designed to help the school improve.

The Quality Assurance Review Team Report. Following the visit, the review team completes the Quality Assurance Review report. After review by a nationally-trained reader, the report is submitted to the school. The report contains commendations and recommendations for improvement.

Using the Report - Acting on the Recommendations. The school uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school is held accountable for addressing the recommendations identified in the report. The NCA CASI/SACS CASI State Office is available to assist schools in addressing the recommendations. Two years following the Quality Assurance Review team visit, the school must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress the school has made on the team's recommendations. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school is addressing the recommendations.

Accreditation Recommendation. The Quality Assurance Review team uses the findings from the onsite visit to make an accreditation recommendation that is reviewed at the state level and by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Accreditation is granted by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission and communicated to the school following action from the commission.

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 Monteagle Elementary School in Monteagle, Tennessee on 01/30/2008 - 01/31/2008.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed the Principal, 2 members of the administrative team, 12 students, 14 parents, and 23 teachers. In addition, team members of 9 support staff, 3 district staff and 6 community members 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.

- **There is a spirit of unity among all stakeholders of Monteagle Elementary School that passionately cultivates and reinforces the total well-being and academic success of each student.**

Observations made by the Quality Assurance Review Team (QART) during the school tour, stakeholder interviews, and examination of artifacts revealed that there is a commitment to the development of the whole child. The faculty and staff create an environment in which every child has an opportunity to reach his/her potential.

This collective effort on the part of all stakeholders has resulted in maintaining a student-centered

environment for teaching and learning.

- **The administrative team models dedication, commitment, and professionalism which create an atmosphere where students are actively involved in meaningful educational experiences and where faculty and staff are supported in their continued professional growth.**

As evidenced by statements during interviews with students, faculty, staff, and parents the team noted that a high level of confidence exists in the administrative team.

This support for teaching and learning by the administrative team has resulted in Monteagle Elementary School earning the distinction of being the top-performing school in their district.

- **Multiple opportunities exist for students to express their talents and interests through a variety of curricular and extra-curricular activities.**

The examination of student produced projects, displays of student work, examination of artifacts, and interviews with stakeholders revealed a high level of participation in school activities.

As a result of student participation in school activities, the team noted a rich culture that engages students in the ownership and process of their own learning.

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.

- **Develop a formal agenda and commit to a regular schedule of collaboration in order to maximize the integration of the mission, vision, and beliefs into the school's action plan.**

Through interviews with teachers and review of documentation, the team noted an absence of regularly scheduled collaboration, which would enhance revision and implementation of the school's beliefs, common mission, and shared vision.

By scheduling formal collaboration time, Monteagle Elementary School can better determine direction and purpose for ensuring student achievement and program effectiveness, which will continue to drive the focus and goals of the school.

- **Evaluate the current action plan to include long-range goals which address achievement beyond the proficiency level.**

The team found through examination of the current Tennessee School Improvement Planning

Process (TSIPP) and other documents that prioritized goals reflected current state minimum competencies.

By revisiting the current goals, Monteagle Elementary School can focus on moving students beyond proficiency to the advanced level, further enhancing progress in overall school effectiveness.

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, 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 Monteagle Elementary School 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:

Monteagle Elementary School has established and communicated the mission, vision and beliefs that guide the teaching and learning process. The mission, vision, and beliefs are clearly communicated to all stakeholders by being posted in classrooms, hallways, office area, and the cafeteria. The school profile was developed by means of parent, student and staff surveys, needs assessments, home-school compact, and student and community demographics. In addition, the Pre-K program has a set of guidelines giving parents an opportunity to share their philosophies and offer suggestions or affirmation for the program. The team did not find evidence that this information is actively reviewed and analyzed.

The leadership ensures that the school's mission, vision, and beliefs guide the teaching and learning process. Grade-level meetings are held monthly to monitor and adjust any processes involved in teaching and learning strategies. The team found through parent and community interviews that the faculty and staff support a strong commitment for parent and community involvement.

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

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The school has clearly defined expectations for student learning that is supported by faculty, staff and external stakeholders.
- The faculty and staff provide students multiple opportunities to reach their full potential.

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

The team offers the following suggestions for improvement and growth in this standard area:

- Develop and implement a defined and scheduled collaboration time, with formal documentation, to review the mission, vision, and beliefs.
- Revisit the school improvement plan and develop school goals to include growth beyond proficiency.
- Reorganize the school improvement plan to follow the guide and templates supplied by the

Finding: Monteagle Elementary School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 2. Governance and Leadership

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

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

The leadership of Monteagle Elementary School is strong. The principal and assistant principal provide stakeholders with opportunities for direct involvement in a wide range of school activities. Both administrators are advocates for the students, teachers, parents, and the community, creating a true family culture. Upon review of the artifacts, through interviews, and observation, the team found the principal and assistant principal to be dedicated leaders whose commitment to children, faculty, parents, and community is outstanding. Their focus on the development of the whole child generates strong satisfaction with all stakeholders. To create this student-centered environment, the principal and assistant principal model effective practices and strategies for success. The administration invites stakeholder input and involvement, creating a family atmosphere, which invites students to learn.

Teachers (Tennessee Framework for Evaluation) and students are formally and informally assessed for performance/achievement. Teachers use the Blueprint for Learning and practice research-based strategies to improve academic achievement and actively engage students in the learning process and encourage them to take ownership for their learning. Student Performance Indicators (SPIs) are posted in classrooms and in the halls on displays of student work. Teachers also keep a school improvement notebook close at hand as a reminder of identified goals. The administration encourages and assists teachers in data analysis and the use of the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS), ThinkLink, Compass Learning and Brain Pop (computer-based interventions), and textbook assessments to evaluate student progress and diagnose remediation and enrichment. The district provides a literacy coach who works with struggling readers as a response to intervention. A tutoring program is in place for intervention beyond the school day, both before and after school.

Parents are kept abreast of activities through the monthly calendar, the information hotline, and the county website. Teachers are available for parent conferences, send mid-progress reports and weekly newsletters, and phone parents. In addition, parents and members of the community volunteer regularly at the school. One such volunteer assists with the journalism club and publication of the school newspaper. Others mentor/tutor in writing classes and other areas of need. Administrators and teachers maintain close contact with the community and parents through Midnight Madness, Family Night, 4-H, DARE, 50's Night, Grandparents Day, and other events. Monteagle Elementary, a Title I school, has an outstanding record of parent and community involvement; it is fully supported by the community.

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

The team noted several practices deserving of recognition:

- Close ties to the community provide opportunities for real world connections and valuable resources. Community volunteers regularly provide financial and active support. One such volunteer sponsors the civics club, donates money to provide field trip opportunities for all, and arranges for elected officials to speak to the student body. One result of community involvement came through observation. It was noted that students needed more real world skills. Students are now required to make academic presentations, honing speech and communication skills as well as improving their ability to work in teams.
- Students have a variety of opportunities for leadership and involvement within the school. Several clubs such as the student council, the civics club, journalism club and newspaper staff, DARE, after school music and exercise programs are a few of the possibilities.
- The principal supports the faculty in their professional growth by providing funding for attendance at conferences and workshops that enhance classroom instruction.
- Teachers receive training in evaluation of test data. The principal met with the faculty at the beginning of the year during in-service and provided data analysis and its impact on curriculum planning and student need. TVAAS reports and the School Report Card were used to determine clear and measurable expectations for student learning. The principal also suggested possible activities to reinforce areas that needed to be improved. Teachers met at that time in grade levels to collaborate about specific strategies that were successful in improving student achievement.

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

The team offers the following suggestion for improvement and growth in this standard:

- Provide more formal, scheduled opportunities for teachers to collaborate throughout the school year. Teachers share strategies informally at the lunch table, between classes, and at faculty meetings; however, more formal collaboration with a scheduled agenda will ensure that student achievement and program effectiveness continue to drive the focus and goals of the school.

Finding: Monteagle Elementary School 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:

Monteagle Elementary School uses the Blueprint for Learning that sets forth the state standards to frame curricular decisions. Teachers use data from the Tennessee Comprehensive

Achievement Program (TCAP) tests, Think Link and classroom curriculum to target specific strengths and weaknesses. Formative assessments, such as benchmark testing, are used by the school to monitor student learning.

Instructional materials and assessments are researched-based and follow best practices among highly successful schools. These programs include: Harcourt Intervention/Tier I, Brain Pop and Compass Learning, teaching strategies that address multiple intelligences, learning modalities, differentiated instruction, and Marzano's nine strategies.

SPIs (Student Performance Indicators) are documented in lesson plans and posted on student work. Student work is displayed in hallways to communicate to parents and other stakeholders what SPIs are being addressed. A ninety-minute reading block is protected from interruptions during instructional time. All teachers have a copy of grade-level SPIs in their classrooms.

All teachers are highly qualified. Through continued education opportunities, approximately seventy-four percent of the faculty have attained a master's degree or above. A professional library is well-stocked and represents the latest in educational research.

Teachers and staff have identified the following specific areas for improvement: vocabulary development, critical thinking skills, higher-order thinking processes, and a three-tiered approach to reading. Teachers are encouraged and given release time to visit and observe in other teachers' classrooms.

Student developed projects and presentations are shared with peers. The middle school grades have smart boards in the classrooms. Students have access to the school's library, computer lab, and art classes. The school web site, school newspaper, school hotline, and calendar provide students and parents with information about the curriculum and student expectations for learning.

Monteagle Elementary School implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations and provides students with diverse curricular and extra-curricular opportunities to learn and achieve. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process.

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

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Monteagle Elementary School shows a school-wide commitment to improving writing scores.
- Teachers are to be commended for pursuing continued educational opportunities. All teachers are highly qualified.
- The art teacher is commended for her diligence in securing grants, expanding the art curriculum to include multimedia, and integrating art into all curriculum areas and grade levels.
- Teachers are given opportunities to observe other teachers' classrooms and share ideas and strategies.
- There is a strong personnel support system in place. A full-time assistant principal, guidance counselor, speech and language teacher, ESL teacher, literacy coach, computer teacher, and an exceptional educational teacher work together to meet the needs of the students.

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

The team offers the following suggestions for improvement and growth in this standard area:

- The library collection should to be expanded to accommodate the wide-range of grade levels and abilities at the school. This would include additional print from all genre especially non-fiction, non-print selections, and reference books in order to provide greater support to the curriculum and meet the interest levels of the students.
- A computer lab offers an opportunity to do some research and is utilized for benchmark testing; however, technology could be used more effectively in the lab and classrooms to incorporate, integrate, and correlate the school's curriculum across all content areas.
- Currently the only opportunity for students to be involved in music education is an after school program which is not available to all students. The addition of a full-time music teacher at Monteagle Elementary School would provide the students with a well-rounded related arts curriculum.
- Additional educational assistants are needed to provide assistance to the primary grade teachers.
- Focusing on the state Teacher Performance Indicators (TPIs) as well as the Student Performance Indicators (SPIs) would enhance teacher performance and student achievement.

Finding: Monteagle Elementary School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" 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:

Both summative and formative assessments are used by the faculty and staff to assess student performance and guide instruction. TCAP is administered to students in grades three through eight, and scores are analyzed to determine student gains made from year to year. School scores are analyzed to determine Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Progress of individual students is checked from year to year in search of trends within specific disaggregated groups of students. TCAP Achievement, TCAP Criterion Reference reports, and TCAP Writing Assessment scores are also examined and compared with other district schools. The TVAAS teacher effect data is examined to verify student growth in individual classrooms. The TCAP Writing Assessment is administered to fifth and eighth grade students to measure the effectiveness of communication skills.

When test results are received, all stakeholders are informed of student performance through parent-teacher conferencing, staff meetings, the media, and the district website. TCAP results and an information pamphlet are sent home to parents as soon as the results are available. Teachers collaborate within their teams about their own results. The administration facilitates discussions about school-wide data in staff meetings. The School Report Card is published in the newspaper. Data from the state restricted website is available to all faculty members.

Formative assessments are managed on-line, allowing immediate access to results and performance monitoring. Benchmark results from ThinkLink which is given three times each year indicate gaps at each grade level in math and reading. The SRT (Scholastic Readiness Test) is administered to the Pre-K and Kindergarten students three times each year. DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills) is currently administered to students in grades 1-3 with plans to expand to K, and grades 4-5 next year. The WRAT (Wide Range Achievement Test) is administered to students for math and reading. Teachers use the formative assessment results to identify students in need of assistance. Twenty-nine intervention strategies were identified as being used by the faculty. Individual and peer tutoring are used by sixty percent of the faculty as an intervention. The school communicates this assessment data on student and school progress to all stakeholders via progress reports, report cards, and parent conferencing.

The non-academic data on the state report card indicates that the school is showing a downward trend in the attendance and promotion rates. Attendance is only slightly above the state goal at 93.7% and the promotion rate is below the state goal at 95.9%. Interviews with the administration indicate an awareness of this trend and plans for improvement include adding more activities for student participation, academic pep rallies, and community sponsored field trips correlated to the curriculum.

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

The team noted several successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Through interviews and artifacts, the team determined that administrators communicate student data to the faculty on a timely basis. During staff and grade level meetings, learning gaps are identified and intervention strategies are used to remediate students to meet proficient levels.
- Analysis of AYP data indicates that a high percentage of students are at the proficient and advanced levels in both reading/language/writing and math, with very few students below proficiency.
- A school-wide writing program has been implemented to increase the writing scores in grades five and eight. Writing samples are displayed in the hallways and in the classrooms. Two Monteagle Elementary School teachers will be serving on the state committee this year and will return to train other teachers on the rubric.
- At the beginning of the school year each teacher administers a teacher-made pre-assessment to determine the extent of background knowledge that the students bring to the classroom.
- With the reduced funding from the district, and in an attempt to improve attendance and

promotion rates, the school has applied for two grants to increase the awareness of students in the fine arts. If approved, a short-term music program and a sculpture garden will be added. Also, the art teacher is participating in an international art exchange program to bring art into the school and an opportunity for the students to share their art with schools in other countries. Broad-based community support includes the display of university student art throughout the building.

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

The team offers the following suggestions for improvement and growth in this standard area:

- The school should develop additional formative assessments used by classroom teachers on a daily basis as a continuous check on progress. Assessment checks such as exit tickets, response cards, minute paper, student generated test questions, one-sentence summary, etc. would help students to become better monitors of their own learning as well as provide the teacher with short-term feedback on the learning and teaching process.
- The school should analyze the AYP detailed report provided by the state and district to determine trends and patterns in student achievement. A comparison of the proficient and advanced levels reveals that the majority of students are proficient. The use of the state restricted website can further enhance the analysis of the student data and provide teachers with specific information on individual students. A goal to move more students to the advanced level would ensure added value and enhanced learning opportunities for all students.
- Training on the holistic scoring rubric for the TCAP Writing Assessment would enhance the current focus on writing by involving all teachers in the writing process.
- In reviewing and updating the Tennessee School Improvement Planning Process (TSIPP), the school should address new and future benchmarks and develop long range goals with observable and measurable action steps.
- Current short term goals in the TSIPP must address the attendance and promotion rates at Monteagle Elementary School.
- With a 64.5% poverty rate (207 out of 305 students) additional educational assistants should be requested in the annual budget to provide assistance in the classroom.
- Space is a limiting factor in offering an expanded curriculum to address advanced classes, music classes, and additional Pre-K classes which could have a positive impact on the attendance and promotion rates.

Finding: Monteagle Elementary School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 5. Resource and Support Systems

Standard: The school has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

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

Monteagle Elementary successfully recruits, employs, and mentors qualified professional staff and assigns the staff responsibilities based on their qualifications. The school employs 100% highly qualified teachers. The school uses resources from the District Office and supervisors of instruction to facilitate employment and recruitment. The county sponsors a new teacher program and clear goals are articulated by personnel directors. Staff is assigned by the principal with input from staff members. Mentoring for new teachers is a priority in the school, serving not only new teachers, but those who have been in the profession for a number of years.

There is a crisis management plan in place and all teachers are provided with a handbook describing procedures to follow in the case of drills and emergencies. A close working relationship exists with the local police who provide assistance with morning and afternoon traffic and during emergency drills. They also provide programs on safety for the students. Access to the building is monitored closely and visitors sign-in and out of the building by computer. The guidance counselor provides a character education and bullying program for all students. Safe and drug-free policies are in place and a district school psychologist is available when needed.

A related arts program is an integral part of the curricular and extra-curricular program at Monteagle Elementary School. Students are rotated through computer, physical education, art, and guidance classes where they are supported in their skills, talents, and interests. The guidance counselor meets with all students for forty minutes once a week and provides small group and individual guidance one day a week. Students are recommended to the counselor for assistance and support but can also request a conference with the counselor. In addition, the counselor works with eighth grade students and parents with their transition to their zoned high school.

The school is supported by the community when students are in need of personal, professional, or medical services. The guidance counselor, the school nurse, and the assistant principal work together to secure shoes, clothes, and various services from the community when a child is in need. Students from the local university and former district educators provide individual tutoring to students during and after school.

A literacy coach and an educational assistant provide literacy intervention which is monitored throughout the year. The literacy coach goes into the classrooms for grades 1-4 and pulls students in small groups on a rotating schedule. She also performs individual assessments and shares the information with individual teachers.

Five educational assistants are on staff at the school. Two are funded by Title I for the literacy program and Pre-Kindergarten program. Three educational assistants work with all other teachers.

A speech and hearing teacher serves twenty-six students in grades K-8. Two special education teachers serve fifteen students in grades K-4, and twenty students in grades 5-8 with direct and consultative services. There is one certified gifted student who is served in the regular classroom and one Comprehensive Development Class (CDC) student in the third grade. The school does not utilize an inclusion model for the special education students.

One English Language Learner (ELL) receives services from an itinerant teacher one day a week. This does not offer needed exposure to diverse cultures for other students attending Monteagle Elementary School; however, the school library media specialist should focus on adding resources to the library that would bring a wealth of information about other cultures into the school for students to explore and research.

The team noted a high degree of satisfaction among stakeholders regarding resource allocation for educational programs and school improvement. The community was extremely supportive of programs at the school, providing monetary and voluntary support from leaders. It is noteworthy that many of these leaders did not actually have children attending the school. The community provides funding for field trips, volunteers for school activities, sponsor of the journalism club, mentor for gifted writers, and school newspaper help. A local business partner funded the sign in the front of the building to announce school events.

The administrative team is commended for creating an atmosphere where teachers are supported in their continued professional growth. The visiting team found through interviews and review of artifacts that the school fully supports on-going embedded learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. This support for teaching and learning has resulted in Monteagle Elementary School earning the distinction of being the top performing school in the district.

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

The team noted the following strengths:

- The school effectively uses human, material, and fiscal resources to augment and support their curriculum. This enables students to achieve and exceed expectations for student learning.
- The school employs highly qualified teachers who are mentored and encouraged to take responsibility for professional growth and development, thus ensuring effectiveness in teaching and learning.
- The school has effectively implemented a strong crisis management and safety plan which supports all personnel, students, and parents.
- A related arts program is an integral part of the curricular and extra-curricular program at Monteagle Elementary School. Students are rotated through computer, physical education, art, and guidance classes where they are supported in their skills, talents, and interests.

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

The team offers the following suggestions for improvement and growth in this standard area:

- Use resources to purchase a variety of genre and young adult literature books for middle level students in the school. Consider books that are not Accelerated Reader (AR), as seventy percent of the collection is AR. Also, focus on adding resources to the library that would bring a wealth of information about other cultures into the school for students to explore and research.
- Expand the audio visual collection in the media center to further support the curriculum for all grade levels.
- Seek funding to support an automated check-in, check-out program for the media center. All books should be bar coded and inventoried to generate circulation reports.
- Seek funding from the district, or from other resources, to increase the number of educational assistants to work with teachers at each grade level.
- Continue to update and purchase technology and software for the media center, the computer lab, and individual classrooms.
- Add music to the curriculum during the day for all students. The afternoon program is

commendable, but a music teacher would enhance instruction and provide rich experiences for all students.

Finding: Monteagle Elementary School 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:

The leaders of Monteagle Elementary School are committed to collaborating with and providing information for all of its stakeholders. They consistently provide feedback to parents and students, thus creating a positive and active relationship with stakeholders. School information can be assessed through the website, parent advisory meetings, AYP power point presentations, activities posted on the school marquee, local newspaper articles and announcements, school newspaper, school hotline, calendar, and weekly feedback from teachers. Interviews with staff, parents, students, and community members revealed a strong knowledge of activities, events, and student progress in learning. A true family atmosphere exists. Parents are actively involved in school events like Midnight Madness, PTO, Open House, Title I parent meetings, book fairs, eighth grade graduation, and Family Reading Night. Administrators and staff call each student by name.

According to student interviews, students are comfortable with teachers and feel a bond with the administration. Student needs are met both in the classroom and outside. Local agencies help with such projects as Snack Pack, which provides students with nutritional food to eat over the weekend. Multiple opportunities exist for students to express their talents and interests through a variety of curricular and extra-curricular activities. Many clubs and organizations, such as DARE, 4-H, Journalism Club, Civics Club, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, help students to feel a part of the school. A strong athletic program is evident.

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

The team noted the following practices deserving of recognition:

- A journalism club is led by a retired United States Air Force Colonel. This club produces an outstanding school newspaper which highlights school activities and student involvement. Students are learning writing skills, organization, and teamwork while participating in this fun activity.
- A retired English teacher and former supervisor of instruction mentors gifted writers and works with students to produce various pieces and types of writing products. Students and teachers mentioned this valuable asset to the school.
- A civics club is sponsored by a community leader who helps provide scholarships for field trips to Williamsburg and brings in community speakers for local government.
- The school provides a variety of activities. Evidence of this was noted in the artifacts, an

outstanding school scrapbook, and through interviews with parents and teachers.

- An examination of student produced projects, displays of student work, examination of artifacts, and interviews with stakeholders revealed a high level of student participation in school activities. The team noted a rich culture that engages students in the ownership and process of their own learning.

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

The team offers the following suggestions for improvement and growth in this standard area:

- Communication with all stakeholders is one of the greatest strengths of the school. Review current practices to evaluate additional opportunities for stakeholder input/involvement.

Finding: Monteagle Elementary School 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:

Upon review of the school improvement plan, the team noted that Monteagle Elementary School maintains a rich profile of its school, staff, students, parents, and community. It originally opened in 1900 and has always served a population of K-8 students. A Pre-K program was added in 2001, and the school's population has doubled within the last five years. Construction in 2004 added nine classrooms. The most recent renovations were completed in December 2007, which added two new classrooms, an art room, and an expansion of the cafeteria. Providing a safe, student-centered environment is enhanced by new safety equipment and security monitors. Outside doors are locked and all visitors must check in and out of the building using a computer in the office.

The school day is seven and one half hours long. The Pre-K class has twenty students, K-2 class size averages twenty students; grades 3-5 average eighteen students, and grades 6-8 average twenty. All students attend physical education, library, art, and computer classes two to three times a week. Guidance classes are also provided as well as individual counseling. The small class sizes enhance the instruction and complement the child-centered instruction. Volunteers tutor students and provide additional academic opportunities through civics club, journalism club, and publication of the newspaper.

The administration met with the faculty at the beginning of the year to determine academic goals driven by data. TVAAS reports and the School Report Card were used to identify areas of need and to set clear and measurable expectations for student learning. Teachers met at that time in grade levels to discuss effective best practices for improved instruction. Through interviews with the staff, the team noted that on-going collaboration among teachers is informal. Teachers

discuss student needs and best practices at the lunch table, in the hallways, and at faculty meetings.

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

The team noted the following practice deserving of recognition:

- A strong sense of pride is evident in the school and in its heritage. Students, teachers, parents, and community volunteers all work together to create a safe, student-centered environment where students are engaged in their learning. Volunteers provide additional support both financially and by actively participating in tutoring, sponsoring clubs, and arranging for speakers that complement the curriculum in current events, history, and local government to name a few. One of the volunteers said it best, "The environment at Monteagle Elementary School invites students to learn and do their best."

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

The team offers the following suggestions for improvement and growth in this standard:

- Schedule formal, collaborative meetings among teachers to further examine data in order to determine the direction and purpose for student achievement and program effectiveness.
- Evaluate current data to address achievement beyond the proficiency level.
- Add a focus to the school improvement plan and a continued commitment to improve the attendance and promotion rates.

Finding: Monteagle Elementary School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Conclusion

The commendations and recommendations in this report are designed to focus the school on those areas that will have the greatest impact on student performance and school effectiveness. While powerful in potential, the commendations and recommendations only have meaning when acted upon by the school. The strength of this report lies in the school's commitment to using the findings to continuously improve. The key is action. The school is encouraged to use the report as a call to action, a tool to sustain momentum in the ongoing process of continuous improvement.

The team identified several recommendations for improvement that the school will need to address. Two years following this review, the school will be required to submit a progress report summarizing its progress toward addressing the team's recommendations.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to Janet L. Layne, 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

- Laura Harper, Chair
- Elizabeth Church, Team Member
- Milbrey Campbell, Team Member
- Shelia Bratton, 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.

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.