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Standards Assessment Report

La Luz Del Monte Learning Center

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Prepared for the AdvancED Quality Assurance Review

Report Status : Accepted

Report Open Date : April 15, 2008

Report Due Date : September 30, 2008

Report Submitted Date : September 30, 2008

Report Accepted Date : October 2, 2008

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 - Middle School
Charter School:	Start-Up
Enrollment:	112
Gender at School:	Co-Ed
Beginning Grade:	7
Ending Grade:	8
Alternate Beginning Grade:	
Alternate Ending Grade:	
Location Type:	Urban
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:
Highly Functional
- 1.2 Communicates the vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support:
Highly Functional
- 1.3 Identifies goals to advance the vision:
Highly Functional
- 1.4 Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the school, its students, and the community:
Highly Functional
- 1.5 Ensures that the school's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process:
Highly Functional
- 1.6 Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate:
Highly Functional

Focus Questions:

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

A. The mission and vision statement of the charter school;

(1) The mission of this school is to prepare students to become self-motivated, self-controlled, independent, competent lifelong learners and productive members of society. Students will be equipped with the reading, writing, mathematical, technological and problem solving skills necessary for success in secondary, post-secondary and personal career choices.

(2) This school is committed to the vision of providing students with the skill and knowledge necessary to be successful in today's highly technological and integrated society.

The vision and the mission statements became a collaborative effort of teachers, administrators, parents and community members that became dedicated to creating a unique middle school model that would ensure student success. The resulting curricular innovation was an evolution of core concepts that was supported by a committed group of educators and parents that overwhelmingly endorsed educating students outside the traditional mindset and leaping forward into 21st Century education. At each juncture in the development of the school programs, the core group reviewed La Luz Del Monte Learning Center's mission, identified goals, profile of the school, its students, and the community and identified the school's key curricular programs that advance and support La Luz Del Monte Learning Center's mission and vision. The process involved stakeholders to attend weekly staff meetings, monthly board meetings, and annual community budget meetings as vehicles for communication among stakeholders. In some institutions a staff meeting is intended for disseminating logistical information. Our weekly meetings often are composed of discussions about real situations that involve stakeholders such as: students, parents, staff, community and board members, district, state and national level support networks, etc., and the impact or influence on our vision as an educational entity. Regular communication with these stakeholders, written, verbal and technological, was key to maintaining an understanding of, and commitment to, the level of student success supported by our vision statement.

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?

The school's Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) is designed around two measurable focus goals as mandated by the New Mexico Public Education Department under No Child Left Behind, one in Reading and one in Mathematics, each with a measurable goal for improving test scores on standards-based assessments. The EPSS is pivotal in the development of curriculum, structure of the budget, and overall design of the school program.

One technological tool, specific to our school, for maintaining student data is PowerSchool. This is a web-based method of storing and disseminating student data. It is available to students, parents and teachers 24 hours a day/7 days a week. It is updated weekly by teachers and staff allowing parents and students the opportunity to access their child's academic progress and achievement in real time.

The New Mexico Public Education Department's fully developed reporting system provides district and school-by-school New Mexico Standards Based Assessment information for the general public. La Luz Del Monte Learning Center faculty and staff are trained in test administration. The staff reviews all data results and academic achievement standards for all required disaggregated groups. Some of the information guides small group, large group and

individual instruction in the following areas:

- Information, in the aggregate, on student achievement at each proficiency level compared to state and APS test results. Academic assessments (disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and disability status) are reviewed as soon as the scores are made available to the school.
- Information that provides a comparison between the actual achievement levels of each student, subgroups and the annual measurable objectives for each such group of students on each of the academic assessments.

Other technological tools for providing a presentation of the school are the Internet website and the Intranet website. The Internet site is on the world-wide web and provides navigation tools, descriptions, video, and data to support our success for anyone in the world. The Intranet site is an internal website with resource and communication information for students, parents, teachers, staff, and other stakeholders.

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

The school leadership team has the responsibility for defining the school's mission which includes framing and then communicating the school's goals by; managing the instructional program including supervising and evaluating teaching, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress; and promoting a positive school learning climate: encompasses protecting teaching time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for learning.

The La Luz Del Monte Learning Center's administrative team has developed strategies and systems in a unified and consistent approach to each educational challenge. The diverse administrative team has relied on the strengths of each staff and faculty member as professional participants in an evolutionary and revolutionary development of the school as a leader in education reform. The administrative team has far more responsibilities with increasing levels of demands from the authorizer, the New Mexico Public Education Department, and federal regulations than any traditional school administrative leadership team. It is incumbent of the charter team to recognize the demands, meet each expectation with excellence and extend and promote the ideals of the founders of the school.

Leadership at the school is a distributive responsibility, as are teaching and learning. A component of the original vision for the school was that every adult works with students in some capacity. Teachers at the La Luz Del Monte Learning Center have the authority, and responsibility, to maintain a learning environment conducive to success for all students. The administration then has the responsibility of supporting the efforts of the teachers and staff creating a sense of a shared vision, commitment, and unity.

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 administrative team employs a multifaceted approach to the systematic analysis and review of students and school effectiveness by creating the conditions in the school community that support the La Luz Del Monte Learning Center's vision and mission. The administrative team protects teaching time, monitors quality instruction and is present throughout all student activities. You will see the administrative team every morning as students get dropped off and picked up at the end of the day. They are visible to the student population. They are in classrooms, in the hallways, in the gym and lunch area. They use all of these venues to interact with students and use natural

opportunities to teach, model and acknowledge student successes. Administrators act as stewards of the educational process. They understand their responsibility as guardians of trust of students, parent and staff. They work to ensure that parents have confidence in the school as a place where students can experience success in learning.

Student test scores and overall student achievement are key components of the testament of the school's success. Achieving the goals in Reading and Mathematics established in the EPSS as mandated by New Mexico Public Education Department under No Child Left Behind is one formal assessment for helping to determine school effectiveness. The year to year monitoring of attendance rates, grades, overall student retention rates, and student exit surveys, all combine to help the school evaluate its effectiveness and regularly re-evaluate its expectations of the instructional staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders.

Stakeholder feedback is solicited in several ways. One of these is the Quality of Education Survey issued by the New Mexico Public Education Department that is submitted on paper or online, by parents. Another is the open forum section of the monthly board meetings for the school, during which time is set aside for public comment and discussion. More informally, parents and community members are always free to come in and speak with a teacher or an administrator or arrange a meeting with a teacher or an administrator, to discuss any issue.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school has achieved a wide commitment by all groups of stakeholders to a shared purpose and direction. The school has clearly defined expectations for student learning aligned with the school's vision that is fully 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 "highly functional" 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:

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 operates under the jurisdiction of a governing board that:

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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:

Highly Functional

2.5 Fosters a learning community:

Highly Functional

2.6 Provides teachers and students opportunities to lead:

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

2.9 Responds to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction:

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

Focus Questions:

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

Establishing and maintaining a strong board was a critical task for the La Luz Del Monte Learning Center. Attention to the composition and work of the board was vital to ensure a smooth transition into a fully functional organization. The central task for the La Luz Del Monte Learning Center Board of Directors is to fully engage in a sense of “ownership” of the school’s mission and vision.

The unique tasks of the La Luz Del Monte Learning Center’s Governing Board are to:

- a. Ensure that the charter school makes a real and valued difference in the community;
- b. Ensure that the charter school functions in a prudent and ethical manner;
- c. Sustain a future focus that keeps the charter school relevant in the community;
- d. Evaluate the effectiveness of the charter school leadership in managing all of the above.

Ultimately, policy and procedure development is the responsibility of the board of directors of the school. Policies and procedures are not simply issued but are the results of the evaluative processes that help the school maintain its vision and purpose. These processes involve the stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, board and community members, and district and state level support networks.

Policies and procedures can be protective as well as restrictive and are therefore considered seriously before established in writing as to their objectiveness and effectiveness in maintaining the school’s vision.

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

Student test scores and overall student achievement are key components of the school’s success. Achieving the goals established in the EPSS is one formal assessment for helping to determine school effectiveness. The year to year monitoring of attendance rates, grades, and overall student retention rates, all combine to help the school personnel

evaluate its effectiveness and regularly re-evaluate its expectations of the instructional staff, students, parents, and community members.

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

Our school has a weekly staff meeting, monthly board meetings, and annual community budget meetings as vehicles for communicating with stakeholders. Where in some institutions a staff meeting is for disseminating logistical information, weekly meetings are discussions about real situations that may involve parent presentations, school scenarios and teaching and learning development that have the greatest impact on the students. Regular communication with parents, staff, community and board members, district and state level support networks via written, verbal and technological methods have become key to allowing the two-way decision-making processes established to run smoothly.

Through innovating scheduling La Luz Del Monte Learning Center has found creative ways to provide more instructional time for students and non-instructional time for teachers to plan and collaborate with peers. These are practices that ensure the productive and focused use of precious school time.

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

The school's administrative team has established policies approved by the school's board of directors regarding: safety of staff and students, student code of conduct, bullying, truancy, the treatment of religious issues, reporting of student progress, teaching controversial/sensitive issues, student Internet acceptable use, sexual harassment, etc., in an effort to ensure an equity of learning opportunities for all students at all times. These policies are also intended to provide an environment conducive to equitable learning for students and staff. All students and parents have access to the individual student's data around the clock, including current attendance and grades, through PowerSchool. Individual Educational Plans for special education students are quickly and effectively developed and implemented to allow for the full benefit of the school's programs for these students. The school process for the IEP process has been developed by teachers and administrators. The on-line curriculum model is efficient and effective as assessed by parents, students and the school staff.

Innovation and "thinking outside the box" is the very foundation of La Luz Del Monte Learning Center. It is a school like no other... with a success record to match. Through the use of technology and best practices such as multi-modal presentation of content material and teaching strategies, teachers and staff ensure that innovation leads to student success. Every request for innovation is an opportunity to shine and potentially discover an untapped resource in our staff and students.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school has leaders who are advocates for the school's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction, lend support, and systematically allocate resources for systemic and sustainable implementation of curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders ensure collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders with clearly defined expectations for each stakeholder group. The leaders provide stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership. The school's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation and are deeply embedded in the way the school functions. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "highly functional" 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:

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:
Highly Functional

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:
Highly Functional

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

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

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

3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning:

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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:

Highly Functional

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?

Program and instructional consistency is a signature feature of the La Luz Del Monte Learning Center. Three key elements distinguish the school's approach to academic learning from other schools.

1. Faculty and staff who decide to work at La Luz Del Monte Learning Center commit to adopting the beliefs that ground the school's philosophy. Their teaching, leading and working habits emerge from those beliefs.

2. Faculty and staff use a standard's based curriculum, proven teaching strategies and student management practices that support the intellectual as well as the social, emotional and character development of children.

3. Teachers and school associates consistently implement the school's philosophy and practices within the school. The consistency of structure, expectations and instruction accelerates learning.

These features bring benefits to student learning because they know what to expect from grade to grade, class to class, adult to adult. Students learn the instructional routines which accelerate their ability to focus on new information, skill development and thinking skills. The core instructional methodology is consistent across grades yet implemented with the unique creativity and talents of each teacher.

All teachers in the La Luz Del Monte Learning Center have been responsible for the alignment of the curriculum to the New Mexico State Standards and Benchmarks as mandated by the Public Education Department. The teachers are on a 192 day contract, so their school year begins on August 1st each year. This allows quality time prior to the start of school to meet with each individual student and his/her parents to discuss and develop an individualized instructional program and strategies for success.

2. In what ways does the school ensure the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and

activities that facilitate achievement for all students?

The La Luz Del Monte Learning Center's standards-based curriculum, instruction and assessment plan provides students with challenging activities and rich educational community-based experiences that foster thinking, creativity, reasoning, analyzing, problem solving, and application of knowledge and skills. This transitional academic plan meets the needs of students by making available a unique blending of computer delivery systems and the "tried and true" modes of traditional curriculum for students in the 7th and 8th grade years. The La Luz Del Monte Learning Center has successfully implemented the educational and information technology that allows the staff and faculty to effectively and flexibly meet the academic needs of the students in La Luz Del Monte Learning Center. The core content is aligned to the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks. The academic blocks allow students to progress through core subject material with optimal time on task. Teachers have enough time allocated within the innovative schedule to work with students in small groups and one-on-one. In addition to the core curriculum in Language Arts/Social Studies and Math/Science, the students will be exposed to a wide variety of experiences through the use of technology, Community Based Instruction, distance learning, science exploration, and writing exercises, physical and critical thinking challenges.

La Luz Del Monte Learning Center is an educational leader in the State of New Mexico, and in the nation, in implementing innovative and research-based strategies and educational programs. The balanced combination of the computer-based delivery of curriculum combined with one-on-one instruction for science and social studies courses, and more traditional classroom instruction of language arts and mathematics, allow La Luz Del Monte Learning Center stand alone. The Smart Lab provides a constructivist style, social learning environment where students work together developing problem solving and critical thinking skills. Ultimately, students are prepared for more than just high school and college. They are prepared for the adventures that will be encountered on any chosen career path in life.

La Luz Del Monte Learning Center has been chosen to participate in the Governor's Laptop Initiative Program for the past 4 years. Each student is issued their own personal laptop and the technology of the laptop is incorporated into the daily curricula. Further, the school has been rewarded by the Governor with academic achievement recognition and additional funding for the 2008-2009 school year.

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

Teachers are the trusted authorities of their content and instruction. The content teachers of La Luz Del Monte Learning Center are all highly qualified in their area of certification and very familiar with their subject courses, as a result. During trainings and professional development opportunities, teachers are instructed in updates and new technologies that affect the delivery of the courses and content. Student grades and achievement combined with test scores and other achievements attest to the effective implementation of the curriculum.

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

The La Luz Del Monte Learning Center will use technology as a tool for teaching, learning, and assessment. Technology is integrated into curriculum and instruction to accelerate learning for all students. Students use technology to gather and organize information, support independent inquiry, and communicate with peers and experts to represent their understanding. Students need fundamental skills in areas such as math and technology to

successfully compete in today's economy. We consider the study of technology important for these reasons:

- the integration of technology engages students and opens them to learning about themselves and their world;
- literacy in technology is necessary to function effectively in today's world;
- the use of technological tools provide a powerful context for learning in all disciplines;
- environments enriched by advanced technology transforms the learning environment by fostering independence and collaboration.

The La Luz Del Monte Learning Center's program is an intentional combination of web-based curricula, traditional classroom instruction, and an integrated community-based activity component. Each student is issued their own personal laptop as part of the Governor's Laptop Initiative. The technology of the laptop is incorporated into the daily curricula.

The Smart Lab provides students access to the latest in computer software and hardware for use in eight systems of technology: Science and Data Acquisition, Graphic Design, Computer-aided Publishing, Physical Simulation, Circuitry, Multimedia, Control Technology, and Computer Simulation. Combined with cutting-edge peripheral equipment, students engage in hands-on, real-world experiences that build success in core curriculum areas.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides multiple opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The school has a formalized process to align instructional practices with the curriculum and demonstrates results through systemic and sustainable implementation across the school. Teachers use proven, research-based, instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process and encourage students to take ownership of their learning. Teachers consistently provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students frequent feedback using a variety of methods to improve their performance. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "highly functional" 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:

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:

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

4.7 Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance:

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

Focus Questions:

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

The students will be evaluated yearly using standardized and validated tests that are appropriate for the child's developmental level and abilities. The data from these tests are evaluated and the student's results are charted in the PowerSchool program. These tests include NMSBA Math and NMSBA Language Arts and Science. Student portfolios and presentations in the Smart Lab are archived and saved from year to year. Growth becomes an ongoing record, documented in the child's school record. Academic progress is also documented through the academic school software and teacher records of meetings and student interactions. This data is be utilized in developing, evaluating and modifying the student's individual educational plan or IEP. Progress reports are given to the parents or guardians quarterly. They contain quantitative and qualitative documentation of student progress.

Many types of assessments are used to measure student progress toward achievement of the state's standards and La Luz Del Monte Learning Center's student performance standards:

- La Luz Del Monte Learning Center will use objective tests, portfolio, student presentations, teacher developed tests and other quantitative and qualitative assessments to assess content mastery.
- La Luz Del Monte Learning Center will use the aggregated and disaggregated results of the NMSBA to assess the effectiveness of La Luz Del Monte Learning Center curricula progress toward the state and school's standards.
- The school's Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) is designed around two measurable focus goals as mandated by No Child Left Behind, one in Reading and one in Mathematics, each with a measurable goal for improving test scores on standards-based assessments. The EPSS is the pivotal point in the development of curriculum, structure of the budget, and overall design of the school program.

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?

One technological tool, specific to our school, for maintaining student data is PowerSchool. This is a web-based method of storing and disseminating student data. It is available to students, parents and teachers 24 hours a day/7 days a week. It is updated weekly by teachers and staff allowing parents and students the opportunity to always be informed of student progress and achievement. Semester and final report cards are mailed home at the end of each semester. Standards-based test results are reviewed with parents and students during the pre-school conference in August as part of the development of the individualized instructional program created for the student. Our web-based

curriculum and skills programs provide students and parents with real-time information concerning academic progress, i.e. current letter grades, percent of course complete, and targeted percent complete.

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

All data pertaining to our students is integral in the decisions that determine the direction of our school and its programs. Student test scores and overall student achievement are key components that contribute to the school's success.

Achieving the Reading and Mathematics goals established in the EPSS as mandated by No Child Left Behind is one formal assessment for helping to determine school effectiveness. The year to year monitoring of attendance rates and overall student retention rates combined, help the school evaluate the school's effectiveness and regularly re-evaluate its expectations of students, parents, and other stakeholders.

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

The La Luz Del Monte faculty and staff have participated in hundreds of hours of training in the implementation of the various computer data systems available to the school. PowerSchool training is updated yearly and teachers direct and modify reporting systems to meet their needs for data review and reporting. Much of the data available to the students and parents in PowerSchool is collected and input by the teachers. They receive training in the retrieval and reporting of such data. All test scores and EPSS related data are disseminated to the teachers immediately for a variety of purposes. The most important of which is to be better informed in making decisions regarding each students individualized instruction.

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Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results, including multiple measures of individual student achievement that assess higher order thinking skills and are of adequate technical quality. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, design and improve instructional strategies and practices, and determine interventions to improve and enhance 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 for individual students and groups and subgroups of students. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "highly functional" 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:

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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:

Highly Functional

5.10 Provides appropriate support for students with special needs:

Highly Functional

Focus Questions:

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

The school's reputation in the community has created an influx of highly qualified applications of interest from teachers and other professionals. Most of our educational assistants have college degrees and some even possess graduate level degrees. All of our teachers are highly qualified in their area of instruction. The Professional Development Plan process is guided by a single area of focus chosen by the leadership and supported and documented by an outside and objective agent. The support staff is valued and appreciated not just by the leadership but by all stakeholders. Effective communication of that appreciation creates a small-school, family environment enjoyed by all. Continual opportunities for educational development and advancement are strongly supported, effectively ensuring long-term continuity and commitment in all facets of the school. The school's reputation in the community has created an influx of highly qualified applications of interest from teachers and other professionals. All of the La Luz Del Monte Learning Center's teachers are highly qualified in their area of instruction. Teacher evaluation is guided by the New Mexico Public Education Department's required, (Professional Development Plan) a process that stipulates that the teacher selects a single area of focus identified by the leadership and supported and documented by a third party evaluator.

Effective communication of that appreciation creates a small-school, family environment enjoyed by all. Continual opportunities for educational development and advancement are strongly supported; effectively ensuring long-term continuity and commitment in all facets of the school. The school rewards the staff for pursuing higher educational degrees by providing monetary incentives for each degree earned.

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?

In the effort to evaluate whether the school's vision and purpose are supported by the current educational programs and the processes used to move into the future, all would be moot without well managed funds to provide for the success. La Luz Del Monte Learning Center's board of directors has adopted many clear policies for fiscal management that must be followed with respect to allocation of financial resources. The annual budget is first

approved by the school's board of directors, and then must also be accepted by the New Mexico Public Education Department's Finance and Operations, and again by the school's chartering agent.

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

The building and structures on the Southwest Learning Center's campus that house the La Luz Del Monte Learning Center are routinely inspected. The City of Albuquerque Fire Marshall has inspected all school buildings each year of the school's operation. Inspections of the physical design of the school have been crucial step in the school's strategy to provide a safe and attractive facility for learning. From local, state and federal level inspections, a Safety Prevention Plan, Policies and Procedures, Response and Recovery Plan has been developed and enacted to anticipate contingencies.

The school has a sprinkler system, a hard-wired fire monitoring system, a video surveillance system and a plan for community/school worst case scenarios. Preventing acts of vandalism, violence against staff, students or visitors and planning for other emergency disasters through physical design and technology have involved regular assessment of the physical school environment with the intention of increasing the safety and security of the La Luz Del Monte Learning Center's environment.

The school has an orderly drop-off and pick-up design for the schools housed at this site. The flow is isolated and monitored by staff to ensure safe passage for all. The walkways are well marked and their use is enforced. Breaks, recesses, and lunch times are effectively scheduled so that students are well monitored by teachers and staff at all times. The school also holds the required fire drills as mandated by the city's fire code as well as instruction to students regarding emergency responses. The school also holds the required fire drills as mandated by the city's fire code as well as instruction to students regarding emergency responses. The building exits are well marked and signage and posters are in plain sight to direct anyone in the building in the event of an emergency. The staff has been trained in first aid, AED (automated external defibrillation) and CPR. The school also maintains a comprehensive School Safety Plan as required by the New Mexico Public Education Department.

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?

In La Luz Del Monte Learning Center students are assigned to groups by grade level, 7th or 8th, then A and B. These groups are then "sponsored" by a content teacher. Students interact with seven different teachers and one educational assistant in the course of a week. All staff members see all students several times a week if not every day. The students in grade seven have the same teachers in grade eight. This network creates a safety net that allows students to experience a familiar family of adults who are responsible for monitoring of students' social and academic activities. Teachers are familiar with their students and the students' families, as well as the resources of the school, and therefore can help a student and their parents find the information they need to assist in any situation. The Director of Academic Support is a key resource for counseling, should professional services be needed by the student or family.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school effectively uses human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve and exceed expectations for student learning, to meet special needs of all students, and to comply with applicable regulations. The school systematically employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments in all content areas. The school provides and fully supports ongoing, job-embedded 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 "highly functional" 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:

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:

6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning:

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

Focus Questions:

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

Parent feedback is solicited in several ways. One of these is the Quality of Education Survey issued by the New Mexico Public Education Department that is submitted online or on paper, by parents. Another is the open forum section of the monthly board meetings for the school during which time is set aside for public comment and discussion. More informally, parents are always free to come in and speak with a teacher or an administrator or at the least arrange a meeting with a teacher or administrator to discuss any issue. The year to year monitoring of attendance rates, grades, overall student retention rates, and student exit surveys, all combine to help the school evaluate its effectiveness and regularly re-evaluate its ability to respond to the expectations of students, parents, and other stakeholders.

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

There are multiple ways in which the leadership has designed the school to foster a learning community: a smaller school with a lower pupil/teacher ratio, highly qualified teachers at all levels, and providing a challenging program composed of courses that are aligned with state standards and benchmarks. The La Luz Del Monte Learning Center has successfully fostered a highly respected learning community that has adhered to the following principles:

- All students need an individualized educational program that balances their social and academic needs.
- La Luz Del Monte Learning Center incorporates practices that have been shown most effective through research and application.
- Administration and staff have continually developed, searched for and implemented curricula and strategies that produce maximum effect with the minimum of waste of scarce educational resources.
- La Luz Del Monte Learning Center staff and administration recognizes respects and nurtures the students.
- La Luz Del Monte Learning Center has created a positive school environment that promotes the growth of students into emotionally, physically and intellectually healthy individuals.
- La Luz Del Monte Learning Center challenges each child to achieve by implementing a unique transitional schedule that incorporates technology (the school has been chosen as a New Mexico Laptop Initiative participant since the inception of the program) and community-based instruction with a focus on the academic basic skills.
- The instructional pacing, strategies and policies are data driven in order to achieve maximum effect. Properly gathered data, when well analyzed and organized, will enable the staff to design and fine-tune the activities of school to produce maximum personal growth and student outcomes.

The instructional staff is empowered to design and maintain their content programs. They are expected to take ownership of their school and their academic program. Administration is not a discipline tool but instead a support team for the overall vision and purpose. Careful and responsible fiscal management by the leadership has resulted in continual financial health. Consequently, request for instructional services and materials to improve educational quality are routinely funded.

The overall program is designed to teach students to be independent, competent, life-long learners. This does not mean that the students learn all alone – instead it means that the student takes responsibility for their own educational and academic experience. They learn to determine their available resources and then use them to move themselves

forward. Each student has an individualized instructional plan that is tailored to their academic needs and interests

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

Weekly staff meetings designed to communicate information about students, their performance, and school effectiveness. Community and monthly board meetings do the same for a different group of stakeholders. PowerSchool is designed for 24 hours a day/7 days a week access by parents and students to monitor student performance and activity. La Luz Del Monte Learning Center's teachers and administrators are available every day, for parent/student interaction. Informal meetings of the LLDM staff are invaluable for the sharing of concerns or successes. Students are also issued printed progress reports at the end of each quarter throughout the school year.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school has the understanding, commitment, and support of all stakeholders. School personnel actively promote and provide regular, systematic opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among all stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts and can demonstrate a high level of meaningful participation by most shareholder groups. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "highly functional" 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.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
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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:

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):

Highly Functional

7.2 Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement:

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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

Highly Functional

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?

The school improvement cycle involves a team effort. The administrative team and teachers, engage in continuous cycles of improvement. It is a self-regulating cycle - the team decides for itself what activities will support the goals, how they should operate, and in what ways they should change and improve their approaches to teaching and learning. The La Luz Del Monte Learning Center's school improvement cycle works in the following way: Educational Plan for Student Success guides the school team as it moves through the problem definition, decision making, implementation and action, and evaluation phases of the improvement process by providing:

- Research-based knowledge
- Expert advice
- Demonstrations of successful practice
- Resources in key educational areas
- Critical issues to stimulate and inform the improvement process
- Indicators of engaged learning
- Self-study tools

All of these resources are designed to guide the school team as it designs models of teaching and learning grounded in the belief that all students can learn. It is our belief that school community teams that engage in a continuous, self-regulating cycle of school improvement, supported by all the stakeholders, is better able to "think globally but act locally" to achieve real and lasting educational reform.

La Luz Del Monte Learning Center evolved from an obvious need for a well structured program for 7th and 8th grade students that would prepare them for a secondary program that demands a high level of self-responsibility. On a weekly basis the staff meets to discuss current issues. It is the driving component in a process that has led to the four year evolution of the school and its programs. Sometimes an issue may involve only one student though it may have implications for all that are important enough to consider. Student academic performance is often the focus of school issues and a determining factor of the resulting decisions. Periodic student progress reports are used to help teachers, staff, students, and parents implement supports for student success. In this way our students' education improves collectively.

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 Educational Plan for Student Success has identified goals for the school and the structures defined has required all staff members to participate in the cycle of school improvement. Each goal is evaluated in a process that ensures

that the goal is specific and measurable, observable, incremental, realistic and achievable.

If a goal is not being met, the staff and administration take on the alignment or direction of the vision and purpose, and the group decides if the goal needs to be modified or and changed to be achievable. These decisions are not made without serious considerations that are often discussed before a final goal/action/solution is determined.

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?

All instructional and professional staff creates and maintain a Professional Development Plan (PDP) containing the professional goals for continuous improvement of each teacher or staff member and all relevant documents delineating past and current development. After an initial meeting with the school leadership team and the evaluator, teachers and staff members identify mutual goals that are reviewed and a professional growth plan is developed, the teacher maintains the PDP, and includes samples of classroom or school work, observation records, personal reflections, and any other material deemed appropriate as evidence of continuous improvement.

Each employee's individual Professional Development Plan process is guided by a single area of focus chosen by the leadership and supported and documented by an outside and objective professional evaluator. Continual opportunities for educational development and advancement are strongly encouraged and supported; effectively ensuring long-term continuity and high level commitment.

The teachers are on a 191 day contract, so their school year begins on August 1st. The extra contract days allows for time prior to the start of school, for professional development and targeted teacher training. Teachers are instructed in updates and new technologies that affect the delivery of the courses. Two network administrators are employed by the school. They maintain the extensive network and they too are expected to take ownership of the school and its equipment and collaborate with the staff in managing the activity in the labs – be it maintenance and updating of existing equipment or the acquisition and implementation of new equipment and software.

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

The La Luz Del Monte Learning Center's instructional program is designed to address the following key components:

- Increased student performance, reduce the achievement gap for students determined to be at risk;
- A positive school climate, including a safe school, more active student engagement, few disciplinary infractions, and less truancy;
- A personalized learning environment in which students have the opportunity to form meaningful relationships with both adults and peers;
- Extensive opportunities for teachers to gather together in professional learning communities that enhance teaching and learning;
- Greater parent involvement and satisfaction, and
- A school structure that maintains the highest levels of business efficiency.

The holistic school plan for the La Luz Del Monte Learning Center has implemented, monitored, achieved and communicated the program to all stake holders in the following activity areas:

1. Curriculum program design and formalizing the instructional program.
2. Unique school schedule.
3. Building school identification: advertising, parent meeting timelines, process for lottery, enrollment procedures, and student registration and data management for all students' reports to the state.
4. Environmental design for classroom and computer lab areas.
5. Student recruitment.
6. Faculty and staff retention.
7. Professional development plan.
8. Establishing accounts for the school at the following organizations:
 - Educational Retirement Board,
 - New Mexico Public School Insurance Authority,
 - The New Mexico Public Education Department Budget Office and DFA.
9. Budget and Financial Organization, Accounting Procedures and Policies Handbook.
10. Student management computer program selection.
11. Identification of available grants for program, classroom, infrastructure and staff development needs.
12. Communication links for school with the Albuquerque Public School District's departments and personnel and the New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools, North Central Association for Accreditation.
13. Policy handbooks developed for students and parents.
14. Special Education Manual.
15. Administration – Personnel Identification.
16. Identification of Secured and Potential Funding Sources/Revenue.

At La Luz Del Monte Learning Center the improvement plan is the result of communication with parents, students, and staff and community members. The implementation and monitoring of improvements are the responsibility of the administrative team and program information is disseminated to the stakeholders through the established communication processes. Any stakeholders outside of the daily circle would be informed through the established communications for their position, i.e. parent emails, phone calls, community and/or board meetings, etc.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school fully implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns all functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are systemic, sustained, and fully embedded, and the school demonstrates significant progress in improving student performance and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are clearly informed by the documented results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of a highly sustained, continuous process of improvement. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "highly functional" 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?

The effects of the empowerment of the staff at our school as part of the original vision are fundamental to our success as a whole. It has created a sense of ownership among the teachers and the staff. The vision and purpose have remained as a constant rudder for the programs at the school and each improvement has added important steps to school improvement.

The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform identified criteria to describe high-performing schools that serve students in the middle grades. Such schools are academically excellent, responsive to the developmental challenges of young adolescents, and socially equitable, with high expectations for all students. A majority of the 14 million young adolescents (grades 5–8) enrolled in U.S. public schools continue to fare poorly on national and statewide performance assessments. Many eventually tune out or drop out of school. One reason for this low level of achievement is that too many middle-grades students attend large, impersonal schools where substantial numbers of students are not purposefully engaged in learning, lack meaningful relationships with adults, and are increasingly alienated from school. Creating small schools and small learning communities represents a giant step toward personalizing middle-grades education and establishing the right conditions for enhanced teaching and learning.

Student performance, in courses and standardized assessments, is what drives the improvement decisions of the stakeholders of the school. La Luz Del Monte has developed a model worthy of replication and advanced study.

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?

The greatest strength of our school is the practice of non-traditional management and educational processes supported by our Governance Board, school leadership, staff and our parents. Consequently, we model what we want to produce – real, independent, problem solving, free-thinking, critical-thinking, competent, and life-long learners.

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

Our greatest challenge is wrestling with the established industrial educational model still employed by our governing authorities. Our non-traditional programs require the ability to adapt in order to function appropriately to ensure the successful education of our students. This comes into conflict when trying to fulfill many of the districts and state mandates.

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

continuous improvement efforts?

We will continue to critically evaluate our program and making relevant changes when necessary. Exchanging ideas through the myriad of communication conduits, we will adapt and enhance our educational processes. We will continue to improve student performance, achievements, and test scores.