Report of the
Quality Assurance Review Team
for
Jack N Darby Elementary School

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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 April 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form one strong unified organization dedicated to education quality. That unified organization, known as AdvancED, creates the world's largest education community, representing 27,000 public and private schools and districts across the United States and in 65 countries worldwide and educating 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 and Policies for Quality Schools. Schools demonstrate adherence to the AdvancED standards and policies 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 required actions to help the school improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school and a written report detailing the team's required actions. The school acts on the team's required actions and submits a progress report 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 and policies.
2. Assess the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and required actions 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 required actions for improvement.

Using the Report - Responding to the Required Actions. The school uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school is held accountable for addressing the required actions identified in the report. The NCA CASI/SACS CASI State Office is available to assist schools in addressing the required actions. At prescribed intervals, the school must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress the school has made on the team's required actions. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school is addressing the required actions.

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 NCA CASI Department of Defense (NCA-CASI-DODEA), a division of AdvancED, visited the Jack N Darby Elementary School in Sasebo, null, Japan on 02/07/2011 - 02/10/2011.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 12 members of the administrative team, 60 students, 15 parents, and 36 teachers. In addition, 13 support staff 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:

1. Vision and Purpose
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Documenting and Using Results
5. Resource and Support Systems
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
7. 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 required actions.

Commendations

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

- **The school's vision drives continuous school improvement efforts, the curriculum, and the support services provided to ensure success for all students.**

  The QAR Team saw multiple examples of how the school uses the vision to focus efforts to ensure students are successful through the interventions and assessments chosen, the collaboration among the staff to monitor student progress, and the support services provided for students needing assistance. The vision was understood, articulated, and communicated to all stakeholders.

  In a school where mobility of faculty and administrators is a factor, the school needs a framework and focus that is well-articulated, actively supported, and clearly understood as a rallying point for all.

- **The principal is an effective leader who is well-respected, fosters an atmosphere of collaboration and**

community, and provides multiple leadership opportunities for students, teachers, and parents.

Through observations and interviews, the team saw evidence of the principal providing effective leadership that fosters good communication and maintains an open door policy. She provides leadership roles for staff through monthly faculty and team meetings and CSI Committees. She also provides opportunities for students to take leadership roles through peer mediation, student mentoring, morning announcements, and community projects.

When a school has developed a learning community where active and effective leadership exists, collaboration is encouraged and practiced, and leadership roles are provided and nurtured, then the school staff can better work together, have active input into the school's direction and plans, and feel a sense of ownership and worth.

- **Support services provided for students are extensive, well-coordinated, and successfully implemented.**

  Based on interviews and observations, the team saw multiple examples of programs that are available to students to help them achieve and acquire needed skills. These programs include literacy support, English as a Second Language (ESL), document translation, and the gifted and talented program. Teachers, staff members, and parents work collaboratively to ensure all students are supported and have opportunities to succeed.

  This is important at DoDEA schools where the staff has to deal with issues of deployment, transitioning, and mobility, and must deal with students who have special needs that require immediacy and support while they are here. Because of the quality services provided and the staff collaboration fostered, students have a better opportunity for success.

- **The school effectively communicates with all stakeholders through a variety of means.**

  The team saw many examples of communication that the school effectively uses to keep students, teachers, and parents well-informed and to foster support for the school improvement efforts. Some examples are the use of the Intranet to keep deployed parents connected with their children, newsletters, progress reports, and displays of student work in the classrooms and halls.

  Communication is important at DoDEA schools because parents, whether on base or deployed, need to be involved and feel connected with their children. When stakeholders are informed about and aware of the programs and plans the school has in place, the process builds the sense of community and support for the school.

- **The school effectively uses qualitative and quantitative data to monitor student progress in the classroom in order to achieve the school improvement goals.**

  Based on artifact review and interviews, the team saw evidence of the school using data during team meetings to discuss classroom and school-wide assessment progress and to identify and support students who have not met learning expectations. Similarly, the school uses data during continuous improvement committee discussions related to the two goals.

  Only when a school monitors student progress using data and conducts rich discussions regarding the data, what it means, and how it impacts instruction can a school know if its school improvement efforts are successful and if the school is effective.

Required Actions

In addition to the commendations, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following required actions for improvement. The team focused its required actions 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 addressing each of the required actions noted in this section. Following this review, the school will be asked to submit a progress report on these required actions.

- **Expand professional development opportunities for teachers and support staff to grow as professionals.**

  Based on interviews, support staff members shared that they need more training focused directly on their job responsibilities. Teachers indicated that they would like more training about understanding and using data to make instructional decisions.

  When teachers and other staff members are provided opportunities to grow as professionals and keep abreast of the ever-changing requirements, they can provide more effective services – both in the classroom and in the school at-large. Because of high staff mobility, it is important to have a comprehensive framework of professional development that provides the means for staff members to stay informed, addresses the expectations of the school improvement plans, and supports the vision of the school.

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 required actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the required actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the school's efforts to improve student performance and school effectiveness.
5. Following the Quality Assurance Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the required actions. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the required actions. 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 NCA-CASI-DODEA accreditation seals are available at www.advanc-ed.org/communicationskit for accredited schools and districts to post on their website and to use in school communications. Flags, door decals, diploma seals, and lapel pins are also available and 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 required actions 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.

Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the Jack N Darby 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:

Based on observations, artifact review, and interviews it is clear that the people of Darby Elementary School live and breathe the vision on a daily basis. DoDEA mandated that all schools use the DoDEA mission and that each school create a vision unique to the individual school. The educators and other staff members describe themselves as a collective – "the school staff" – and chose to work together with other community stakeholder groups to revise the vision statement to more closely reflect community expectations gleaned from parent surveys, assessment results, and local command issues. The school's vision is to be "a community dedicated to success for all students." When the QAR Team arrived, the Continuous School Improvement Leadership Team (CSILT) co-chairs provided an overview of the school, including a video that highlights students, parents, and the school staff. Each participant in the video described the vision and goals and shared ways in which they are ". . . the faces of Darby." This school is focused on the success of all students and doing what it takes as a learning community to ensure that does happen.

The vision is understood, articulated, and communicated with stakeholders. During interviews, students, parents, and staff members could articulate in their own words what the vision is, what it means, and how it is used to guide decision-making. One student stated, "The vision means to try your best." A teacher indicated that a teacher's job was to take students from where they are to the next level. Parents believed that "Successful students grow into successful adults." The vision and goals are posted around the school and are communicated in a variety of ways – through the monthly parent newsletter, at Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings, on the Intranet website, and on the Internet website.

Observations, interviews, and artifact review indicate that school staff members have, after careful data analysis and discussion, created and implemented a school improvement action plan that includes two school improvement goals. The first goal is: "All students will improve written expression throughout the school." The second goal is: "All students will improve problem-solving throughout the school." These goals are supported by interventions and assessments that provide direction and focus on improving student performance, thereby helping monitor student progress to judge the school's effectiveness. The goals are understood by all stakeholders, and as one teacher said, "I feel like the school is making the right connections to the goals."

The vision drives the continuous school improvement process. School staff members chose to use the Looking At Student Work (LASW) process and the 6+1 Writing Traits rubric as interventions to monitor student progress in writing. Staff members also chose LASW and Number Talk processes as interventions

for math problem-solving. Staff members created FOSSE – Find Out, Strategize, Solve, Explain – as the standardized four-step problem-solving method. Teachers expressed positive feelings about the use and success of all interventions. As one teacher expressed, "The school staff knows what to do to work toward the goals and promote student success." Students shared with the QAR Team ways in which they use FOSSE, especially in mathematics; the QAR Team observed students using FOSSE, not only in mathematics, but also in other subjects such as science.

Based on observations and interviews, the QAR team believes that the vision drives the teaching and learning at this school. The students are engaged in learning and know what they are working toward – future success. Support programs reflect the staff's focus on "doing whatever it takes to make sure that students are successful." Support programs include the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, the Literacy Partnership meetings, the Student Services Team (SST), the guidance programs, the Gifted and Talented program, and the Case Study Committee to help students.

Based on artifact review, the QAR Team confirms that the school maintains a complete and up-to-date profile featuring unique local insights, follow-up on former students, existing school data, and a summary of results and effectiveness. The "Faces of Darby" video reflects the diversity of the student body and staff. As an example of the school improvement process being systematically reviewed and revised, the CSILT has determined, based on a review and extensive analysis of the assessment data, that the writing goal needs to be continued because, although students have improved over time, further improvement is desired. The goals committee has determined that the mathematics problem-solving goal has been met; a new goal will be studied and chosen for the 2011 – 2012 school year. While school staff members may know about the success of the school, the QAR Team found little evidence of a broader understanding by all stakeholders of school-wide success related to continuous school improvement efforts.

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

- The vision is understood, articulated, and communicated effectively by stakeholders.
- The vision drives the school improvement efforts, the curriculum, and the support services provided to ensure the success of all students.

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

- Create and implement a plan to communicate and promote to the wider community the school-wide success of continuous school improvement efforts.

Finding: Jack N Darby Elementary School has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 2. Governance and Leadership

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

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

The school supports and implements the policies and procedures established by DoDEA. DoDEA curriculum standards are prominently displayed throughout the school, and many teachers post standards included in current lessons. Student work is displayed on bulletin boards, in classrooms, hallways, and other venues, with appropriate DoDEA standards noted. DoDEA also provides evaluation processes for all personnel; the evaluation process for teachers beyond the probationary period includes a professional growth plan (PGP).

The principal is an effective leader who is well-liked and respected. She fosters good communication by maintaining an open-door policy. She is open to new ideas and supports teacher requests. The QAR Team noted that the principal maintains a positive rapport with students. Teachers shared with the QAR Team that the principal uses both school improvement committees and teacher teams to share ideas.

The principal and other school leaders foster a learning community through a monthly meeting rotation – faculty meetings, team meetings, and school improvement committee meetings. The entire school community works collaboratively to sustain a culture that supports informed risk-taking. Support staff members mentioned that they could benefit from more opportunities to participate in job-related training.

All DoDEA schools are to be data-driven, and practices are expected to be research-based. Based on artifact review, interviews, and observations, this school meets DoDEA expectations. The continuous school improvement co-chairs described the process for reviewing data and making decisions: the school utilized a data carousel activity when choosing school goals, establishing school-wide performance assessments, and making other school improvement decisions. School improvement leaders, along with teachers, regularly review student achievement data relative to the goals. Teacher teams meet at least monthly to look at student work, making adjustments to instruction as needed.

All stakeholders have opportunities to provide leadership. Teachers and other staff members serve as committee chairs, team leaders, and sponsors for extra-curricular student activities. Students practice leadership in a variety of ways, including mediating peer conflicts, mentoring other students, giving morning announcements, and supporting community projects. Students also provide leadership as they help other students with activities such as kangaroo jump rope, homework club, soroban, and family consumer science-related activities. Parents have opportunities to take on leadership roles in the School Advisory Committee (SAC) and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), to volunteer in classrooms, and to promote effective communication by translating documents and interpreting as needed.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:
- The principal is an effective leader who is well-liked and respected, and who fosters good communication by maintaining an open-door policy.
- The principal is open to new ideas and supports teacher requests when appropriate.
- The principal and other school leaders foster a learning community through monthly faculty meetings, team meetings, and school improvement committee meetings.
- Students have taken on a variety of leadership roles, including mediating peer conflicts, mentoring

other students, giving morning announcements, and supporting community projects.

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

- Consider ways in which the current professional development plan can be expanded to include more opportunities for support staff members to participate in job-related training.

Finding: Jack N Darby Elementary School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" 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:

Helping students become the best they can be drives the teaching and learning processes at this school. Student expectations are made clear and classroom instruction is modified as needed. Furthermore, students are aware of classroom expectations and, in some classrooms, provide leadership such as conducting warm-up activities. New students are made aware of the vision and standards. Students are challenged with extended questioning, question of the day, test questions, and local assessments to assess their growth. Teachers noted that they identify areas of weakness and provide individualized instruction based on review of data and discussion about student work. Students shared that if they don't understand, a teacher will help them.

Every student who was interviewed could describe the goals in their own words; some students also mentioned the adopted problem-solving model referred to as FOSSE (Find Out, Strategize, Solve, Explain) and the 6+1 writing traits. Teachers and the principal provided the opportunities for students to create a school song and mascot (FOSSE) to support the continuous school improvement goals. The writing committee provides instruction on the Looking at Student Work (LASW) process, the 6+1 traits of writing process, and use of rubrics.

Based on observations, interviews, and artifact reviews, teaching and learning is grounded in a variety of successful practices. Teachers use peer modeling and lesson modifications in response to "teachable moments" and to address individual student needs. Students stated that they feel comfortable using the mathematics intervention, FOSSE, with or without the rubric. Students extend the FOSSE process to other subjects, such as science. Students mentioned that they participate in a variety of mathematics and writing activities related to the goals. Both students and teachers reported that opportunities are provided for review of mathematics work to enhance learning. Students use the library and computers as research tools to support and strengthen writing skills.

Observations provided evidence of active student involvement through the use of manipulatives, flexible small groups, and technology such as interactive whiteboards and projection units. Students mentioned that technology is well-utilized in classroom instruction. Students use writing and mathematics journals daily, with frequent teacher feedback provided. The QAR Team observed that teachers in lower grades (K-3) used flexible small group interaction more so than teachers in upper grades (4-6). Students practiced

both writing and problem-solving skills in real-world ways during lessons in science and music as well as in mathematics and language arts. Students benefit from literacy-related activities such as the Living History Museum, biographies, "read-alouds," author visits, and the school-wide reading program, "Million Words Read." Computer support is provided for Accelerated Reader (AR) tests and research.

Teachers and staff members display high quality student work on bulletin boards throughout the school and on the Intranet (i.e., teacher webpages, student webpages). These work samples reflect the two continuous school improvement goals, as well as DoDEA curriculum standards. Some teachers post collections of student work electronically; however, the QAR Team noted that imbedded links in these posted work samples do not always work.

Students indicated that they are supported by teachers and helped to become successful learners. Students responded that learning opportunities include Read 180, special education, gifted education, homework club, library, and teacher-provided after school programs. Students are aware of their success through evidence such as Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) scores.

Evidence of continuous improvement goals, grade level standards, and teacher expectations is posted in classrooms and hallways. Teachers indicate that assessment of student learning includes a variety of tools and processes including review of student logs, mathematics and writing journals, student questions, rubrics, Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) scores, Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) scores, and pre-tests and post-tests. Best practice examples and ideas are shared through monthly team meetings. In addition, monthly subject area meetings often include student work review and looking at student growth.

Students stated that what they learn in special subjects complements what they learn in their general education classes. A retired Japanese physics professor provides hands-on experiences for 5th and 6th grade students in a dedicated science lab. The intermediate science teacher collaborates with the visiting professor by preparing students before the experiments, translating for the professor, and providing follow-up activities and discussion after the experiment.

Study tours are provided to both on- and off-base locations. Teachers organize on-base activities, and the Host Nation teacher provides support for trips planned to off-base locations. The Host Nation teacher provides speakers and organizes activities in and with the Japanese community, including visits to and from Japanese schools. The school also hosts visitors from many Japanese schools.

The QAR Team observed that teachers and students value instructional time, keeping students on-task during all instructional minutes. As further demonstration of effective use of time, parent conferences are conducted quarterly, on non-instructional days. Informal parent conferences are conducted before or after school as needed. Some teachers conduct conferences during teacher planning time, but not during instructional time. Teacher meetings, team meetings, and committee meetings are conducted after school.

Teachers support school goals by using the LASW process to evaluate student learning, by sharing and discussing students' mathematics and writing examples by grade level. Special subject teachers participate on grade level LASW teams based on which grade level they work with most often. Vertical team meetings occur at the end of the school year to review assessment results and plan for the next school year.

During interviews, students stated that they felt safe in school and that they had been provided training for emergencies, including fire, earthquake, typhoon, and school lockdowns. School safety rules are presented in school safety videos that are posted on the Intranet. Intermediate grade students indicated that they learned important information from the anti-bullying and healthy eating habits programs.

Various forms of technology are available and used extensively by students, teachers, and parents. The school has computer labs for group instruction as well as computers in the library for individual student use. Student webpages are posted on the Intranet and include student work and event videos. Student products include PowerPoint presentations, videos, and Excel spreadsheets, printed examples of which are posted throughout the school. Teachers and students in many classrooms use interactive whiteboards. Projection units are used in most classrooms. The school provides outreach to deployed parents by helping them connect with their child's/children's school experiences through technology. Parents also noted that they would like instruction for their children about appropriate Internet research practices (i.e., credible websites, search engines) and responsible use of technology.

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

- Students are producing high quality work that is posted on bulletin boards throughout the school, on the Intranet, and on teacher and student webpages.
- Teachers "do whatever it takes" to promote student success.
- Students are supported by teachers and helped to become successful learners, They know that teachers and other staff members help them learn.
- All staff members support the continuous school improvement goals.

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

- Consider ways to extend flexible small group learning to all grade levels and classes.
- Regularly monitor links that are provided on the Intranet to ensure that all links are active.
- Promote consistent use of webpages by all teachers.
- Promote instruction related to responsible use of technology that includes online research tools, techniques, and the use of a variety of appropriate search engines.

Finding: Jack N Darby 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:

Based on artifact review, interviews, and observations, the QAR Team determined that this school is using processes and practices that are data-driven and research-based. Teachers stated that they have received some training about basic data analysis processes. The school utilized a data carousel activity when choosing school goals that focus on improving writing and mathematical problem-solving skills, when establishing the school-wide performance assessments, and when making school improvement decisions. Assessments chosen for the writing goal are Terra Nova writing for 3rd – 6th grades given in the spring; a local writing prompt in kindergarten through 6th grade given in the fall and in the spring; and, teacher-created curriculum assessments given periodically at the end of textbooks units in all grades. Assessments chosen for mathematics problem-solving are Terra Nova mathematics in 3rd – 6th grades given in the spring; a local mathematics prompt in problem-solving in kindergarten through 6th grade given in the fall

and spring; and, teacher-generated curriculum assessments given periodically at the end of textbook units in all grades.

The school's assessment system also includes Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) scores which are used to measure and support all students' literacy skills attainment and to provide help for those who do not measure up to the learning expectations. The staff chose to use Looking at Student Work (LASW) processes and 6+1 Writing Traits rubric as interventions to monitor student progress in writing. The staff also chose LASW and Number Talk programs as interventions for mathematics problem-solving.

Individual staff members mentioned that they use data to monitor student progress. Examples include the gifted education teacher tracking student performance and the physical education teacher using data to benchmark and compare fitness growth. Teachers expressed positive feelings about the use and success of all interventions and have seen growth in student achievement.

Interviews and artifact review indicated that grade level teams meet every fourth Tuesday to review data, to determine how students are progressing, and to plan differentiated instruction to meet the students' immediate needs. Teachers were trained to use rubrics with the local assessments and created benchmark writing and mathematics papers to help guide how to score student work. In interviews, teachers expressed a need for more training in how to use data over time. Teachers use local assessment data to compare student growth from fall to spring and to guide instruction for the following fall. Teachers from the same grade level review common assessment results and use the team meetings to review Terra Nova results in the spring; however, this assessment is not tied to the DoDEA curriculum standards, but it serves as a starter for further discussions to delve into why students scored the way they did and to find a correlation with results from other assessments. Classroom teachers also use informal assessments (i.e., observations, student work, student portfolios, learning logs) to monitor student progress.

The school established a targeted group – English as a Second Language (ESL) – for whom they specifically focus instruction and monitor progress. Identified students are provided extra interventions and help in both mathematics problem-solving and writing. Individual student data are collected and reviewed in the team meetings; teachers indicated that the extra interventions are making a difference with students in the targeted group.

Five times a year a Literacy Partnership meeting is held where an ESL teacher, the Reading 180 teacher, a Learning Impaired (LI) teacher, the principal, and a classroom teacher meet to discuss students who have fallen behind in literacy skills attainment. The status of students' progress is discussed using data from the various assessments, and then a plan of action is put into place that will help the student work toward success in reading. The QAR Team understands that the success rate of students who receive additional support services for reading through the Literacy Partnership program is tracked informally.

The school maintains a complete and up-to-date profile that features unique local insights, follow-up on former students, existing school data, and a summary of results and effectiveness. Based on review and extensive analysis of assessment data, the continuous school improvement committee has determined that the writing goal needs to be continued because, although student writing has improved over time, further improvement is desired. Statistical analysis using the effect size algorithm has shown the problem-solving intervention to be effective, with all seven z-score comparisons showing meaningful increase. Therefore, the Continuous School Improvement Committee has determined that the mathematics problem-solving goal has been met, and a new goal will be studied and chosen for the 2011 – 2012 school year. The CSI Committee also uses data from the DoDEA annual report card to show how the school compares to other school in the Japan District.

Based on artifact review and interviews, the school communicates student progress in a variety of ways such as report cards issued at the end of every quarter, parent/teacher conferences held at the end of the first quarter in which student work is shared, parent newsletters, a parent letter sent home explaining the Terra Nova results, and Gradespeed, an online gradebook. Student work is displayed in the halls and in the classrooms around the school as evidence of student achievement. However, based on observations, no school-wide data are displayed to show students' progress and the school's effectiveness.

Students are frequently recognized through programs such as the Million Word Club in reading and Student of the Month bulletin board. School data are also shared with stakeholders in many forums such as the School Advisory Committee (SAC), the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), the Installation Advisory Committee (IAC), the school's Intranet webpage, and the DoDEA website. The school also uses data from the DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey and teacher surveys to determine stakeholder perceptions and satisfaction with the school programs, the results, and their effectiveness.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:
- The school effectively uses quantitative and qualitative data to monitor student progress, and this positively impacts instruction and the school's effectiveness.
- The school communicates with stakeholders regarding student progress through a variety of means.
- The school uses data to monitor student progress and provides a strong support system for students who have not met learning expectations.
- The school has determined through data analysis that the mathematics problem-solving goal has been met.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:
- Follow through with continuous school improvement plans to analyze data and choose a new school improvement goal.
- Create a data display in the school that features student progress toward the school goals.
- Formalize the tracking of student success in the Literacy Partnership.

Finding: Jack N Darby 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:

Based on observations, interviews and artifact review, the school has the resources and services necessary to support and to ensure achievement for all students. Based on observations, staffing at this school reflects the school's vision. Using processes established by DoDEA and school officials, staff members and other personnel are hired and assigned according to their qualifications. The principal has hired teachers with multiple qualifications. The size of the school and the number of staff members were reflected during an interview: "Small class size is a positive at this school and allows us to better know and help our

students." The principal observes staff members regularly and holds end-of-year conferences according to DoDEA guidelines.

Included in the action plan is a professional development plan that supports the school improvement goals. Staff development related to continuous school improvement is conducted in-house using staff expertise during the four meeting Tuesday rotation (i.e., staff meeting, CSILT meeting, school improvement committee meetings, and team meetings). The school also attends an "Educator Day" where teachers can learn from others. New teachers are given an orientation at the beginning of the year and are mentored by a veteran teacher. DoDEA offers and encourages online professional development courses such as special education aide training and university course opportunities. However, during interviews support staff members expressed interest in participating in training for their job. During interviews, staff members noted that they would like more professional development; however, they know that budgetary restraints are in place which reduce the number of opportunities. Specifically, some faculty members stated that they would like more training in data understanding and usage.

As stated in the Self Assessment (SA) and confirmed by the QAR Team in interviews, the school is well-funded through government procurement. During the year, the principal asks for suggestions for using discretionary funds and tries to fulfill those requests. Teachers are also given a budget for purchases to support the classroom and the interventions. Budgetary and resources oversight is monitored by the resource manager, supply clerk, and principal. As the resource manager stated, "I ensure that teachers have all that they need to ensure that DoDEA children have what THEY need." Teachers have opportunities to request resources that might be purchased later with unbudgeted amounts. Some additional funds are raised by the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and are used to support extra student activities such as field day, potter-in-residence, a haiku artist, and a visiting author. Audits are held regularly and the school has remained in compliance with governmental regulations.

The school has a crisis team and policies and procedures are in place and included in handbooks. Based on observations, both the school and equipment are well-maintained. The school employs a handyman, supply specialist, and many local maintenance workers who are constantly cleaning, polishing, and repairing. The resource manager also makes sure inspections are current, schedules emergency drills, and manages the custodial staff.

The school is a safe learning environment where children want to come to learn. As one student said in the interview, "I like to come to this school!" Students also indicated that they always have someone like the principal or teachers they can go to if they have a problem. Based on observations and interviews, the school has a wide range of resources that provide needed support for all children attending this school. The school has a full-time guidance counselor who is in classrooms at least once a week. Student peer mediators are chosen and trained to help their peers when a problem occurs at school. The school has a part-time nurse who supports the health and well-being of the students and coordinates dental and medical visits from specialists. Students and families have a new resource available to them, Military and Family Life Consultants (MFLC), that is provided to this school by the base commander to support students at school. Other programs include Character Counts and career counseling. Through observations and interviews, the QAR Team noted that all staff members are sensitive to the needs of students whose parents are deployed.

Students with special needs receive the support they need in multiple ways at this school. Support services include the Case Study Committee which meets weekly to review students needing services and ensure compliance with federal regulations. Kurzweil, an electronic reader, is available for hearing impaired students. The English as a Second Language (ESL) Team reviews all incoming students, assesses their possible needs and assigns a level of service. All of these supports are monitored by the Literacy

Partnership meetings which are held five times a year where the Learning Impaired (LI) teacher, the Read 180 teacher, the ESL teacher, the classroom teacher, and the principal meet to coordinate services, discuss the students' progress, and decide the next course of action and support. The Student Support Team (SST) meets weekly to review referrals from classroom teachers and specialists for students who are having trouble adjusting to school.

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

- The support services provided by this school are extensive, well-coordinated, and successfully implemented.
- The school is well-maintained and clean, and it provides a safe learning environment for all children.

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

- Develop and implement a professional development plan that will provide teachers with additional information about how to analyze and use data to inform instruction.
- Encourage support staff members to use available online training opportunities.

Finding: Jack N Darby Elementary School has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" 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 school community is a small, tightly knit community, with all students coming from the Hario housing unit. Parents and children shared with the QAR Team that they feel comfortable communicating with teachers, the principal, and other staff members. The principal, teachers, and support staff all maintain an open-door policy. Support staff members shared that they believe they are part of the school team, not just support staff, and that they work collaboratively with the teachers to support student learning.

Based on review of artifacts and information shared in interviews, teachers, the principal, and other school staff members communicate effectively using strategies that include the school website, the Intranet, email, notes and phone calls home, the newsletter, progress reports, parent / teacher conferences, Gradespeed, and electronic student portfolios. Student expectations are shared with parents using handbooks, daily folders, and planners. However, parents who were interviewed indicated that not all parents know where and how to express their concerns about issues that are out of the purview of the school.

Documents are translated as needed into Japanese, Tagalog, and Spanish; translators are also available for conferences. The principal noted that many Japanese schools visit, sometimes bringing the entire school – one school even stays overnight when they visit.

Parents and support staff members noted that "most of us are military spouses and have diverse perspectives and understandings;" this allows the school to work more effectively as a team to provide

specific support for families during deployment. Because parents are often deployed for lengthy periods of time, the school uses resources such as Skype and videos of special events to keep parents actively informed and involved in their children's education.

The school provides opportunities for parents and their children to come together to celebrate student learning. Parents expressed their appreciation for information about how they can help their children at home. Teachers and parents shared that events such as the Math Carnival and weekly parent literacy support meetings provide opportunities for parents to learn strategies to help their children be successful.

Parents, teachers, and the principal noted that parents and other community members are true partners with the school, providing a variety of supports. Parents translate for other parents, and the Host Nation teacher provides translation to Kanji in emails and other formats. Students benefit from Japanese community partnerships. A retired science professor conducts hands-on science lab experiments with 5th and 6th grade students. Taicho drummers, haiku poets, local potters, and ceramic artists, working with the Host Nation teacher, provide enriched cultural experiences throughout the school year.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:
- Because parents are often deployed for lengthy periods of time, the school uses resources such as Skype and videos of special events to keep parents actively informed and involved in their students' education.
- Documents are translated as needed into Japanese, Tagalog, and Spanish; translators are also available for conferences.
- Students benefit from Japanese community partnerships. A retired science professor works with teachers to conduct science lab experiments. Taicho drummers, haiku poets, local potters, and ceramic artists, working with the host nation teacher, provide enriched cultural experiences throughout the school year.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:
- Provide additional reminders about when and how parents may share concerns.

Finding: Jack N Darby 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:

The school vision is: "A community dedicated to success for all students." The entire staff and student body are committed to this vision. Parents know the school goals and are fully supportive of the school's efforts to ensure success for all students. Students indicate that the focus on school-wide goals and support provided by teachers are strengths. Teachers commented that they are always looking for ways to improve, using team time for Looking at Student Work (LASW) and monitoring student progress as well as their instructional practices.

All staff members and students are committed and actively involved in the process of continuous school improvement. Goals are posted throughout the school, along with student work. The QAR Team heard many students talk about "becoming better writers" (goal 1) and "becoming better problem-solvers (goal 2)." Teachers use monthly team meetings for the LASW process and monthly committee meetings to oversee progress toward continuous school improvement goals. Professional development is embedded in both team and committee meetings.

School improvement leaders requested assistance from the Japan District School Office (DSO) to support continuous improvement efforts. Over the last three years, the DSO has provided guidance and professional development for reviewing data, completing the self-assessment, updating the profile, and preparing for the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit.

School improvement committees and teacher teams monitor progress with continuous school improvement action plans as well as student achievement, providing reports to the CSILT. The CSILT reviews this information, organizes the information, and shares information in various ways (i.e., bulletin boards, school and teacher websites, school and teacher newsletters, and American Forces Network (AFN) local news stories).

The CSILT plans next steps based on the collective information from all committees and teams, sharing results with the entire school staff at faculty meetings or with committee and team chairs. At the last CSI meeting of the school year, the CSILT works with all staff members to review information and discuss plans for the next school year.

Goal One – Writing: Based on review and extensive analysis of assessment data, the Continuous School Improvement Committee has determined that goal one needs to be continued because, although student writing has improved over time, further improvement is desired. Teachers shared that the original focus for goal one was to introduce 6 + 1 Writing Traits, focusing on one or two traits each year. However, during interviews, teachers shared that they now are implementing all six traits, though without a defined, consistent scope and sequence for instruction and assessment.

Goal Two – Mathematics: Statistical analysis using the effect size algorithm has shown the problem-solving intervention to be effective. Therefore, the continuous school improvement committee has determined that goal two has been met and a new goal will be studied and chosen for the 2011 – 2012 school year.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:
- The entire staff and student body are committed to the vision.
- The school communicates progress with continuous school improvement in a variety of ways.
- The CSILT uses information provided by the school improvement committees and teacher teams to monitor and adjust the continuous improvement process.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:
- Develop and implement a plan for focusing intentionally on all writing traits at all grades.

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

Conclusion

The commendations and required actions 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 required actions 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 required actions for improvement that the school will need to address. Following this review, the school will be required to submit a progress report summarizing its progress toward addressing the team's required actions.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to the School Administration, 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 NCA-CASI-DODEA accreditation with AdvancED.

Appendix

Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Ms. Mary Mickelson, CHAIR (Brownsburg Community School Corp)
- Mr. Philip Metcalf, VICE_CHAIR (Wawasee High School)
- Ms. Laurel Eisinger, MEMBER (Daegu American School)
- Laura Elder, MEMBER (Shirley Lanham Elementary)
- Jay Arnold, MEMBER (Yokosuka Middle School)

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.