Colegio Panamericano

Standards Assessment Report (SAR)

January 2009
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Introduction

Purpose of the Report

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 (QAR). 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?"

Together, the indicators rubric, focus questions, and overall assessment provide a comprehensive view of how schools address each of the standards.
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

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Evident</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Operational</th>
<th>Highly Functional</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Establishes a vision for the school in collaboration with its stakeholders</td>
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<td>1.2 Communicates the vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support</td>
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<td>1.3 Identifies goals to advance the vision</td>
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<td>1.4 Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the school, its students, and the community</td>
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<td>1.5 Ensures that the school's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process</td>
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<td>1.6 Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate</td>
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### Focus Questions:

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

The Colegio Panamericano community has followed a cyclical process for establishing and committing to its guiding statements. As part of the SACS re-accreditation process in 2004, the school leadership was very inclusive in the methods they used to take on the task of involving all stakeholders in the redefinition of the Mission, Vision and Belief statements. These statements were then shared with the community and used to guide all major institutional practices, from instructional and curricular design to material purchasing and staffing needs. Even in the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year the school director publically challenged all teachers, students and parents to set 3 goals for themselves based on the guiding elements of the Mission statement from...
2004. This served to continuously orient the school community; however the creation and adoption process for new institutional guiding statements had already begun.

In 2007, the school began to re-examine the guiding statements and ensure that they clearly communicated our central identifying values and methods to teachers, parents, students, community members and all other school stakeholders. To strengthen the community’s understanding and commitment to the new Vision and Purpose, every attempt was made to actively involve as many people as possible in the process of creating them. Teams of teachers examined the past guiding statements to give input on which elements no longer reflected the school’s current identity. Similarly, the past statements were shared with the parent community through the school newsletter, and feedback was received which was later used to guide the creation of new statements. The administrative team researched the objectives of guiding statements, appropriate wording and phrases adopted by a range of public and private institutions. Once the core ideas had been identified by the community, a rough draft was presented in both English and Spanish to teachers and parents to encourage further input and ownership. This draft was again modified to include concepts considered central to the Colegio Panamericano philosophy and goals. The Colegio Panamericano community adopted the following Vision and Purpose statements in 2008:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
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<tr>
<td>We envision our graduates as socially responsible, adaptable, life-long learners and leaders capable of passionately pursuing their dreams.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colegio Panamericano is a progressive, non-profit educational community with a global perspective offering both Colombian and U.S. diplomas. Our rigorous curriculum and exemplary faculty empower students to develop their intellectual, physical, and ethical potentials in preparation for a quality university education and a successful life.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

While the final draft of the school’s Vision and Purpose was adopted in 2008, the process for building understanding continued throughout the year. The new statements have been included in the school’s Official Handbook, weekly newsletters to parents and promotional material for new families. The school began to re-define and update day-to-day practices, such as encouraging programs that supported the school Purpose, and establishing a minor scholarship to be given to students who best demonstrate the values expressed in the school Vision.

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 Colegio Panamericano constantly works to define the school profile. In addition to the most important factor of allowing institutional self-assessment, the school must share accurate profile information with new and perspective parents and applicants for teaching positions, especially those coming from abroad.

In 2007, a survey was conducted using NSSE services, which polled the opinions of parents, students and teachers on a range of institutional issues. The data from this survey permitted a more effective definition of areas for school improvement. This profile data was added to data which is currently
compiled by the school’s admissions and counseling departments to gain deeper insight into the thoughts and trends of our community.

Student performance data, both quantitative and qualitative, are used to direct curricular decisions such as instructional methods and program development. In past years, data collected from student grades, formalized internal writing assessments and external tests such as the SAT, PSAT, ICFES and Stanford 9, helped guide institutional decision-making processes from areas for professional development to individual teacher growth plans. Recent adoption of NWEA MAP tests in the areas of Math, Reading and Language Usage for all students from grades 3-10 has added much-needed depth and perspective to previously existing student performance data.

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

The Mission, Vision and Beliefs adopted in 2004 were central to the definition of a 5-year School Improvement Plan as well as on-going efforts to develop and focus teaching and learning practices. In reference to the phrases, “...students reach their full ...intellectual potential...” the school took on the multi-year improvement goals of strengthening the English, Spanish and Math programs, as well as increasing support for the area of technology. To be, “...recognized nationally and internationally” required the adoption of a Colombian-American curriculum which combined strengths and areas of focus of the Colombian Ministry of Education with those of the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, and permitted the school to continue conferring both Colombian and American diplomas to its graduates. Similarly, school leadership created an action plan for instilling core institutional values of respect and responsibility as a response to the phrase, “...within a respectful and responsible... environment...”

Essential to the process of linking the guiding statements to actual teaching and learning processes, the Colegio Panamericano provides all teachers with a “Go-To Binder” at the beginning of the year that communicates the guiding statements as a focal point for curriculum and school policy. The statements are also posted in classrooms, on the school webpage and in all school communications. In 2007, 80.4% of teachers surveyed using the NSSE tool either agreed (49%) or strongly agreed (31.4%) with the statement, “Our school has a clear mission and goals that provide our staff with a common purpose and sense of direction.” Further demonstrating confidence in a clear vision for the school, 84.1% of teachers either agreed (52.9%) or strongly agreed (41.2%) with the statement, “Our school is committed to continuous improvement focused on improving student learning.”

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?

Committed to the goal of continuous improvement, the Colegio Panamericano has participated actively in the 5-year review cycle established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Through this cycle the school constantly revisits important goals and achievements, such as creating yearly goals for each section and documenting results of improvement efforts. As a crucial part of this cycle, the previously mentioned process for redefining and fully implementing new Vision and Purpose statements for the school sought to be as inclusive and open as possible. The involvement throughout 2007 and 2008 of many different internal and external stakeholders, through participation in surveys, feedback sessions and review of publicized drafts of the statements, helped construct statements that were coherent with current community expectations and set clear goals for institutional efforts.
Overall Assessment: Vision and Purpose

Operational

“The school has committed to a shared purpose and direction. The school has clearly defined expectations for student learning aligned with the school’s vision that is supported by school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school effectiveness. The school’s vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.”
**Standard 2: Governance & Leadership**

**Standard:** The school provides governance and leadership that promotes 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.

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<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Not Evident</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
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<th>Highly Functional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In fulfillment of this standard, the school operates under the jurisdiction of a governing board that:</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1 Establishes policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the school.</td>
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<td>2.2 Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership prerogatives of the administrative head of the school.</td>
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<td>2.3 Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations.</td>
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<td>In fulfillment of this standard, the school has leadership that:</td>
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<td>2.4 Employs a system that provides for analysis and review of student performance and school effectiveness.</td>
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<td>2.5 Fosters a learning community.</td>
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<td>2.6 Provides teachers and students opportunities to lead.</td>
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<td>2.7 Provides stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership.</td>
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<td>2.8 Controls curricular and extracurricular activities that are sponsored by the school.</td>
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<td>2.9 Responds to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction.</td>
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<td>2.10 Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel.</td>
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</table>

**Focus Questions:**

1. What is the process for establishing, communicating, and implementing policies and procedures for the effective operation of the school?
Colegio Panamericano has a clear process for establishing, communicating, and implementing policies and procedures within the school community. The Board of Directors establishes policies and procedures with input from the Leadership Team according to school needs and community feedback.

The Board comprises 14 members of the parent community who are elected by a general assembly each year. The Leadership Team consists of the Director, Business Manager, section principals, and the Dean of Students. The director and the business manager meet with the school board ten times a year to monitor progress of the school's mission and purpose; ensure legal and ethical integrity; maintain accountability; ensure effective organizational planning; determine, monitor, and strengthen the organization's programs and services; and ensure that the school system operates in accordance with the expectations of the Colombian Ministry of Education and AdvancED standards.

The Board provides the director and administrative team with the moral and professional support they need to further the goals of the organization. The director is responsible for the administration and execution of approved policies and procedures, and for keeping the Board and community informed about pertinent issues.

The director and the leadership team meet weekly to discuss issues relating to the implementation and communication of approved policies and procedures. Section principals meet as well with their teams to analyze the daily issues that arise at the school and to discuss proposals and suggestions to improve school effectiveness in guaranteeing a quality education for students. Teachers support school policies and procedures when working with students and their families.

Colegio Panamericano uses a variety of resources to communicate policies and procedures with its stakeholders. These include a weekly newsletter entitled “Bits and Pieces”, the Manual de Convivencia which outlines school policies and procedures, a teachers’ “Go-To Binder” outlining responsibilities, weekly agendas from section principals, email, the school website, letters, and written correspondence. In sum, Colegio Panamericano’s organized structure and professional communications facilitate the establishment, communication, and implementation of policies and procedures for the effective operation of the school.

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

The leadership of Colegio Panamericano has been working hard over the last few years to establish a consistent and effective plan to evaluate school and student performance. At the beginning of the school year, parents attend sectional Open Houses to meet with the leadership team and teachers, and discuss their expectations and important school processes that promote a learning environment. Throughout the year, parents always have ongoing and constant opportunities to provide feedback and meet with teachers, counselors, principals, and the director. Any particular feedback or information garnered within sections is shared at the leadership team’s weekly meetings, where it is analyzed and used as a part of the school evaluation process.

During the year, the school offers grade level meetings with parents called “Coffee with the Director”. These meetings provide a forum to speak with the director, business manager, section principal and counselor. This forum maintains open lines of communication, giving parents and
administrators clear feedback about how the school is functioning and what adjustments need to be made to have a positive learning environment.

In terms of academic development, the leadership team analyzes the results from standardized tests in order to describe trends in student performance and develop strategies for improvement. These tests include the ICFES, PSAT, SAT, and MAP. The leadership team shares this information with teachers during academic meetings. Working together, the leadership team and teachers establish specific plans to support student learning.

Finally, section principals examine report card data every trimester to better understand overall student performance and trends. In addition, the Evaluation and Promotion Committee analyzes individual cases and makes recommendations that benefit student learning and overall academic achievement.

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

Colegio Panamericano is an institution where leadership is considered a fundamental value. The **vision** of our school is for our graduates to be life-long learners and leaders. Teachers, administrators, parents, and students work together in their respective roles to create a caring and open community based on mutual respect and common goals. Students learn to become good citizens, serve others and respect the environment through personal involvement and experience.

Colegio Panamericano believes that opportunities for democratic participation and teacher leadership in the school are essential. To this extent organizations have been formed to provide not only governance for school policy and operation, but also to provide students, parents, staff, and community the opportunity for leadership and assistance in helping the school to meet its vision.

Teacher leadership is encouraged through department coordination and committee work. Examples of these include the MS/HS English Language Coordinator, the Lower School Science Coordinator, the Academic Council, the sectional Academic Advisory Councils, discipline committees, elected teacher representatives, and area and grade level meetings. Additionally, teachers are empowered through their active participation in decisions that contribute to the enhancement of the school and through opportunities to organize activities in their area, such as school academic nights, science fairs, field trips, and academic encounters with other institutions. Moreover, teachers are autonomous in developing and implementing methodologies in their subject in accordance with school expectations.

All parents of enrolled children comprise the General Assembly, which, among it other functions, elects the **Board of Directors**. Parents also have the opportunity to get involved in the formation of activities for students through the **VYDA** and Boosters programs.

Students show their leadership by electing representatives to a student council (STUCO) in elementary, middle, and high school. The STUCOs organize and sponsor different events and activities throughout the year for the student body. As an educational leader in Bucaramanga, Colegio Panamericano promotes social initiatives within and outside the school. Students participate in programs like Padrinos, **National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society**, and integrative activities that contribute to both the quality of living of beneficiaries as well as the formation of citizens with pro-social commitment.
4. What policies and processes are in place to ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation?

The various policies and processes in place at Colegio Panamericano that ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation are the following:

a. Every member of the Colegio Panamericano teaching staff bases his or her curriculum on the requirements of the Ministry of National Education and international standards based on McREL.

b. It is a school policy to adhere to AdvancED standard 3.11 in terms of the number of students per classroom.

c. In the school library, there is vast selection of books for research and effective learning for the Panamericano community. The library undergoes a continuous renewal process. Also, national and foreign textbooks are renewed through an adoption cycle in the different subject areas in order to maintain up-to-date content.

d. The Learning Center is in charge of supporting students with learning difficulties. Counselors, teachers, and assistants aid students as they overcome learning struggles. The counselor works with the teachers, parents, and students throughout the year in order to create an individual educational plan for each student. Many students receive special tutoring and some are given internal or external therapy.

e. Computer and audiovisual labs are updated continually. This modern technology enhances both academic and administrative processes.

f. Students’ active participation in a variety of extra-curricular activities such as Destination Imagination, ‘Pasaporte a la Aventura’, sports clubs, Classrooms without Walls, Bi-national Games, and academic encounters permit and amplify student knowledge, vision of the world, and integration with others.

g. Colegio Panamericano offers AP and Pre-AP courses to students in Spanish, Math, and English. These courses challenge students and prepare them for university classes and life.

h. Standardized test such as NWEA MAP and the SAT provide invaluable data on student achievement and contribute to the development of student test-taking skills. School leaders analyze standardized tests results as part of school and program effectiveness studies. These analyses serve as the foundation for strategic action plans for school improvement.

i. Colegio Panamericano provides economic support for laptop acquisition for its teachers.
Overall Assessment: Governance & Leadership

Operational

“The school has leaders who are advocates for the school's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and systematically allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The school's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation. While these processes and conditions are being implemented, the implementation is not systemic across the school, and the results are varied. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric".
Standard 3: Teaching and Learning

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

**Impact Statement:** A school is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

### Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In fulfillment of this standard, the school:</th>
<th>Not Evident</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Operational</th>
<th>Highly Functional</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Develops and implements curriculum based on clearly defined expectations for student learning</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>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</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3 Gathers, analyzes, and uses data and research in making curricular and instructional choices</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 Designs and uses instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that are research-based and reflective of best practice</td>
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<td>3.5 Offers a curriculum that challenges each student to excel, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity</td>
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<td>3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>3.7 Provides for articulation and alignment between and among all levels of schools</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.8 Implements interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning</td>
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<td>3.9 Monitors school climate and takes appropriate steps to ensure that it is conducive to student learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.10 Provides comprehensive information and media services that support the curricular and instructional programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>✓</td>
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### Committee Members

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<tr>
<td>Alejandra Padilla</td>
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<td>Adriana Leal</td>
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<td>Cristian Ardila</td>
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<td>Yaneth Plata</td>
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<td>Zeb Johnson</td>
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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 of student learning?

Beginning with the creation of a School Improvement Plan as part of the SACS re-accreditation process during 2003-2004, the school's leadership has implemented a curriculum framework based on Dr. Janie Pollock’s “Big Four Strategy” from Improving Student Learning: One Teacher at a Time. The following stages and school-wide accomplishments comprise this framework:

1. Clearly articulated learning targets
2. Effective planning and instruction to the learning targets
3. Variety of assessments
4. Criterion-based feedback, recordkeeping and reporting

2004-2005
Clearly articulated learning targets
☑ Identified as a need in the 2003-2004 SACS re-accreditation process and School Improvement plan, school-wide learning targets were adopted in the form of McREL (Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning laboratory) standards and benchmarks which identified developmentally-appropriate learning objectives for each grade level. Since their initial adoption, these standards and benchmarks have been redistributed and modified by curriculum teams on an on-going basis, according to the needs of our particular students. For example: Combination of American Social Studies curriculum with “Sociales” (Colombian History, Geography, Politics and Culture taught by Colombian teachers in Spanish)

2005-2006
Effective planning and instruction to the learning targets
☑ Introduction and training in the area of Best Practice and Classroom Instruction that Really Works
☑ The school Curriculum Team attended Janie Pollock’s Learning Horizons training course and was prompted to take a new direction for Big Four sequence, based on backward-design planning.

2006-2007
Criterion-based feedback, recordkeeping and reporting
☑ Discussion surrounding specific and timely feedback
☑ Full adoption of SDS system for reporting student performance in subject areas, standards and benchmarks
☑ School-wide standardization of planning and record-keeping, including a common format for unit plans and trimester divisions of curriculum documents

2007-2008
Variety of assessments
☑ School-wide workshops and development of authentic performance assessment, criterion-referenced tests and rubrics
☑ Full implementation of Formalized Writing Assessment, based on English and Spanish Language Arts standards
Pilot of MAP tests for Math, Reading and Language Usage skills, Grades 6-8

2008-2009
Effective planning and instruction to the learning targets
- Differentiated Instruction, aided by MAP test data and tools for Grades 3-10
- Balanced Literacy for Grades 1-5

In recent years, efforts to coordinate actions across grade levels have also included the online publication of standards and benchmarks, alignment of a school-wide re-teaching and re-testing policy, a common discipline policy, and a “Go-To Binder” for all teachers. The “Go-To Binder” outlines policies and practices for working with curriculum, creating Professional Growth Plans, and dealing with discipline issues. Subject area coordinators, administrators and teaching teams continue to work together during and between regularly scheduled discussions to ensure that student learning remains the focus of curriculum, evaluation and classroom instruction.

While much advancement has been made, Colegio Panamericano continues to identify areas for future growth. Some of these areas include i) the coordination of Reggio Emilia methodology in the Pre-School section with school-wide curriculum standards, ii) implementation of Balanced Literacy methodology and curriculum for LA classes in the Elementary Section, iii) growth of the AP Program, iv) the continuous use of data for driving major decision-making processes, and v) continued work with Dr. Pollock’s Big Four Strategy.

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

In addition to research-based school improvement strategies already mentioned above, Colegio Panamericano strives to continuously support an environment of innovation and reflection, seeking to take advantage of the many important professional tools that exist for educators. Working with guides such as What Works in Schools, by Robert Marzano, Colegio Panamericano focuses on school-level, teacher-level and student-level factors to improve student learning.

An important element in the reduction of future academic concerns has been the formalization of procedures and resources for the early identification of learning and language difficulties, which is directed by the school Learning Center in coordination with all teachers. Developed as an important element recognized by the previous School Improvement Plan, the Learning Center now provides consultation and testing services as well as a rich and varied learning environment for specific students that allows them to strengthen the foundations of their basic learning skills. Interdisciplinary meetings are convened regularly throughout the year to bring parents, teachers, counselors, therapists and tutors together to discuss student progress and recommend strategies and best practices that will most support each student.

Working closely with the Learning Center and school administration, Colegio Panamericano teachers seek to always use flexible student groupings to differentiate lessons according to learning styles and performance levels, exposing students to a variety of imported and nationally acquired materials which emphasize language development and higher order thinking. Through a school-wide re-teaching and re-testing program, teachers identify students that require extra support and work closely with them to reinforce learning and facilitate growth.
As part of an increased focus on research-based instructional strategies, Colegio Panamericano has adopted a long list of programs and strategies proven to facilitate student achievement. Some of these programs include a Home Reading Program in English and Spanish for all students Kinder 5 through grade 12; the use of portfolios, student self-assessment and Three-Way Conferences for strengthening meta-cognitive skills; Balanced Literacy, including the use of 4-Block, 6+1 Traits of Writing and Guided Reading strategies, and the use of internal and external data (such as MAP, SAT, PSAT, ICFES, report cards, formalized writing assessment and criterion-referenced tests) to guide instructional and institutional decision-making.

In addition to that which can be easily measured, many elements of school life have been adopted to help ensure success for our diverse population of students. The Preschool Section has embraced the Reggio Emilia methodology; students from grades 1 to 7 participate in the Destination Imagination program, while Middle School and High School students are able to select from a wide range of electives, as well as participate in artistic and philosophical exchanges with other institutions.

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

Over the past five years Colegio Panamericano has undergone a transition from principal-led teacher evaluation, based on the Five Essential Domains of Effective Teaching by Charlotte Danielson, to a process which is supported by the Five Domains but through which teachers create and lead their own professional growth plans. In addition to administrative and peer input, the creation of this plan, as well as many other major instructional decisions, takes into account student performance data, making data-based decision-making an increasingly central part of institutional improvement efforts.

Time and effort in the area of professional development is focused by the goal of effectively implementing and evaluating curriculum and improving student learning. Every Wednesday the Colegio Panamericano instructional staff meets as a school or in teams to work on school improvement, teacher preparation or subject coordination. Additionally, a total of 10-14 full days over the course of the year are dedicated to specific teacher training, planning and reflection.

The school also dedicates a specific portion of its annual budget to external professional development activities for staff. In the past these opportunities have included participation in regional and international conferences and workshops—training professional staff in areas such as Reggio Emilia or AP to coincide with school improvement goals.

In order to maximize opportunities for student learning, Colegio Panamericano has made certain adaptations to protect instructional time. For example, there have been increases to the amount of time and subjects with instruction in English, a switch from 45 to 65 minute blocks for Middle and High School students, efforts to reduce the quantity of interruptions such as assemblies, celebrations or parent interventions in class and a streamlined discipline policy with stronger implementation of the Tribes program to make the best use of class time.

4. How does the school provide every student access to comprehensive information, instructional technology, and media services?
Over the past three years, Colegio Panamericano has consistently implemented an ambitious Technology Plan, which has involved significant improvements to student access to comprehensive information, instructional technology, and media services. During the first stage of this plan the school acquired 30 graphic calculators, 17 Dell Pentium IV computers and 4 new video projectors, and set-up a wireless network for the entire school. The second stage included a massive purchase of educational software for all sections, 15 Dell Pentium IV computers, 2 projection carts with laptops, a video projector and a Mimio for use in individual classrooms, 8 Lego robotics kits and new servers and firewalls for network safety. The final phase of the plan saw the school complete construction for an air-conditioned Elementary IT lab with 15 Dell Pentium IV/HT computers, and an Audio-Visuals room for Elementary to complement the existent one for MS/HS. Colegio Panamericano has digitally inventoried all information, instructional and media services and material using EBSCO data base software, with direct links to the school webpage, making resources immediately available for all teachers and students. Throughout the term of the previous Technology Plan, teachers and students were given training on how to best use the new resources.

During the 2008-2009 school year the Colegio Panamericano made additional acquisitions in the area of technology. A new three-year technology plan is currently being developed to guide future initiatives starting in August 2009.

As a result of the Technology Plan, 85.5% of students agreed (27.2%) or strongly agreed (58.3%) that “Up-to-date computers and other technologies are used in our school to help students learn.” An overwhelming majority of students (82.8%) felt encouraged to use school and community resources (e.g., library, Internet) to help with schoolwork.

**Overall Assessment: Teaching and Learning**

**Operational**

“The school implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The school demonstrates evidence of alignment between the curriculum and instructional practices with systematic implementation across the school. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students regular feedback to improve their performance. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric”.
Standard 4: Documenting and Using Results

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

**Impact Statement:** A school is successful in meeting this standard when it uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.

### Indicators

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

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### Focus Questions:

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

Colegio Panamericano has a multi-faceted assessment system at the institutional level, grade level, area level, and classroom level, involving external and internal standardized tests, criterion-referenced tests, and systematically designed and implemented projects.
One of our newest externally developed standardized assessments is the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test. The school implemented a pilot test in mathematics, reading comprehension, and language usage in May 2008 for all Middle School students. This school year, all students in grades three through ten tested in the same three domains in September and in January. A possible third testing cycle, in May, is available and ready. A team of administrators, classroom teachers, and ELL support teachers has begun studying the MAP results to determine strengths and areas for improvement in our academic programs.

Other external standardized tests that the school requires are the national university admission tests, the ICFES, the PSAT, and the SAT, which allow educators to assess and analyze students comparatively against norms from past years as well as other local, national, and international school systems. The Board of Directors Academic Committee published a study of ICFES results during school year 2007-2008 and a similar study of SAT results during 2008-2009.

Another way Colegio Panamericano assesses and analyzes student performance is through regular administration of internally created writing assessments twice a year and trimester final exams. Some grade-levels in elementary have developed criterion-referenced tests for the end of each trimester over the past two years. The writing assessments have provided consistent data since their implementation in 2006-2007. In upper grades, data collected from these final exams are analyzed against final trimester grades.

The Senior Project, a professional orientation program, requires students to plan and realize an investigative and practical project that culminates in the execution of a two-week internship at a company outside of school. The student writes a final report that offers a substantial if untapped potential reservoir of data to analyze toward student support and performance improvement.

At the classroom level, teachers in all sections use formative assessments on a daily basis to measure their students’ ongoing progress. These include speaking and listening activities, daily quizzes, assigned homework, collaborative learning group work, and mini-presentations. Teachers also create and rely on performance or authentic assessments once per unit.

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?

Colegio Panamericano uses the following means to effectively communicate assessment results with stakeholders:

**MAP Testing Results:** The results of MAP testing are available to administrators and subject teachers almost immediately upon completion of each testing cycle. These leaders and teachers access information relevant to their students’ performance through the NWEA website and concrete printouts of data. Weekly workshops during the month of October brought together these stakeholders to analyze MAP data and discuss differentiation strategies and global trends with a view to modifying the School Improvement Plan. Parents receive a printed copy of their children’s MAP results with trimester grade cards.

**Midterm Reports and Grade Cards:** Six weeks into each 13-week trimester parents receive a midterm report that provides feedback on their children’s academic and personal progress. Each
section issues complete grade cards at the close of each trimester. These trimester grade cards report students’ grades, progress toward academic standards, and individualized comments.

**Three-Way Conferences:** At the mid-point of the first and second trimester, the school invites all parents to participate in conferences with their children and their children’s teachers. To prepare for these conferences, students complete a written self-assessment. Among the student, teacher, and parents, the student serves as the leader of the conference. Together, they identify strengths and opportunities for improvement while reviewing student-produced artifacts from classes during the trimester. Theses sessions also provide an opportunity to discuss MAP testing data and set goals toward desired future growth on these standardized tests.

**Meetings and Committees:** Student learning support staff plan interdisciplinary meetings with lead teachers and parents for those students who demonstrate learning difficulties or slow progress toward standards. At the end of each trimester, Evaluation and Promotion Committees meet to analyze special cases and consider intervention options. Teachers, administrators, and parents comprise these committees.

**Reggio Emilia:** This preschool pedagogical program is founded on documentation and communication. Teachers and specialists are in charge of classroom projects, panels, presentations, and maintaining books and binders of photos and texts.

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

Effective use of data in decision-making and strategizing is a priority for our school. Data is used to determine the effectiveness of academic programs, early childhood bilingual literacy program, the AP programs, writing assessments, and student performance on other standardized tests.

Over the past years, the Board of Directors and the Academic Council have compiled and analyzed data from the results of the national standardized test, the ICFES, as well as those of the SAT. Teachers have access to the tables and graphs that these groups have produced. Certain testing results are published on the school website and in the weekly electronic newsletter for the wider community. The Leadership Team is working on a similar data analysis for MAP tests as well as the internally standardized writing assessment in the elementary section. Midterm reports and grade cards also provide valuable data toward evaluating the effectiveness of certain academic initiatives.

The school has identified the following opportunities for growth: greater teacher involvement in data analysis; workshops and trainings on data analysis; differentiation informed by data, and the creation of more data.

4) How are teachers trained to understand and use data in the classrooms?

To date, teachers have reviewed and analyzed MAP data through a series of workshops after each testing cycle to develop a coherent and strategic plan for improving student achievement in math, reading, and language usage. In addition, these teachers have access continuously to all their students’ MAP data via the password-protected NWEA website.

Section principals, counselors, and lead teachers analyze midterms reports and grade cards in order to devise intervention and accommodation plans to support student learning in low- or mid-achieving students. These meetings are ongoing and especially at the end of each trimester.
In the lower grade levels data from the burgeoning Balanced Literacy program are compiled and analyzed.

**Overall Assessment: Documenting and Using Results**

**Operational**

“The school uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric”.
Standard 5: Resources 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 national regulations.

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<tr>
<td>5.1 Recruits, employs, and mentors qualified professional staff that are capable of fulfilling assigned roles and responsibilities</td>
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<td>5.2 Assigns professional staff responsibilities based on their qualifications (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience)</td>
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<td>5.3 Ensures that all staff participate in a continuous program of professional development</td>
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<td>5.4 Provides and assigns staff that are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school</td>
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<td>5.5 Budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement</td>
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<td>5.6 Monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system</td>
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<td>5.7 Maintains the site, facilities, services, and equipment to provide an environment that is safe and orderly for all occupants</td>
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<td>5.8 Possesses a written security and crisis management plan with appropriate training for stakeholders</td>
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<td>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</td>
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<td>5.10 Provides appropriate support for students with special needs</td>
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Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for recruitment, induction, placement, development, evaluation, and retention of qualified teachers, administrators, and support staff?
Colegio Panamericano has an established process of recruitment, orientation, placement, development, evaluation, and retention of highly qualified staff with a commitment to a continuous improvement process. Recently, the school has created a human resources department to facilitate and support employment processes. Colegio Panamericano requires all staff to be certified and well-prepared professionals in their area.

**Recruitment**

- By November the school determines which positions will need to be filled for the following academic year and defines corresponding job descriptions and profiles.
- Colegio Panamericano hires staff who help achieve the school’s Vision, giving special attention to teachers who are socially responsible, easily adaptable to our community culture and demonstrative of life-long learning and leadership.
- To recruit foreign staff, the school participates in international recruitment fairs and conducts video interviews.
- To recruit Colombian staff, the school publishes advertisements in local and national newspapers and informs the Panamerican community of teachers and families about openings.
- Section principals are instrumental in the identification and selection process. They provide the majority of the necessary information to the candidates in concert with the director.
- Once the school makes an offer to a candidate, it provides the candidate with complete information about the working conditions and expectations at the school, as well as greater detail regarding living conditions and salary.
- The school provides candidates enough time to make a decision.

**Induction**

Colegio Panamericano provides all instructional staff with a “Go To Binder” that includes complete information specific to each teaching position and general information about quotidian operations. The school also requires new teachers to participate in an orientation program, which includes adequate time to prepare classroom and didactic materials according to the school’s curriculum. For foreign staff, this program also includes cultural adaptation workshops and Spanish language training.

During the school year, Colegio Panamericano provides continuing support through general and sectional meetings as well as professional development opportunities. Principals meet frequently with new staff to address needs and provide support. The Human Resources Department and Parent Sponsors program offer additional assistance as needed.

**Placement**

Colegio Panamericano assigns duties to staff based on their qualifications and previous experience. The only exceptions are when unexpected resignations require filling an immediate
vacancy. In such situations, short-term replacement teachers may be considered temporarily until the school can secure a qualified candidate.

Development

Colegio Panamericano plans and develops professional development opportunities according to the School Improvement Plan and section needs. Throughout the school year, the director, administrators, teachers and staff periodically attend conferences, workshops and courses that provide training on current research and best practices. We also use Wednesday afternoons for training and orientation activities. In addition, the school offers to select staff members and their children the possibility of reduced rates for classes in the English Institute.

Evaluation

Colegio Panamericano has an evaluation process for instructional staff based on the creation of Professional Growth Plans for all teachers. Each teacher completes a self-evaluation, which is used in addition to peer observations and section principal observations to create a formal Professional Growth Plan. Section principals also frequently supervise the teaching practices of their staff. Through continuous peer observations, teachers learn from watching each other and thereby improve their teaching practices. Once a year students provide teachers feedback on their learning experience via surveys administered by section principals.

Teachers conduct performance evaluations of their section principal yearly. Upon receipt of these results, the school director reviews them and shares them with the principals in conjunction with the principals’ own self-evaluations and the director's evaluation of their strengths and areas for improvement.

Retention

The Leadership Team is reflecting on the school’s teacher retention rate and the factors that influence it, such as school climate and competitive salaries and benefits. There have been efforts to ensure that teachers’ experiences, both professional and personal, within the school are consistently positive. Also, a new pay scale has been introduced in the last year. Housing for foreign staff is in well-furnished apartments with close proximity to campus to reduce their transportation costs. Teachers’ children receive proportional scholarships to attend Colegio Panamericano, which may contribute not only to staff retention but also the feeling of family in the school. Recently, the school offered teachers a newly created subsidized program to finance laptops with a multiple-year loan repayment schedule.

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?

A budget is developed each year in accordance with the school's long-term vision and year-to-year improvement needs, as determined by the School Improvement Plan, Master Facilities Plan and program needs. The director and business manager, depending on projected tuition revenues and operational costs, establish the budget for each section. The principals in turn develop their section budgets according to curricular, material, and program needs. Area Coordinators generate a list of material and textbook needs for their area as a budget annex, which they submit to their section
principal. These budgets are developed with a view to the textbook adoption cycle, School Improvement Plan, and current school curriculum and programs.

The director and business manager make any necessary adjustments to section budgets, which are then presented to the Board of Directors, which makes recommendations in the process of approving the annual budget. The business manager monitors the execution of the yearly budget and the director is responsible for regulating revenues and expenditures of funds.

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

Colegio Panamericano has developed a safe and organized environment for all students and community members.

Through standardized procedures, staff members can report irregularities or abnormalities in school facilities to section principals or the General Services Director. The latter is a new position created with the explicit purpose to strengthening these procedures and coordinating the school transportation service.

Transportation service has been improved by greater parent cooperation, better school-parent and parent-school communication, and the presence of preschool assistants on morning routes. The bus driver's assistants provide assistance and security for students on afternoon routes.

During arrival and dismissal times and at recess, teachers supervise students in order to provide a safe and well-organized environment.

With contributions from the U.S. Embassy, Colegio Panamericano installed a cutting-edge, alarmed security system with fire, movement, and contact sensors in critical areas and CCTV cameras that a guard monitors from 6 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. There are also new computers at both entrances linked to the CCTV cameras to improve the vigilance. Furthermore, the school installed an alarmed electrical fence around perimeter walls and has plans to add security layers to glass windows on campus.

Last year, COPASO (Comité Paritario de Salud Ocupacional) was formed with the mission to oversee the health and psychosocial welfare of the staff. The school also offers ARP insurance for professional risks. Both COPASO and ARP are supported within the institution through talks about health and the prevention of workplace accidents. The institution has a full-time professional nurse to assist students and the staff.

All staff is provided with the obligatory national health care plan, EPS, and foreign teachers receive as a benefit the choice between subsidized premium national coverage and subsidized international coverage.

With respect to school facilities, many improvements from the Master Facilities Plan have already been completed, for example, the construction of elementary and middle school classrooms, administrative offices, a computer lab, and the new Learning Center facility, all with ramps and stairs for easy access. Subsequently, the parents, students and staff gave our institution one of the highest scores of the NSSE survey to the following prompt: "Our school provides a safe and orderly environment for learning".
The Emergency Evacuation Plan outlines procedures for situations such as fires, earthquakes, kidnappings, or the presence of strangers. Every classroom and office has visible information with the specifications of what to do in case of a disaster. These procedures are practiced with students and staff, drills during which school leaders orient and assess for possible areas of improvement.

Emergency brigades assist during special events and activities on campus as does the city fire department, which provides first aid workshops. We are in the process of continually analyzing security processes for improvement and heightened security.

Finally, the school has a student handbook that delineates institutional guidelines. This is currently in the process of revision.

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?**

The Student Services Department consists of three psychologists, a speech and language therapist, the Learning Center Coordinator, and four resource teachers. Colegio Panamericano will begin providing occupational therapy services in February 2009. Student Services takes an active roll in working alongside parents, therapists, tutors and resource teachers to enable students to achieve learning expectations. It also provides support for special needs and during periods of behavioral and emotional adjustment.

The academic intervention process includes five stages: (1) the study and follow-up phase, (2) the information phase, (3) the possible remission phase, (4) the development of an action plan with Student Services, and (5) ongoing teamwork and follow-up on student’s process.

Other services that all students have access to include counseling, retreats with counsellors and teachers, parent workshops, and interdisciplinary meetings of educators. Career counseling services are available to students in first through twelfth grades. In eleventh and twelfth grades, students take interest identification tests, aptitude tests, knowledge tests, and personality tests. The university orientation program allows students to visit universities, attend workshops, and meet one-on-one with counselors. In addition, the school organizes and hosts the largest university fair in the city with invitees from select universities nationwide.
Overall Assessment: Resources and Support Systems

Operational

“The school has human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The school employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The school provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness, including both professional and support staff. The school ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric”.
Standard 6: Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

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

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

Indicators

In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

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<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning</td>
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<td>6.2</td>
<td>Has formal channels to listen to and communicate with stakeholders</td>
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<td>6.3</td>
<td>Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the school</td>
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<td>6.4</td>
<td>Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders</td>
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<td>6.5</td>
<td>Provides information about students, their performance, and school effectiveness that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders</td>
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Focus Questions:

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

Colegio Panamericano has created a space in which the voice of each individual in our collective community is appreciated and taken into consideration. Different committees made-up of teachers, administrators, students and parents work together where all opinions are valued. These committees include Administrative meetings, Board meetings, General Assemblies of Families, and the Academic Council. Committees of this type are key in listening to the community. They provide feedback for making important decisions that affect the entire school.

The school has additional opportunities for parents and the school to communicate. General Assemblies are organized to share the school’s accomplishments, vision and goals. “Coffee with the Director” is an informal meeting where stakeholders make suggestions and contribute ideas to enhance the school. It is a time to share concerns and ideas for improvement. Principals at every level have an open door policy and frequently meet with parents for the same reasons on an individual level. The school has a formal written process as well. Annual surveys are given electronically to evaluate the stakeholders’ opinion on the health of the school.

Committee Members

Carrie Peterman
Luz Amparo Sanchez
Mariela Rojas
Piedad Arevalo
Patty Sanjuan
Maria Consuelo
Angela Maria Guarnizo
Teachers at Colegio Panamericano actively partake in making decisions. Our teachers fill different leadership roles at the school. They are participating members in the Academic Council, Discipline Committee and Advisory Committee. An annual process of curriculum review and modification by our teachers supports quality best practice teaching. Furthermore, input via surveys from students and feedback from administrators are both incorporated into teacher Professional Growth Plans. Teachers also have “office hours” available to meet with parents and any other stakeholder in need of time.

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

Fostering a community of life-long learners is the vision of Colegio Panamericano. In 2006 Colegio Panamericano began a rigorous curriculum revision implementing the standards and benchmarks from McREL, (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning) including the guidelines of the National Ministry of Education in Colombia. Re-evaluations are made every year. It is the school’s goal to meet the evolving needs of our students and apply research-based methodologies and programs that enrich the curriculum.

The process of reviewing the curriculum is linked to student outcomes and assessments taken by grade level teachers. This assessment is in turn followed-up through teacher area meetings and then reviewed by the section principal. This process is set to nurture growth and improvement of the school.

A community of learners is also encouraged through the recruitment of national and foreign teachers who are highly skilled and whose profiles are in line with Colegio Panamericano’s Vision and Purpose. These teachers are recruited through a rigorous selection process in Colombia and at international fairs. Our teachers are involved in conferences such as those hosted by AASSA, Tri-Association, SACS Forums, and IRC (Inter-Regional Center.)

The school has an annual budget to promote and develop a diverse learning environment. Great investments have been made in technology, the development of the physical structure of the school, and in resources for the library. The school also encourages students to experience activities locally and nationally including inter-collegiate educational forums, SIP, the Bi-national Games, Destination Imagination, and “Classroom Without Walls”.

Furthermore, the school promotes parent participation to enrich student learning. These activities include Open Houses, the STEP program, local and national field trips, three way conferences, and parent/child activity nights. Program descriptions can be found on the school website, the weekly newsletter, Bits and Pieces, The Preschool Times, and student agendas.

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

Colegio Panamericano strives to clearly communicate with its stakeholders. Certain measures have been taken to ensure that our stakeholders and the school are communicating efficiently and effectively. The network of communications includes the Board, Director, Administration, Teachers, Students, Parents and others in the extensive Panamericano community.

I. General Information
• Panamericano website
• Midterm reports
• Weekly school newspaper: Bits and Pieces
• Preschool Times
• Fliers/ brochures
• Admission packets for prospective families
• Weekly Agenda
• Email

II. Student Progress
• Parent/Teacher conference
• Written reports from Learning Center
• Midterm Progress Reports
• Report cards
• Interdisciplinary meetings

III. Interpersonal Meetings for Parents
• Annual Open House per section
• “Coffee with the Director”

IV. Interpersonal Meetings for Teachers
• Staff meetings
• Department meetings
• Grade level meetings
• Administrative meetings

Overall Assessment: Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

Operational

“The school has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. School personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts and can demonstrate good participation by some stakeholder groups. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric”.
Standard 7: Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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

**Impact Statement:** A school is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the school demonstrates progress in improving student performance and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process.

### Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Evident</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Operational</th>
<th>Highly Functional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>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)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Ensures that plans for continuous improvement are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school and expectations for student learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Provides professional development for school personnel to help them implement improvement interventions to achieve improvement goals</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 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 first step in the process for continuous improvement at the Colegio Panamericano is using data to measure progress and understand our current reality. To accomplish this, we administer **MAP, PSAT, SAT, ICFES, AP exams**, criterion-referenced tests, **NSSE surveys**, and annual...
Our second step towards continuous improvement has been establishing a shared organizational Vision and Purpose in order to unite our community and guide future actions and efforts. The review and update of the Colegio Panamericano’s Vision and Purpose took place during the Spring and Fall of 2008. This process involved partnership of staff, students, parents and board members to build a collective vision that is the driving force and primary criterion by which we make decisions.

Knowing our current reality in union with a collective vision to guide our future leads to our third step towards continuous improvement: establishing a road map to help us get there. The Colegio Panamericano created a School Improvement Plan (SIP) in 2004 to focus actions, efforts, and resources on the school goals of Language Arts, Mathematics, Technology, Values, and Curriculum. The SIP was reviewed, modified and adjusted periodically in reflection of progress made towards these goals. The 2008-09 academic year provides an opportunity to create a new School Improvement Plan that reflects our newly-adopted vision, as well as incorporating the results of this self-study and the recommendations provided by the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team in Spring 2009.

An additional step that has acted as a road map and guided our actions has been our 2002 Master Facilities Plan, which oversaw the acquisition of new land and the construction of a sports coliseum, new school entrance and parking lot, an Elementary building, technology lab, Learning Center, staff lounge, Middle School building, board room, nurse’s office, language institute, and soccer field. The school is currently in process of creating a new Master Facilities Plan that will guide expansion and construction for the next five years.

Our final method towards ensuring continuous improvement is employing systematic procedures that monitor progress on School Improvement Plans. This is generally (2008-09 has been an exception due to time spent on this self-study and the creation of a new draft SIP) accomplished through time allocated during early dismissal Wednesdays. School Improvement Plan time is built into this Wednesday cycle, allowing staff to work on identified actions and to discuss, reflect, and analyze current progress towards meeting these goals.

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?

Colegio Panamericano’s previous Vision and Mission were reflected in our 2004 School Improvement Plan. Efforts were focused over the previous four years on strengthening Language Arts, Mathematics, and Values via a dual standards-based curriculum and an upgrade in technology. These goals had specific action steps that reflected student needs at the time and the school’s vision for where we were headed in the future.

The need to create a new School Improvement Plan was further stimulated by the updating of our Vision and Purpose. Colegio Panamericano is currently undertaking a self-analysis and
assessment of student learning needs. Our new SIP document will unite our present reality with our vision to guide future actions.

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?

Colegio Panamericano’s process begins with ensuring that significant time is allocated in the calendar for professional development (PD) purposes and towards working on school improvement. Wednesdays are structured for early dismissal of students allowing staff to work on improvement initiatives at their subject, section, and school level. Additionally, after school time has been established to support language acquisition training for staff, NWEA MAP training, and literacy workshops. An orientation week is scheduled at the start of August to support new faculty and their adoption, in addition to supporting all staff with training for new programs and projects. Furthermore, three professional development days are scheduled into our calendar on an annual basis that concentrate on school improvement initiatives.

When appropriate and possible, efforts are made to bring consultants to the school in order to provide training as related to specific goals (topics planned for 2008-09 include Reggio Emilia, Balanced Literacy, AP). Funds are limited but the school is able to send a small number of staff to different workshops, conferences, and sister SACS-AdvancED schools throughout the year and during the summer. Additionally, members of the leadership team (principals, business manager, athletic director, board members, and school director) meet annually with colleagues of other Colombian SACS-AdvancED schools to share ideas and dialogue on innovative happenings in the region.

The second part of our process has been creating new structures that will ensure that all 2009 and beyond PD efforts are based on school needs (as identified in our new 2009 School Improvement Plan), individual staff member needs (as identified in their 2009 Professional Growth Plans), and furthering our Vision and Purpose.

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

The 2004 School Improvement Plan was shared with staff, the Board of Directors, and community stakeholders. Implementation took place over a four-year period and improvement efforts were communicated via channels such as the school webpage, school newsletter, the annual General Assembly for parents, emails, ‘Coffee with the Director’, and special bulletins. It was monitored and updated on annual basis until 2007-08. With the creation of a new Vision and Purpose in 2008-09, the Colegio Panamericano made the decision to devote this academic year to the creation of a new School Improvement Plan that we anticipate to have completed by late spring 2009.
Overall Assessment: Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Operational

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

STEP¹ - Systematic Training for Effective Parenting Program

(Program modified by the counseling department of the Colegio Panamericano)

What is STEP?

STEP is a course for parents who want to build a more satisfactory relationship with their children. In an environment of mutual support, parents learn communication skills, positive discipline techniques and ways to increase self-esteem, guiding them towards a more effective philosophy of education.

What are its Goals?

- To reflect on the relationships built between parents and children
- To develop purposeful parenting behavior
- To structure positive internal dialogues
- To generate desirable and secure family environments and ensure holistic development for all family members
- To develop in children the ability to make decisions assertively

What Strategies are Being Used?

- Recognizing respect as a fundamental value that frames all human relationships
- Stimulating positive behavior
- Developing self esteem and control over emotions
- Motivating open and clear communication
- Learning different listening skills
- Understanding the importance on self-evaluation as a building process for the individual

How to Understand Children’s Behavior

1  STEP Parenting Young Children: Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) Don, Sr. Dinkmeyer, Gary D. McKay, James S. Dinkmeyer, and Joyce L. McKay http://www.steppublishers.com/
Reasons for Bad Behavior

ATTENTION
POWER
REVENGE
FEELING INCOMPETEN

Differences Between Praise and Encouragement

PRAISE IS A REWARD THAT CAN TURN INTO DISCOURAGEMENT

- Children believe that it is only possible to win by competing with and triumphing over others.
- With praise, children learn to want to please others.
- Children get used to wanting more and more praise.
- They begin to have their own doubts about themselves if they do not receive praise.
- They can begin to see each activity as a competition in which they can win or loose.
- Praise uses words that judge.

ENCOURAGEMENT IS A GIFT

- It is given for effort or progress.
- It can be given even when the child makes a mistake or when things do not come out well.
- Parental encouragement makes children feel valued just as they are.
- Encouragement uses words that show that the person really realizes the efforts being made.

Consolidating Communication Spaces - How to Listen and How to Speak to your Child?

1) Family Meetings

- Establish a weekly family space
- List of Topics
- To set up agreements
- To establish limits for complaints
- Entertainment
- Learn to change conflicts
2) Democratic Discipline

How is it Being Implemented?

- Continuous work with parents during two consecutive months
- Weekly morning meetings
- Parents grouped according to ages
- Couples are preferred
- Maximum 14 people in each group
- A different skill is discussed every week.
- Readings are assigned prior to each session
- Activities can be applied weekly
- Feedback is given by each member regarding the activities carried out
**Conclusion**

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

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

Student learning is at the heart of the Colegio Panamericano’s continuous improvement efforts. We strive to constantly improve our educational methodology by challenging every student to achieve his or her full potential in a bilingual system that promotes high academic performance and personal growth. Our desire to consistently create a better and more enriching educational experience for our students and community has witnessed the undertaking of a great number (perhaps too many) of initiatives since our last SACS accreditation visit in 2004. The SAR self-study process led us to conclude that we need to focus our efforts on fewer programs and projects and learn to strengthen and build long-term sustainability into those we consider central to our institutional vision.

The foundation for future continuous improvement has been strengthened through the introduction of support tools, such as student achievement data collected through MAP and new accounting protocols and software, and the facilitation of communication via technology. Additionally, we have updated key guiding documents such as, Colegio Panamericano’s *Vision & Purpose* and our *Manual de Convivencia*. The formation of our new School Improvement Plan (SIP) has begun and will guide our actions starting August 2009 for the next three years. This self-study also highlights the need for the systematic review of our SIP to monitor efforts, make appropriate modifications, and ensure accountability.

2. **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?**

One of our greatest strength is community involvement. Teachers, administrators, parents, and students work together in their respective roles to create a caring and open community based on mutual respect and common goals. With just over 600 students, we have a ‘small school’ feel, which transmits a sense of belonging to our ‘Panamericano family’ and has led to positive school climate, teamwork, and collaboration.

Additional strengths:
- The Colegio Panamericano’s constant upgrade of facilities, infrastructure, and technology over the past 5 years.
- Strong network of support and idea sharing from other schools in the region (AdvancED/SACS schools in Colombia, TRI-Association, ASSAA, ACCAS)
- Growing focus on supporting all student learning (Learning Center, Guided Reading, Balanced Literacy, differentiation, use of assessment data to inform instruction, enrichment programs, Reggio Emilia philosophy)
3. What would you consider to be your school's greatest challenges?

- Increasing professional development opportunities for staff
- Growing co-curricular sporting programs and opportunities
- Greater focus on the values of leadership, social responsibility, and adaptability from our school Vision
- Developing stronger alumni support and relations
- Expanding classroom technology (computers in every room, educational software, access to student data)
- Creating Pre-school facilities that mirror the Reggio Emilia philosophy and increasing the number of overall classrooms
- Emphasizing English at earlier ages
- Continuing to strengthen learning support for all students (Learning Center, differentiation, Guided Reading, Balanced Literacy, enrichment programs)
- Ensuring that continuous improvement efforts and programs are sustainable and not adversely impacted by staff turnover.
- Facilitating the acquisition of data (PS, ES, MS) and supporting data-based decision making for current data
- Improving the range of services provided by the school library for curricular instructional support
- Developing stronger networks with other schools in Bucaramanga
- Creating and implementing a Master Facilities Plan that advances student learning and future growth

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

Our next steps in enhancing quality assurance and continuous improvement efforts will be to:

- Share the finalized Standards Assessment Report (SAR) with our community
- Share and reflect upon the commendations and recommendations provided by the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team with school stakeholders
- Incorporate the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team’s feedback into our draft 2009-2012 School Improvement Plan.
- Finalize a sustainable 2009-2012 School Improvement Plan that is developed with maximum staff and community input. The SIP action plan will contain specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely goals and will be shared with all stakeholders
- Establish systematic processes for reviewing our SIP goals and AdvancED standards on a regular basis
- Systematically collect, interpret, and use data to drive our instructional programs, monitor progress on our SIP action plan, and further our school Vision