



North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

Standards Assessment Report

Mater Gardens Charter School

9010 NW 178 Lane Miami, Florida 33018

Prepared for the AdvancED Quality Assurance Review

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Standards Assessment Report

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Introduction & Purpose of the Report

Introduction

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

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

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

Structure of the Report

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

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

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

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

practices/processes implemented?"

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

Demographics

Public/Non-public:	Public
School Type:	Elementary
Charter School:	Start-Up
Enrollment:	617
Gender at School:	Co-Ed
Grade(s):	K,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
Location Type:	Suburban
Gender at School:	Co-Ed

Standard 1. Vision and Purpose

STANDARD: The school establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school.

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

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

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

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

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

1.3 Identifies goals to advance the vision:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Focus Questions:

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

Students, parents, teachers, and administration at Mater Gardens Academy are well aware of the school's vision statement. Knowledge of the vision is achieved by constant communication between the school and its stakeholders via Connect-Ed messages, one-on-one meetings, public address announcements, the school's website, as well as Parent Nights.

Students recite the school's vision every day in a song (during the morning announcements and during music class). This allows children to remain responsive to what the school stands for. In addition, the mission statement and vision is displayed in each classroom for teachers, parents, and students to see. Administrators and faculty at the school would like to further develop communication with the community and parents.

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?

School data on test scores is distributed on a regular basis. The information provided by this data is broken down and debriefed between faculty and administration to further discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher and his/her students. If school-wide goals are being met, higher standards are put in place. If goals are not being reached, there is immediate intervention and a program designed to address the specific need is developed. For example, for the 2008-2009 school year there were several intervention programs at the school such as Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) tutoring for struggling students. When data from this program was reviewed, faculty found opportunities for improvement and additional intensive sessions were created to target students who were still struggling and those not previously enrolled in the tutoring program.

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

Leadership at the school demands strong curricular plans from teachers. Faculty is required to provide weekly lesson plans to administration. Lesson plans are designed with the knowledge that students not only learn

differently, but may be at different academic levels as well. Instructions must include a whole group component, small group interactions, and individual assignments to ensure learning is taking place. Technology is a crucial component of instruction at Mater Gardens Academy. Students, as well as teachers, make frequent use of computers and Promethean boards. Professional development of teachers is also important. Teachers are required to participate in workshops and specific area training to supplement their curriculum. For the 2008-2009 school year several professional development workshops were held at the school ensuring teachers keep their skills up to date. For the 2009-2010 school year SpringBoard Training, a math by strands workshop, and a workshop on infusing reading and writing into a balanced literacy program have already been scheduled. Parents are a key component to the success of the school's vision. Therefore, surveys about administration, school environment, and academics are administered yearly. This School Climate Survey is analyzed by administration to make appropriate changes if necessary.

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?

Faculty and administration meet on an annual basis to specifically discuss the school's vision. Sub-groups are formed to discuss the vision's strengths and weaknesses, data from state and district testing, as well as surveys to see if there are additional opportunities for improvement or needed revisions. The school additionally provides training and support for teachers to learn new strategies and interventions that can be implemented in the classroom. Additionally, the School Climate Survey is distributed to parents and students. In this way administration can analyze what aspects of the school's vision and purpose the parents and students feel are not being satisfied.

Overall Assessment:

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

Standard 2. Governance and Leadership

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

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has leaders who are advocates for the school's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The school's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

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

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

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

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

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

2.5 Fosters a learning community:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

2.6 Provides teachers and students opportunities to lead:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

2.9 Responds to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Focus Questions:

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

Mater Gardens Academy communicates its policies and procedures using various means in order to maintain an effective operation of the school. From before our students step foot in the classroom, communication begins with

the parent contract and continues with the principal's "open door" policy. Moreover, communication of policies and procedures is transmitted throughout the school year using different forms of technology, including but not limited to Connect-Ed (communication via telephone to each individual home about school news and events), Open House, and the school's official website. Teachers also communicate the policies and procedures of the school through individual teacher websites (being implemented by creating websites through TeacherWeb), syllabi, teacher packets, and parent/teacher conferences. It is through these measures that policies and procedures are established and communicated to all stakeholders.

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

Many different tools are used by the school's leadership to evaluate school effectiveness. School Climate Surveys, Student Climate Surveys, and Parent Climate Surveys are a few examples of methods used to evaluate the school's performance. Student performance is certainly a reflection of school effectiveness, and such is measured by the state with student Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) scores and the school's grade resulting from the scores. At the school level, several formal assessments are administered throughout the school year to evaluate student performance, such as district and state-mandated baseline and interim assessments, Florida Assessments in Reading (FAIR), the FCAT, and the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT). Lastly, at the classroom level, teachers are given the data generated by the aforementioned assessments to drive their lessons towards more differentiated instruction that cater to individual student learning styles and levels.

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

Opportunities to provide leadership are available to all stakeholders, including staff, throughout the school year. Committees are established for the purpose of offering an opportunity for all staff members to demonstrate their leadership qualities. Some committees include School Improvement Plan and the Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (EESAC). Participating in such committees allows teachers the opportunities to contribute in the decision-making processes that affect the school and their students. On a school-wide level, faculty and staff are also given an opportunity to contribute as leaders in their school, with individual committees geared towards school events and activities, such as Hispanic Heritage Month. Students are also encouraged to show their leadership through participation in clubs, sports, and school activities. One particular club that has proven to have made an impact in school decision is Student Council. With Student Council, students have a role in making decisions that affect their school, and have raised a great deal of funds geared towards their school's improvement. It is clear that from the faculty, staff, to the students, all stakeholders are given opportunities to become leaders in their school, contributing to decisions that will inevitably affect the school.

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

Mater Gardens Academy is always seeking to ensure all students receive equal amounts of opportunities to learn. Moreover, the school makes sure that there is always room for advancement and improvement in providing the equal learning opportunities. One prime example is the English Language Learners (ELL) program. With ELL, students' individual needs are targeted and teachers are constantly making sure they are adapting their lessons to accommodate an ELL student. Moreover, Special Education (SPED) relies on the same accommodations to make sure that an individual student's needs are met in the classroom. Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) is a tool used by the teachers to determine a student's specific area of deficiency, based on such data as FCAT scores or quarterly grades. With these plans, teachers specify interventions that will help students overcome their areas of weaknesses. As far as innovation is concerned, for as long as teachers adapt lessons to individual student needs, there will be a necessity to research the latest tools and strategies that will benefit the students. Carnegie Learning, for instance, has helped teachers target areas of weakness based on assessments administered in the program, as

well as areas specified in the students' FCAT scores. Other such programs are utilized to cater to various learning styles and student needs.

Overall Assessment:

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

Standard 3. Teaching and Learning

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

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

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

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

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Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

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

Evidence Provided:

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

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Focus Questions:

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

Mater Gardens Academy Charter School ensures that the curriculum is being fulfilled across grade levels by following the Sunshine State Standards (SSS) and the pacing guides which are developed and provided by Miami Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS). The SSS provide an outline of benchmarks per grade level that successfully scaffold a comprehensive curriculum. By aligning the SSS benchmarks to assessment, the pacing guides provide a timeframe for instruction that facilitates achievement on formal assessments, such as district and state-mandated baseline and interim assessments, Florida Assessments in Reading (FAIR), and Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), Stanford Achievement Test (SAT). Furthermore, data analysis from these assessments provide areas for targeting instruction. Some school-wide instructional strategies that align with curriculum and assessments are differentiating instruction, project-based learning, and problem-solving investigations. Success on formal and informal assessments is facilitated through a constructive approach in the classrooms; which includes but is not limited to the implementation of cooperative learning groups, hands-on experiences, and student-centered instruction. In addition, our multi-age curriculum ensures that students are always challenged to perform on or above grade level.

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

The school ensures the implementation of research-based instructional strategies through various methods. Through the implementation of both contracted consultants and in-house professional developments, all teachers are well informed and trained on both traditional and ground-breaking instructional strategies. Teachers are also provided with a well-structured lesson plan format and an interactive planning approach, such as grade-level planning and professional learning communities. Lesson plans are developed in a way that address the needs of the whole class, small groups, and individual students. In addition to a school-wide lesson plan format, the multi-age curriculum challenges students' inquisitiveness and enhances their potential. Moreover, Mater Gardens Academy continually incorporates innovative technological advances in the classroom allowing the teachers to teach using a variety of media, such as the use of Promethean Boards, document-image cameras, and the latest software and web-based programs. These software and web-based programs, such as Riverdeep, Accelerated Reader, Carnegie, Explore Learning Gizmos, and many more, which enhance student learning as well as students' technological skills.

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

There are many processes executed at Mater Gardens Academy to ensure that the teachers are well-prepared to implement the curriculum. The teachers attend various in-service activities as well as independent professional development workshops that enable teachers to effectively implement the curriculum. The teachers strive to implement best practices from the various professional developments which ensure that students are learning according to the most up-to-date research and trial-based theories. Teacher assistants also aid in the implementation of the curriculum by providing instructional support in the classroom. The leadership team, including the principal, assistant principal, and reading coach, routinely conduct school-wide walk-trouths to ascertain that the teachers are implementing the curriculum through research-based practices, and more importantly, that the students are engaged in reaching and exceeding high standards. Teachers attend a bi-weekly faculty meeting in which the administration guides and supports the instructional staff in implementing new programs and procedures. At these meetings, the testing chair also provides teachers with data analysis from

formal assessments to guide classroom instruction. Lastly, the administrative team conducts formal observations on a regular basis to provide teachers with the feedback necessary to continually improve their instruction.

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

The school offers every student access to comprehensive information through the use of school-adopted textbooks and a wide range of supplemental resources. These supplemental resources include both technological and print materials. Each classroom at Mater Gardens is equipped with several computers which offer a variety of programs for student use. Through the use of instructional software and web-based programs, students have access to programs such as Riverdeep, FCAT Explorer, Star Reading, ExploreLearning Gizmos, Carnegie Learning, and others. Along with computers, a Promethean Board, a projector, and a document image camera is available in each classroom, which offer students an innovative approach to learning. Along with our instructional technology in the classroom, our state of the art library offers students access to books on a wide range of levels and topics to encourage independent reading as well as foster research skills. In addition to the computer lab housed in the library, students have access to a mobile laptop station which gives each student access to a computer and the Internet within the classroom. Lastly, the media specialist not only provides instructional support and resources for teachers and students but also arranges literacy activities to enhance learning.

Overall Assessment:

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

Standard 4. Documenting and Using Results

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

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

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

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

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Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

4.7 Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Focus Questions:

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

The assessment system currently employed at Mater Gardens Academy analyzes changes through various ways in order to attain a high level of student performance. Our school currently implements the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) evaluation system for all students from kindergarten to third grade, and for students attaining levels 1 and 2 in the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). The FAIR assessments provide teachers with screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic information that guides the planning and developing of the differentiated instruction in the classroom. Our school additionally uses the Accelerated Reader's STAR computer adaptive assessment to provide information about the students' independent reading comprehension levels. The reading, math, and science baseline and interim assessment tools provide specific information on the clusters within the subject that require intervention and reinforcement. The Accelerated Reader is another instrument which is used to measure students' reading levels and reading comprehension. The students are assigned reading levels based on their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The students are required to read material which appeal to them and are located within their ZPD. The students take reading comprehension

practice quizzes based on the books read for the Accelerated Reader program. The students will earn points based on the books' point values and how well they perform on the quizzes. Points are a measure of reading practice, as they provide a summary of quantity, quality, and difficulty. Accelerated Reader provides teachers a snapshot of the students' reading progress including average percentage correct on quizzes and number of points earned. The different assessment systems used in the school help analyze changes in student performance because, through data dissemination, the teachers collaborate to understand and to analyze the performance trends. The teachers are able to then debrief the assessment results with the students in order to accommodate their learning needs and to provide reinforcement activities of skills that require mastery.

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?

Mater Gardens Academy strives on providing and informing the staff, parents, and students with the current assessment data results. The school's testing chairperson regularly meets with the staff members in order to provide the teachers with information about assessment results. The instructional coaches, such as the school's reading coach, additionally support the data disseminating by hosting discussions with teachers on developing and implementing strategic instructional practices to meet and exceed the assessment results. The teachers also actively participate in grade level meetings to further discuss the data and to collaborate in planning methods to address the needs. The students are communicated about the assessment results with debriefing sessions, which are hosted within several days of the implementation of the tests. The teachers set aside time to provide feedback on the test results and to review the responses to the evaluations. The parents receive feedback on the tests results through communication portals like the Pinnacle electronic gradebook tool and through participation in data dissemination events like FCAT parent nights. The teachers are required to update the district's electronic gradebook on a weekly basis. Once the gradebook has been updated, parents registered in the Parent Portal of the district's website receive instantaneous emails notifying them of the updates to the students' grades status. Both parents and students have passwords that allow them to access information into the students' gradebook accounts. This availability allows students and parents to monitor any deficiencies in grades, allowing them the opportunity to improve their performances based on results displayed in the gradebook. In addition, Mater Gardens Academy provides mid-term and quarterly reports. The mid-term reports, known as progress reports, update parents on the students' progress half way through the quarters. Students also receive report cards at the end of each quarter with cumulative summaries of their grades for the subject areas. Included in the quarterly report cards are updated standardized test scores results. The various testing systems, such as Accelerated Reader, STAR, FCAT, baseline, interim, and FAIR assessments, additionally provide electronically provided reports for families that debrief the results from the exams. The stakeholders are notified of students' performances via Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (EESAC) meetings and school website news bulletins. Furthermore, the community members have access to school assessment and accountability documents, such as the School Improvement Plan (SIP), via the Miami-Dade County Public Schools and state of Florida websites.

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

Our school strongly believes that in order to attain higher school gains, we must learn to interpret data effectively and to set academic goals in order to improve overall school effectiveness. We know that in order to improve school effectiveness we collect data from assessments such as FAIRS, STAR Reading, Accelerated Reader, benchmark baseline tests, and interim assessments. The data gathered from these assessments are then used to compare the findings within our School's Improvement Plan. We then modify the curriculum and instructional tactics based on the obtained data. Additionally, in order to assist our struggling students, we also provide tutoring, as well as small group pull-out intervention groups, in order to prepare for the assessments. During

faculty and grade level meetings, our staff members meet to discuss and interpret data which is obtained from the administered assessments. The staff works together to develop action plans to address the needs for improvement, as well as the ways to maintain the areas of strengths. The staff then relays the data information to the teacher assistants, students, and parents via communication medians like letters and web site bulletins, as well as class debriefing sessions. The collaborative group efforts made by the teachers, paraprofessionals, students, and parents are put into place to assist all students in need of additional support.

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

Based on the fact that children grow and develop over time, teachers are provided with continuous training on how to interpret data and to implement best practices in the classroom to address the data analysis. Mater Gardens Academy provides its staff with professional development workshops throughout the school year in order to instruct on how to interpret, analyze, and identify specific areas of improvement and success. Teachers additionally share their best practices among the staff during faculty and grade level meetings in order to increase effectiveness in using data to drive instruction. Mater Gardens Academy's administration, as well as the test chairperson and instructional reading coach, compare student achievement and use the information to inform the staff about state, local, and district assessments. Data such as interim and baseline assessment results, as well as FAIR testing, is then relayed to the teachers for evaluation and planning purposes. The ability to interpret data helps to better guide our school's students to address the needs in their struggling academic areas.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results, including multiple measures of individual student achievement that assess higher order thinking skills and are of adequate technical quality. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, design and improve instructional strategies and practices, and determine interventions to improve and enhance student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts for individual students and groups and subgroups of students. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "highly functional" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 5. Resource and Support Systems

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

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The school employs and allocates staff that are well qualified for their assignments. The school provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. The school ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

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

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

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

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

5.10 Provides appropriate support for students with special needs:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Focus Questions:

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

Mater Gardens' administration is engaged in a thoughtful and purposeful planning process to address the recruitment, induction and retention of qualified professional staff. Recruitment of highly qualified faculty and staff is conducted mainly through recommendations made by current employees and by publishing job openings

on the school's website. Induction of all certified teachers as well as teachers' assistants in our school engage in a two day orientation program consisting of both operational and academic information. The orientation provides information from Human Resources regarding employment benefits and procedures as well as job expectations and/or requirements. Faculty and staff placement is intentionally assigned based on the school's current needs and employee's job experiences. An analysis of institutional data assists in the planning of current and future professional development. Tuition reimbursement for career enhancement in accredited universities is also provided to develop the faculty's professional goals. Faculty and staff evaluations are conducted throughout the school year to meet the Merit Award Program (MAP) elements, Mater Gardens Academy Evaluation Forms, and State mandated requirements such as Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAP). In addition, Mater Gardens' faculty and staff are continuously monitored to provide immediate remediation or feedback on areas of growth. Performance evaluations are highly confidential and address the needs of employees on an individual basis. Administrative staff is monitored and evaluated by Charter School Operations, Schools of Choice, and other District departments to ensure the implementation of successful school management. Florida Department of Education assesses the school's yearly progress by making sure district and state mandated requirements are met. School administration and teachers work together to develop individual professional growth plans. Staff members are offered opportunities to participate in professional developments which are offered in diverse forms including workshops, trainings, and academies conducted by lead teachers and other contracted professional development companies. Finally, the matching of professional salaries to that of Miami Dade County Public Schools, health insurance coverage and a variety of selections from flexible benefits offerings for full-time employees such as education assistance fund/tuition reimbursement, paid legal holidays, and personal or sick leave programs support the retention of qualified faculty and staff. Furthermore, school recognition funds and team building activities such as a mentoring system for new teachers and faculty picnics serve as incentive programs for the retention of faculty and staff. Mater Gardens' administration strives to provide a safe, supportive and successful working environment for all employees. The principal and assistant principal hold an "open-door" policy that encourages on-going communication among administrative staff and teachers. Faculty and staff take part in social activities as well as instructional activities throughout the year. These activities provide an excellent opportunity for them to meet and network with each other. Consequently, there is positive school moral, cooperative team-work and shared instructional planning among teachers.

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?

Mater Gardens' leadership follows the schools' vision in making decisions about the allocation of financial resources. The Miami Dade County Public School District, in collaboration with Academica, assists our school in the implementation of programs such as Carnegie Learning, SuccessMaker, Accelerated Reader, ExploreLearning Gizmos, SpringBoard, and RiverDeep that support our vision and mission. Members of the administrative staff responsible for evaluating program effectiveness, reviewing test data, and researching school improvement plans play a key role in monitoring the school's budgetary expenditures. Mater Gardens Academy provides resources and support to promote academic and personal success. A majority of school resources are allocated based on a comprehensive allocation assessment tied to the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) or enrollment count. This ensures an equitable allocation of both staff and resources required to support teaching and learning. Financial accounts are maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Mater Gardens Academy has a bookkeeper and adheres to policies, procedures and practices in accordance with statutes and accounting procedures for activity funds. District and individual school accounts are regularly audited by an independent accounting firm hired by the school board. Stakeholders comprised of teachers, administrators, parents, students and community leaders such as the Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (EESAC) committee have many opportunities to provide input about the allocation of financial resources on a quarterly basis.

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

The leadership ensures the safety of all students and personnel by communicating student and staff policies and procedures through the student handbook, negotiated agreement, and school policy book at the beginning of the school year. The faculty, security guards, and the school's state of the art security system monitor students' behavior and safety in the hallways and on the school grounds. Cameras, intercom system in every classroom, two way communication devices, and an alarm system are some of the equipment that provides safety at our school. Teacher assistants are specifically assigned to areas around the school building to monitor and supervise student safety. The school building is designed with safety in mind. There is an assigned area for school buses to drop off and pick up students. Parents are given a decal to place inside their cars when picking up students in a designated area of the school. Signs are posted on classroom windows notifying visitors of our school visiting policy encouraging all visitors to proceed to the office in order to obtain authorization for being on school grounds. Teachers encourage positive and orderly behavior by executing a classroom management plan. Classroom management plans include rules, procedures, consequences and rewards in accordance with our school policies. The office staff maintains a sign in/out log to monitor school visitors and has student emergency information on file. In addition to cafeteria rules and procedures, students are motivated to follow an orderly environment through a variety of incentives. Teacher assistants are responsible for maintaining a safe and orderly environment in the cafeteria. They praise good manners and cafeteria behavior by following a school-wide behavior plan during cafeteria duties. Additionally, our maintenance staff ensures and makes necessary repairs to sustain safety on the school premises. Drills and practices are implemented throughout the year to ensure the safety of our students, faculty, and staff in the event of a real life emergency. Furthermore, students and staff are given an annual survey to monitor their feelings on safety within the school environment. Utilizing the results of the survey, faculty and staff develop a written security and crisis management plan for our school that includes the hiring of additional security personnel.

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?

Advice for appropriate services is provided through placement meetings conducted by the Child Support Team (CST). The CST committee consists of the classroom teacher, school psychologist, ESE coordinator, and parents. Student progress is continuously monitored through teacher and parent communication via on-line grade book, teacher websites, student agendas, and parent conferences. Some of the ways in which Mater Gardens' faculty and staff ensure that students have access to resource services are through, parent/teacher conferences or meetings, Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings, Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) meetings, and teacher referrals. Other resource services include free vision and hearing exams, free tutoring services, and free/reduced lunch program. All students have access to free vision and hearing exams through the Miami Children's Hospital services. A prescription and a list of providers are provided for the parents free of charge. Tutoring is open to students who are at risk and/or have low academic performance. Finally, a lunch application form is provided to all families at the beginning of the school year to provide healthy meals at free or reduced prices.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school effectively uses human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve and exceed expectations for student learning, to meet special needs of all students, and to comply with applicable regulations. The school systematically employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments in all content areas. The school provides and fully supports ongoing, job-embedded learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness, including both professional and support staff. The school ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "highly functional" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

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

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

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

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

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

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Focus Questions:

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

The school's leadership ensures that the school is responsive to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction mainly through the Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (EESAC). Through this organization, the school and community take equal share of decision-making. The council meets regularly to review the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and make enhancements to it. Other topics discussed are high-stakes testing results, school events, and budgeting. The council makes decisions on budget issues, such as how to allocate school recognition funds. Since the meetings are open to the public, the community's expectations are addressed at each meeting. The satisfaction of the stakeholders is also a priority of the EESAC agenda. Although EESAC provides an avenue for communication between the school, community, and all involved stakeholders, attendance of parents and community could use some improvement. Some ways to increase attendance of EESAC members and the public will be implemented in the following ways: The EESAC members will be notified by e-mail several times before a meeting (i.e., a week before the meeting, three days before, and the day of). These three notices should ensure and increase member participation. In addition to the e-mails, flyers will be sent home with students for all stakeholders to be invited. A Connect-Ed phone call will be made to parents and the community the day before the meeting. These two notices to the public should also help increase community turnout at the meetings.

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

The school's leadership fosters a learning community through the many events that take place throughout the year. These events include activities in which parents are informed of student assessments, such as Orientation Night, and Open House. Other events, such as Career Week, Bookabration, Measurement Fair, Art Fair, Spring Show, etc. enhance communication between the school and community by creating an environment that encourages students and their families to be life-long learners. The school mandates that families volunteer 30 hours per student per year; therefore, families are encouraged to participate in the aforementioned school activities instead of making donations to fulfill the volunteer requirement. The school's web site additionally enhances the development of the school's learning community. The presence of bulletin boards throughout the school are used as a communication devices to display the student work, to show what students are learning, and to make announcements to parents about upcoming activities.

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

The school uses many avenues to communicate effectively about student performance and the overall progress of the school with all stakeholders. These avenues include but are not limited to letters, e-mails, Connect-Ed phone calls, parent nights, conferences, etc. Notification letters are most likely the main form of communication between the school and community regarding student performance and school effectiveness. In addition to the notification letters, report cards, progress reports, and teacher notes also inform parents about the students' progress. E-mails and Connect-Ed phone calls are also used by teachers and the administrators, respectively, in order to inform parents of important dates, events and/or activities that may be taking place. Lastly, parent nights such as Open House and EESAC meetings as well as parent/teacher conferences provide face-to-face opportunities for the community, parents, and students to discuss the school's effectiveness with teachers and administrators.

Overall Assessment:

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

Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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

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

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

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
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Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

7.1 Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the school is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, school effectiveness, and the school community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform what happens next (Results):
Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

7.2 Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement:
Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

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?

Mater Gardens Academy offers various options for extended learning opportunities in our school. During the 2008-2009 The school offers options as Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) tutoring, guided reading, and differentiated instruction. In doing so, we determine the biggest needs of our students and the best ways to reach our students. Moreover, we collect and analyze data from different sources in order to place our students in their appropriate levels. For instance, we analyze the data from monthly writing prompts, STAR Reading, FCAT Explorer, and Ticket to Read to target where our students are struggling and what teachers need to do to help them reach their appropriate levels. Finally, the school is always seeking to deliver any information we have about our students to their parents. In the beginning of the year, an "Open House" sets the tone for the school year and gives parents a clear view of rules, procedures, and expectations for their children's class(es). We additionally offer the "FCAT Parent Night," an informational session that clears up any questions and concerns parents may have about the test. For faculty, staff, and administration, feedback of student performance is constantly provided in order to determine how student performance can be continuously improved. Grade level meetings, faculty meetings, and our School Improvement Plan (SIP) meetings are examples of ways we seek to improve not only student performance, but the school's effectiveness.

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

The vision and purpose of Mater Gardens Academy call for a safe and inviting environment to reach out to our students' needs. In order to achieve this, the teachers will always be responsible for providing the appropriate

environment for our students. In essence, the teachers will exude a positive attitude and character that will serve as good role models for students. Motivation is also key, and the teachers will give students the motivation they need every day, whether it is from direct praise (such as “Good job!” or “You can do it!”) or from motivational posters in the classroom. Our school wants to make sure that everyone becomes lifelong learners, including students, teachers and even teacher’s assistants. For students, we make sure the lessons are relatable to them, making the lessons authentic in order for them to see a connection between the curriculum and how they can apply it in their own lives. For teachers, learning never stops. For example, during the 2008-2009 school year, the school provided about eight workshops on campus, and teachers attended various others throughout the year pertaining to their particular areas of instruction. Finally, teacher’s assistants are also expected to be lifelong learners, and the best way for assistants to achieve that is through hands-on experiences. Through observation and direct interaction with students, teachers, and parents, assistants are receiving the best experience to better prepare them for careers as teachers. Through the support of the community, school, and parents, students are given every opportunity to succeed. One of the most important ways the school achieves that support is through the technology found in our state-of-the-art building. Each class comes equipped with a Promethean Board, document image camera, and at least five computers. These technology resources provide more accessibility for all our students. For instance, teachers have access to a website known as Safari Montage, including countless numbers of educational videos on any subject. With the Promethean Boards, teachers can easily show these videos to all the students in the classroom. The community provides support for its students through Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (EESAC) meetings. These meetings, attended by parents, students, and teachers, are an important factor in providing support for our students in that everyone has a voice. Through these meetings, the community is able to come together and provide input on important issues affecting the school. Mater Gardens Academy seeks to make global learners of its students, and we attempt to reach those goals in a variety of ways. In order to make students positive and contributing citizens of this global and diverse society, we celebrate the diversity in our school and our classrooms. Teachers have many themed lessons and celebrations occur school-wide. An example of that is Hispanic Heritage Month, where each class embodies a Latin-American country. On one day during this month, the students travel with handmade passports from class to class and sample the cuisine and culture of a different country. Character education is another pivotal factor in assuring that our students are positive and contributing citizens in the community. Each month, the students are taught about applying a core value through the use of authentic and engaging lessons. Students are also encouraged to step out into their community and give back to it.

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?

The administration and staff of Mater Gardens Academy is constantly seeking information and resources that will aid teachers in implementing interventions and achieve improvement goals in the classroom as well as the school. As previously mentioned, the 2008-2009 school year saw many in-house workshops, and many more attended by individual teachers. An important factor in ensuring that the school personnel are receiving adequate training and assistance is by providing the faculty and staff with a needs assessment. The needs assessment is administered to teachers and used to help administration determine what teachers and staff need in terms of training and professional development in order to guide the kind of workshops that should be offered and so forth throughout the school year.

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

The school leadership ensures that the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated in various ways. The implementation of the plan takes forms in trainings such as workshops for teachers and parent meetings like Open House, where all stakeholders practice first-hand on how to apply the

school improvement plan's remediation directly into the daily school life. The monitoring is achieved through observations and communication briefings with the stakeholders, where the quality of the development of the improvement plans are evaluated, discussed, and revised. In terms of communication, all of the stakeholders, which include teachers, students, and teachers, participate in committees to develop the solutions to improve the school and work to approve the final remediations in order to meet the school's goals (as delineated by the School Improvement Plan).

Overall Assessment:

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

Conclusion

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

Focus Questions

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

The major trends and areas of focus that cut across the seven standards are the facts that Mater Gardens Academy implements a process for continuously evaluating achievement and areas for improvement, and the school uses the information from self-evaluation in order to develop school improvement goals, to monitor the attainment of the goals, and to strive in order to exceed the goals. Mater Gardens Academy engages in the process of reflecting upon achievements and needs through communication and collaboration with all of the school's stakeholders, which includes students, teachers, administration, parents, and community representatives.

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

Our school's greatest strengths are the fact that all stakeholders are communicated about school matters in an effective manner and the fact that stakeholders receive different opportunities to participate in sessions where they can devise and discuss methods of improving the school in order to best serve the needs of the students. Ensuring equal learning opportunities and support for school innovation thrives at Mater Gardens Academy, where through the overall collaboration of the faculty, staff, and the business community, the school is able to attain yearly goals.

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

Our school's greatest challenges lie in continuing to foster the teamwork ambiance in the future despite any changes in personnel and in attempting to grow in student population, which is currently restrained due to the temporary housing of Mater Lakes Academy Middle School in the building.

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

The insights gained from the self-assessment will be used to sustain an effective level of communication in order to ensure that quality assurance and continuous improvement effort are being met. The self-assessment yields the conclusion that communication and involvement from all stakeholders is important in establishing and maintaining a quality level of education. Therefore, communication medians will be reviewed and enhanced in order to increase feedback from all stakeholders in regards to various school matters, which will ultimately result in greater school improvement as yielded from the discussion and collaboration of ideas implemented by all affected members of the school community.