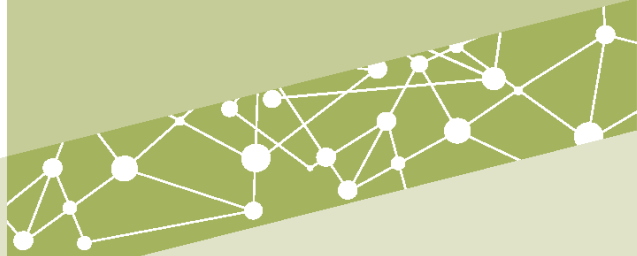


February 11-13, 2018



AdvancED®
Engagement
Review Report



AdvancED® Performance Accreditation

Al Kamal American International School
Sharjah, UAE

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
AdvancED Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review	3
AdvancED Continuous Improvement System	4
Continuous Improvement Journey Narrative	4
AdvancED Standards Diagnostic Results	6
Leadership Capacity Domain	6
Learning Capacity Domain	6
Resource Capacity Domain	7
Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) Results	9
eleot® Narrative	10
Findings	12
Improvement Priorities	12
Accreditation Recommendation and Index of Educational Quality™ (IEQ™)	14
Conclusion Narrative	14
Next Steps	16
Team Roster	16

Introduction

AdvancED Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

Accreditation is pivotal to leveraging education quality and continuous improvement. Using a set of rigorous research based standards, the accreditation process examines the whole institution—the program, the cultural context and the community of stakeholders—to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of learners. Through the AdvancED Accreditation Process, highly skilled and trained Engagement Review Teams gather first-hand evidence and information pertinent to evaluating an institution’s performance against the research-based AdvancED Performance Standards. Using these Standards, Engagement Review Teams assess the quality of learning environments to gain valuable insights and target improvements in teaching and learning. AdvancED provides Standards that are tailored for all education providers so that the benefits of accreditation are universal across the education community.

Through a comprehensive review of evidence and information, our experts gain a broad understanding of institution quality. Using the Standards, the review team provides valuable feedback to institutions that helps to focus and guide each institution’s improvement journey. Valuable evidence and information from other stakeholders, including students, also is obtained through interviews, surveys and additional activities.

As a part of the Engagement Review, stakeholders were interviewed by members of the Engagement Review Team to gain their perspectives on topics relevant to the institution's learning environment and organizational effectiveness. The feedback gained through the stakeholder interviews was considered with other evidences and data to support the findings of the Engagement Review. The following chart depicts the numbers of persons interviewed representative of various stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Groups	Number
Leadership	16
Teachers	35
Students	60
Parents	12
Total	123

Once all of the information is compiled and reviewed, the team develops the Engagement Review Report and presents preliminary results to the institution. Results from the Engagement Review are reported in four ratings represented by colors. These ratings provide guidance and insight into an institution's continuous improvement efforts as described below:

Color	Rating	Description
Red	Needs Improvement	Identifies key areas that need more focused improvement efforts
Yellow	Emerging	Represents areas to enhance and extend current improvement efforts
Green	Meets Expectations	Pinpoints quality practices that meet the Standards
Blue	Exceeds Expectations	Demonstrates noteworthy practices producing clear results that exceed expectations

AdvancED Continuous Improvement System

The AdvancED Continuous Improvement System (CIS) provides a systemic fully integrated solution to help institutions map out and navigate a successful improvement journey. In the same manner that educators are expected to understand the unique needs of every learner and tailor the education experience to drive student success, every institution must be empowered to map out and embrace their unique improvement journey. AdvancED expects institutions to use the results and the analysis of data from various interwoven components for the implementation of improvement actions to drive education quality and improved student outcomes. While each improvement journey is unique, the journey is driven by key actions. AdvancED identifies three important components of a continuous improvement process and provides feedback on the components of the journey using a rubric that identifies the three areas to guide the improvement journey. The areas are as follows:

Commitment to Continuous Improvement	Rating
The institution has collected sufficient and quality data to identify school improvement needs.	Emerging
Implications from the analysis of data have been identified and used for the development of key strategic goals.	Emerging
The institution demonstrates the capacity to implement their continuous improvement journey.	Emerging

Continuous Improvement Journey Narrative

The staff and leadership of Al Kamal American International School (AKAIS) have clearly established a culture of continuous improvement. The teachers, students, staff, and parents are united in their desire to make the school a center for 21st Century Learning, and a sense of purpose is evident when you enter the building. The school is situated amongst a multitude of other international schools in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates with over 1000 students in grades K-12 and nearly 100 staff members. The school operates under the authority of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and is one of several schools privately owned by one individual.

The current school leadership has been in place for a little over one year. In that period of time, these leaders have started a new improvement journey by first addressing the teaching and learning paradigm. Traditional education has been focused on memorization, exam preparation, and covering the topics in a textbook. AKAIS leadership and staff are now embracing a new paradigm that is centered on standards and 21st Century Skills. Although this initiative is in infant stages, the Engagement Review Team could tell through interviews with school leaders and the staff that efforts to change the learning paradigm were genuine and poised for success. The school has invested time and energy in moving this concept forward and the team noted the following: collaborative staff meetings to discuss what standards-based teaching should look like; peer observations have been introduced; a formal lesson plan format designed around standards-based teaching and learning is now used by all teachers; and the curriculum has been collaboratively mapped to standards. Perhaps the most powerful observation noted by the team was the level of enthusiasm amongst students and parents regarding the school's efforts to rethink learning. There was a palatable level of support from parents regarding 21st Century Learning, and students expressed their enthusiasm specifically for two components of this new emphasis on learning: Project Based Learning (PBL) and lessons focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM). Teachers are beginning to incorporate project based learning as a method of skill and knowledge application and school leadership have injected energy into standards based learning by constructing a STEAM room (dedicated to science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) and allocating human and fiscal resources to support the facility.

The school developed a comprehensive improvement plan comprising over 29 pages of improvement activities. The team reviewed the plan, and noted that all of the activities were focused on improvements that support the school's vision and mission and align with the school leadership's vision of not only transforming learning but also improving all aspects of school operation. Activities included a multitude of segments focused on lesson planning, instructional improvement, assessment, and curriculum as well as improvement efforts in crisis management,

health, safety, school organization, child protection, enrichment, extracurricular activities, and maintenance.

It should be reemphasized that the journey AKAIS has begun in transforming learning is in the early stages, and the team noted several potential “bumps in the road” that may impede the school’s progress in achieving its new vision and mission. First, a continuous journey of improvement requires the use of meaningful data over time to substantiate growth and change in the desired direction. The Engagement Review Team noted that the school has limited student achievement data other than results from the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT). The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment was administered to a few students this school year for the first time. Thus the school has limited availability and use of longitudinal achievement data from which to establish baseline trends and measure subsequent growth. Another component of essential data that is missing from the improvement journey is the perceptions and experiences of staff, students and parents. The school principal explained how parent views regarding traditional learning are slowly changing and students and staff were observed to have positive views toward nontraditional learning and instruction. However, scant objective survey data have been utilized to substantiate these perceptions and document positive or negative changes in stakeholder experiences through the course of the improvement journey. While the direction and momentum of the school’s efforts to redefine learning are commendable and observable, the systemic and systematic use of achievement and survey data to monitor progress, guide decision making, and determine success is an emerging facet of the school’s continuous journey.

The Engagement Review Team reviewed multiple artifacts that confirmed the school’s commitment and capacity to pursue improvement over time. Student activity summaries and announcements indicated a wide range of competitions, clubs, and community activities designed to engage the students in meaningful extracurricular activities. The school’s professional development plan, although not driven by policy or a formal needs assessment, included numerous learning activities geared towards building teacher skills in differentiation, collaboration, lesson planning, syllabi development, and classroom management. The team also observed numerous notes from the principal to staff members commending them for their efforts. Along with the noted artifacts, the team learned that school staff had been divided into teams for each of the School Quality Factors (SQF) and these teams helped evaluate the school’s ratings on the diagnostics. The one area of concern regarding the capacity for continuous improvement was the lack of overarching policies used to guide the governance of the school’s ownership, the employed school leadership, and the general operations of the school organization. However, the school principal and academic advisor are fully aware of this need and are working on the development of these policies.

The following points summarize Al Kamal American International School’s continuous improvement journey:

1. The school has committed to the challenge of creating a new model of learning that is student-centered, project-based, and enriched with 21st Century Skills, Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM). However, the use of data to guide this new direction and to continually monitor and validate the results of the improvement efforts is emerging. The school must now put into place a valid and reliable data system comprised of student performance results and stakeholder perceptions and experiences in order to objectify and guide further improvement efforts.
2. The school’s analysis of student achievement data thus far been limited to summary conclusions on results of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT) with some dialog regarding what changes should occur based on the data. Stakeholder surveys were administered to all stakeholders but minimal analysis of the data was provided. Therefore the school is emerging in the collection and analysis of data to guide continued school improvement.
3. The school has provided evidence that there is a commitment among staff and stakeholders to improve the learning dynamics of the school. The momentum to begin school improvement was observed by the team. However, the capacity to continue this improvement process is emerging and will need the support of wisely developed policies and procedures to direct the process as well as the collection and analysis of data to substantiate and clarify continuous improvement over time.

AdvancED Standards Diagnostic Results

The AdvancED Performance Standards Diagnostic is used by the Engagement Review Team to evaluate the institution's effectiveness based on AdvancED's Performance Standards. The diagnostic consists of three components built around each of the three Domains: **Leadership Capacity**, **Learning Capacity** and **Resource Capacity**. Point values are established within the diagnostic and a percentage of the points earned by the institution for each Standard is calculated from the point values for each Standard. Results are reported within four ranges identified by the colors representing Needs Improvement (Red), Emerging (Yellow), Meets Expectations (Green), Exceeds Expectations (Blue). The results for the three Domains are presented in the tables that follow.

Leadership Capacity Domain

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress toward its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its purpose and direction; the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives; the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways; and the capacity to implement strategies that improve learner and educator performance.

Leadership Capacity Standards		Rating
1.1	The institution commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning including the expectations for learners.	Exceeds
1.2	Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the institution's purpose and desired outcomes for learners.	Exceeds
1.3	The institution engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice.	Emerging
1.4	The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support institutional effectiveness.	Emerging
1.5	The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities.	Needs Improvement
1.6	Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.	Needs Improvement
1.7	Leaders implement operational process and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.	Emerging
1.8	Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the institution's purpose and direction.	Meets Expectations
1.9	The institution provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.	Emerging
1.10	Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement.	Emerging

Learning Capacity Domain

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement and success is the primary expectation of every institution. An effective learning culture is characterized by positive and productive teacher/learner relationships; high expectations and standards; a challenging and engaging curriculum; quality instruction and comprehensive support that enable all learners to be successful; and assessment practices (formative and summative) that

monitor and measure learner progress and achievement. Moreover, a quality institution evaluates the impact of its learning culture, including all programs and support services, and adjusts accordingly.

Learning Capacity Standards		Rating
2.1	Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the institution.	Meets Expectations
2.2	The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving.	Emerging
2.3	The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs and skills needed for success.	Meets Expectations
2.4	The institution has a formal structure to ensure learners develop positive relationships with and have adults/peers who support their educational experiences.	Emerging
2.5	Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels.	Exceeds Expectations
2.6	The institution implements a process to ensure the curriculum is aligned to standards and best practices.	Meets Expectations
2.7	Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the institution's learning expectations.	Emerging
2.8	The institution provides programs and services for learners' educational futures and career planning.	Emerging
2.9	The institution implements, evaluates, and monitors processes to identify and address the specialized social, emotional, developmental, and academic needs of students.	Emerging
2.10	Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.	Meets Expectations
2.11	Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.	Emerging
2.12	The institution implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.	Meets Expectations

Resource Capacity Domain

The use and distribution of resources support the stated mission of the institution. Institutions ensure that resources are distributed and utilized equitably so that the needs of all learners are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning for all staff. The institution examines the allocation and use of resources to ensure appropriate levels of funding, sustainability, organizational effectiveness, and increased student learning.

Resource Capacity Standards		Rating
3.1	The institution plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the institution's effectiveness.	Emerging
3.2	The institution's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness.	Emerging

Resource Capacity Standards		Rating
3.3	The institution provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.	Meets Expectations
3.4	The institution attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the institution's purpose and direction	Emerging
3.5	The institution integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness.	Emerging
3.6	The institution provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the institution.	Meets Expectations
3.7	The institution demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the institution's purpose and direction.	Emerging
3.8	The institution allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the institution's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.	Emerging

Pending Final Review

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®)

Results

The eProve™ Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) is a learner-centric classroom observation tool that comprises 28 items organized in seven environments aligned with the AdvancED Standards. The eleot provides useful, relevant, structured, and quantifiable data on the extent to which students are engaged in activities and/or demonstrate knowledge, attitudes, and/or dispositions that are conducive to effective learning. Classroom observations are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes. Results from eleot are reported on a scale of one to four based on the degree and quality of the engagement.

eleot® Observations	
Total Number of eleot® Observations	48
Environments	Rating
Equitable Learning Environment	2.44
Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs	1.77
Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	3.00
Learners are treated in a fair, clear and consistent manner	3.15
Learners demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions and dispositions	1.83
High Expectations Environment	2.52
Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher	2.62
Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	2.85
Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work	2.52
Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	2.48
Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning	2.15
Supportive Learning Environment	2.80
Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful	2.71
Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	2.79
Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks	2.92
Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher	2.77
Active Learning Environment	2.58
Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and the teacher predominate	2.75
Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences	2.21
Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities	3.12
Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments	2.23
Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment	2.34
Learners monitor their own learning progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored	1.92
Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work	2.65
Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content	2.77
Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed	2.02

eleot® Observations	
Total Number of eleot® Observations	48
Environments	Rating
Well-Managed Learning Environment	3.00
Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other	3.33
Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others	2.90
Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another	2.83
Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions	2.94
Digital Learning Environment	1.70
Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	1.90
Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	1.65
Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and/or work collaboratively for learning	1.56

eleot® Narrative

In the course of the Engagement Review, team members conducted a total of 48 classroom observations utilizing the eProve™ Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®). The eleot collects data on seven different learning environments, 1) Equitable Learning Environment, 2) High Expectations Learning Environment, 3) Supportive Learning Environment, 4) Active Learning Environment, 5) Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment, 6) Well Managed Learning Environment, and 7) Digital Learning Environment. Within in each of the learning environments are criterion statements used to describe and quantify that particular learning environment.

Results of the eleot observations for AKAIS indicate that the highest rated learning environments were Well-Managed Learning Environment at 3.00 and Supportive Learning Environment at 2.80. The lowest rated environment was the Digital Learning Environment at 1.70 followed by Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment at 2.34. The other three learning environments for equity, high expectations, and active learning had ratings of 2.44, 2.52 and 2.58 respectively.

The higher ratings for Well-Managed Classroom (3.00) and Supportive Learning Environments (2.80) are reflective of the school's overall culture of respect, caring, and a general family-type atmosphere. The highest rated eleot criterion was within the Well-Managed Classroom Environment: "Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s)" (3.33). The other criterion in Well-Managed Classroom Environment and Supportive Learning ranged from 2.94 to 2.77, and included criterion related to students abiding by classroom rules, making smooth transitions, minimizing disruptions and wasted time, taking risks and being supported in the learning process.

The Equitable Learning Environment was rated at 2.44 overall with criterion ratings ranging from 3.15 to 1.77, the largest span in ratings of all the criteria. This wide range is significant for this environment. The second highest individual criterion rating of the school's eleot was in the Equitable Learning Environment "Learners are treated in a fair, clear and consistent manner" (3.15). Following this rating was the third highest rated criterion of "Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support" (3:00) These two ratings also support the tangible culture of respect and acceptance present in the school. However, the lowest criterion rating in the eleot observations, with the exception of Digital Learning, is also found within the Equitable Learning Environment, "Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs" with a rating of 1.77. This low rating bears out the fact that it is one thing to treat all students in a fair, consistent manner and provide them equal access to discussions, activities, and resources, but providing them

with differentiated instruction to meet their individual needs is a much greater challenge. Although the school embraces differentiated learning and even includes differentiation in lesson planning and team planning for instruction, these eleot observations reveal that minimal observable differentiated learning occurred.

The High Expectations and Active Learning Environments had similar ratings of 2.52 and 2.58 respectively. These two environments are closely aligned with the school's curriculum and the instructional approaches used to deliver instruction. Within the High Expectations Learning Environment, the highest rated criterion was "Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable" (2.85), which reflected a general push by the school to have students engaged beyond traditional textbook learning. The lowest rated criterion in High Expectations was "Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning" (2.15). Interestingly, the third highest rated criterion of all the eleot observations was within the Active Learning Environment, "Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities" (3.12). This rating reflected the school's efforts to make learning fun and keep students engaged in the learning process. It also confirms the other ratings in Well-Managed and Supportive Learning Environments.

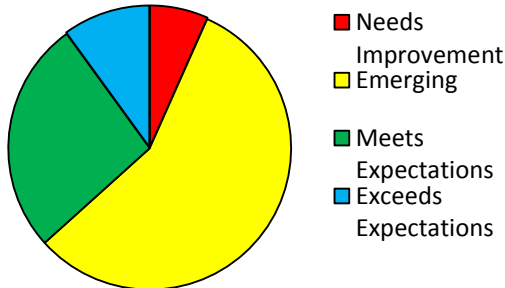
Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment was rated at 2.34, the second lowest environment. This environment is a snapshot of whether students clearly understand how their work will be assessed and what the expected standards of performance may be for various activities. Lower ratings in this area occur when teachers fail to use exemplars, rubrics, or rating systems or do not clearly identify what quality work looks like. The lowest rated criterion in this environment was "Learners monitor their own learning progress or have mechanisms, whereby their learning progress is monitored" (1.92). An often overlooked, but vital part of instructional planning is determining how students will monitor their progress and know whether or not they are mastering the skills or content.

The lowest rated environment, Digital Learning (1.70), is often the lowest rated in most schools. It remains a significant challenge to provide meaningful use of digital learning tools as indicated by the ratings for AKAIS. The team discussed the eleot observations related to technology and found that the highest use of digital learning occurred in classrooms where Project Based Learning (PBL) was occurring or in the STEAM activities. As the school continues to incorporate more PBL and STEAM activities, the demand for and use of digital resources will most likely increase.

Obviously the eleot observations conducted by the review team will not capture all of the various teaching dynamics of AKAIS. The observations simply provide a snapshot and overall glimpse of what took place in the observed classrooms at those particular times. However, the data can be powerful as the school continues its efforts to enhance and improve the quality of instruction. The school leadership and staff are encouraged to leverage these data by pursuing targeted professional development, mentoring, and peer observations to develop the essential learning environments and teaching behaviors necessary to support 21st Century Skills, Project Based Learning, and STEAM. The school leadership is also encouraged to continue using eleot as a means of providing ongoing feedback to the staff on how the school is doing as a whole in its pursuit of continuous instructional improvement.

Findings

The chart below provides an overview of the institution ratings across the three Domains.



Rating	Number of Standards
Needs Improvement	2
Emerging	17
Meets Expectations	8
Exceeds Expectations	3

Improvement Priorities

Improvement priorities are developed to enhance the capacity of the institution to reach a higher level of performance and reflect the areas identified by the Engagement Review Team to have the greatest impact on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Improvement Priority #1

Develop, implement, and monitor comprehensive data-driven policies and procedures to ensure integrity and effectiveness in all school operations.

Primary Standard: 1.4

Evidence:

The team observed a few isolated school policies, including staff and student handbooks, but noted a general lack of specific policies to guide all school operations. This was confirmed in the interviews with school leadership as well. School leaders described their efforts to formalize school operations during the past year, and the team was made aware that formal policies and procedures were minimal prior to the current leadership's employment last year. In finance, for example, the team reviewed documents and interviewed school leaders and found that the budgeting process tends to be ambiguous due to the lack of specific guiding policies and procedures. There were no policies and procedures for resource allocation from the school owner to the school. The team was also unable to find policies or procedures regarding resource allocation and budgeting processes that are linked to the school's vision and mission. For example, the Internet connection within the school was often too slow to support teacher and student digital activities. Teachers expressed their desire to further the integration of technology for 21st Century Learning, but felt limited by an inadequate technology infrastructure. The lack of a policy to guide resource allocation in support of the school's vision on 21st Century Learning resulted in resource allocations directed toward other priorities. When the team requested a copy of finance policies, they were provided a copy of the financial audit rather than a policy. Through a review of human resource documents and in interviews with human resources personnel, the team noted that some written procedures were identified, but a comprehensive set of policies that describe recruitment, retention, salary guidelines, overall performance appraisal, etc. do not exist. Finally, the team reviewed the school's professional development plan and noted a variety of activities scheduled for the year. To the school's credit, the team noted that some of the professional development activities were based on the results of teacher evaluations. However, the team did not find policies and procedures to guide overall planning, resource allocation, and evaluation of the school's professional development program.

Improvement Priority #2

Formulate, adopt, and publish policies for the governing authority, which includes a code of ethics, governance policies and processes, well-defined roles and responsibilities, and identified sources of data that guide the governing authority's decision-making.

Primary Standard: 1.5**Evidence:**

The Al Kamal American International School Board of Governors consists of three individuals including the founder, chairman, and deputy chairman. However, there are no formalized roles and responsibilities specific to the governing body and school administration. Unfortunately, the owner was unable to meet with the team for an interview. Prior to this year a deputy served as the liaison between the principal and owner. However, the owner and principal decided that direct communication between the two of them was more effective so the deputy position was eliminated. The principal meets monthly with the owner to discuss school business and review the strategic plan. The principal described the owner as committed to the school's vision of incorporating 21st Century Skills and stated that she could approach him with any concerns. In the interview with school leadership it was apparent that a positive working relationship existed between the owner and the principal. However, no policies are in place dealing with ethics, owner and board of governor roles, school leadership roles, and the level of autonomy granted to school leaders to administer the school programs.

Improvement Priority #3

Implement and monitor the impact of professional development that provides teachers the skills and knowledge to analyze student achievement data and design effective differentiated learning to meet unique student learner needs.

Primary Standard: 2.7**Evidence:**

The team noted that, although differentiated instruction was frequently referred to as a school priority, there was little evidence of differentiation occurring in classroom instruction. eleot observation results indicated that differentiated learning was one of the lowest ratings with a rating of 1.77 on the statement, "Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs." The school has taken steps to standardize a lesson plan format that includes a specific section for differentiation, but the team observed minimal use of differentiation during the classroom visits. Additionally, when asked about differentiating instruction, teachers gave examples of more worksheets and more instructional time as a means of meeting individual student learning needs rather than adapting, modifying, individualizing, or changing instruction. Interviews with teachers also indicated that some data analysis occurs within departments and grade levels, but teachers provided few specific examples of how data analysis actually changed instruction. Finally, although the school has some comparative achievement data, there was a lack of substantive longitudinal achievement data, which limits the school's ability to compare student cohort groups at the local and national level in order to target specific learning gaps and make instructional decisions.

Accreditation Recommendation and Index of Educational Quality™ (IEQ™)

The Engagement Review Team recommends to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that the institution earns the distinction of accreditation for a five-year term. AdvancED will review the results of the Engagement Review to make a final determination, including the appropriate next steps for the institution in response to these findings.

AdvancED provides the Index of Education Quality™ (IEQ™) as a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of standards and review criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus. The IEQ is comprised of the Standards Diagnostic ratings from the three Domains: 1) Leadership Capacity; 2) Learning Capacity; and 3) Resource Capacity and the results of elite classroom observations. The IEQ results are reported on a scale of 100 to 400 and provides information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria.

Institution IEQ	293.96
-----------------	--------

Conclusion Narrative

Al Kamal American International School is situated on a large tract of land along with numerous other international schools with similar structural designs and facades. At first glance, nothing really distinguishes AKAIS from the other schools. However, in a conversation with the Lead Evaluator the principal stated, "I want this school to be different from all of these other schools. I want it to be a beacon, a light. Something unique and moving away from the traditional textbook bound instruction of the past." This vision for AKAIS has a strong beginning and in a little over a year several noteworthy transitions are obvious.

The principal has worked tirelessly to establish strong relationships with school staff, students, and parents. Building trust was her first goal; and, in interviews with stakeholders it was evident that they are willing to embark on this improvement journey. It was also evident that the school owner has supported the principal by giving her the autonomy to pursue this new journey. After building the stakeholder's trust the principal and her leadership team began a series of initiatives. The vision and mission of the school were revised to establish a new way of viewing the school's possibilities. Teachers were engaged in discussions and trainings to help them see the power of standards-based curriculum and new curriculum guides were developed. Project-based learning was introduced as a means of raising expectations and incorporating 21st Century Skills. Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) became a buzzword, and a room was set aside and furnished as the "Steam Room." A focused parent communication campaign was instituted to help parents understand the difference between "textbook focused learning" and standards-based learning. As one school leader said, "Parents now understand that the book is not the curriculum. They see that the curriculum is based on Standards and STEAM." This observation was substantiated in the interviews with parents. The Engagement Review Team noted that all of these initiatives are strongly supported by most of the staff and students, which adds to the energy, and momentum of the improvement journey.

Al Kamal American International School staff also joined together to extend the new curricular emphasis into their morning assemblies. On designated mornings the school meets in three separate assemblies to conduct simple physical exercise, sing the national anthem and the school song, and review one of the school's values that has been selected for monthly emphasis. The team observed students having opportunities to perform before their peers through drama, recitation, speaking, or singing. The principal explained that these assemblies are used to build understanding of the school's values as well as give students opportunities to use important communication skills.

The school leadership involved the staff in reflecting on the steps they had taken thus far by dividing them into

teams that focused on the School Quality Factors. This process clarified the reasons for many of the initiatives that had been instituted in the school, and it also provided talking points for future improvement steps. The process was reported to be beneficial; one teacher stated, “We didn’t stay after school until 5:00 on so many nights working on the School Quality Factors because of the upcoming Engagement Review. We worked like this because this is who we are, and this is what we want for our school.”

Other school personnel have also been included in understanding and supporting the school’s new mission and vision. Specific activities were identified in the school improvement plan to engage support staff, security, and maintenance personnel. The team noted that maintenance personnel and support staff were aware of the school’s new emphasis on learning as pointed out on posters summarizing learning projects. One support staff member explained that the auditorium is a busy place because so many students are scheduled to present their projects. The team observed that the auditorium resembled a “TED Talk” stage complete with the TED box graphic.

The Engagement Review Team noted that the school would benefit by collecting and analyzing data from more sources in order to measure and compare student success as well as document and inform other school improvement initiatives. For example, If the school’s definition of learning is the use of 21st Century Skills and the ability to complete meaningful projects, how will this learning be measured and evaluated? How will this learning be compared to traditional assessment techniques? How will the school know that it is achieving its new vision and mission? Such questions create opportunities to document and celebrate new levels of student learning.

Digital Learning was evident within the school particularly within the STEAM Room and in classes where project based learning was emphasized. The team noted that some high school teachers were conducting activities where students were encouraged to use their own electronic devices to access the Internet for research and problem solving. However, resources for digital learning must be allocated to support the school’s vision and mission. Not all classrooms were equipped with interactive boards and the Internet signal was sporadic in some parts of the building. In addition, classroom observations indicated that the integration of technology into teacher lessons and student learning is minimal and further professional development in this area is warranted as a support for and enhancement to the schools vision and mission for 21st Century Learning.

The school leadership, owner, and staff are to be commended for accomplishing so much in such a short time. However, several important factors are in need of improvement in order to maintain momentum and protect the investment of so much time and energy into these worthwhile endeavors. As pointed out earlier in this report, the school lacks formal policies to guide and direct school operations. It is imperative that clear policies are developed and adopted in order to ensure smooth operation of all school programs. Additionally, the school organization lacks essential governance policies dealing with ethics and the overarching relationship between the school owner and school leadership. Effective governance policies protect institutions and people during unforeseen personnel or resource transitions. Finally, it is evident through classroom observations that truly differentiated instruction continues to be an elusive goal. Teachers talked about differentiation in interviews, and the lesson plan format includes differentiation as a part of the planning process. The professional development plan included several sessions on differentiation and meeting the needs of gifted and talented students. When asked to give examples of differentiation some teachers explained the school’s after school remedial program that offers additional worksheets and more time for the students to practice. However, differentiation is not more of the same nor does it become part of the instructional process by including it as a part of lesson planning. Incorporating authentic differentiation to meet individual learner needs requires significant teacher training, collaboration, and feedback. To meet their goal of incorporating differentiated instruction, Al Kamal will need to incorporate a professional development program that gives teachers the understanding, skills, and practice necessary to use data and design truly differentiated instruction based on individual learner needs.

Al Kamal American International School is on the right path for their improvement journey. Although the journey is just beginning, as indicated by the number of Standards rated emerging, the school is positioned to move forward and accomplish its vision and mission as the staff and stakeholders continue working together to enhance the quality of learning for all students.

Next Steps

The results of the Engagement Review provide the next step to guide the improvement journey of the institution in their efforts to improve the quality of educational opportunities for all learners. The findings are aligned to research-based criteria designed to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness. The feedback provided in the Accreditation Engagement Review Report will assist the institution in reflecting on their current improvement efforts and to adapt and adjust their plans to continuously strive for improvement.

Upon receiving the Accreditation Engagement Review Report the institution is encouraged to implement the following steps:

- Review and share the findings with stakeholders.
- Develop plans to address the Improvement Priorities identified by the Engagement Review Team.
- Use the findings and data from the report to guide and strengthen the institution’s continuous improvement efforts.
- Celebrate the successes noted in the report
- Continue your Improvement Journey

Team Roster

The Engagement Review Teams are comprised of professionals with varied backgrounds and professional experiences. All Lead Evaluators and Engagement Review Team members complete AdvancED training and eleot® certification to provide knowledge and understanding of the AdvancED tools and processes. The following professionals served on the Engagement Review Team:

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Dr. Kelly Duane Tolman Lead Evaluator	Dr. Kelly Tolman recently retired as an administrator with Saudi Aramco Expatriate Schools in Saudi Arabia. Prior to this he has worked stateside as a director of curriculum and instruction, principal, and teacher. Dr. Tolman received his doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Wyoming and completed his bachelor and masters degrees in Elementary Education at Utah State University. Dr. Tolman has broad national and international experience with school and district level improvement efforts including mission and vision clarification, developing systems and systemic mindsets, stakeholder engagement, professional learning communities (PLC), and effective collaboration. Dr. Tolman is a Lead Evaluator for AdvancED and has conducted accreditation reviews in the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Dr. Tolman’s interests in improving educational systems have resulted in numerous presentations in state and national conferences including the International Reading Association (IRA), Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), and AdvancED.

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
<p>Dr. David Barnett Associate Lead Evaluator</p>	<p>After serving 42 years in education, Dr. David Barnett retired in July 2016 from his position as Founding Dean for the Patton College of Education at the University of Pikeville in Pikeville, KY. Prior to accepting the Dean’s position, Barnett worked thirteen years as a faculty member at Morehead State University (MSU) in Morehead, KY. His responsibilities at MSU also included department chair, assistant dean, and director of the doctoral program. Prior to moving to higher education, Barnett served in the public schools for twenty-seven years. His P-12 experience spans several roles including middle school math teacher, P-12 instructional supervisor, federal programs coordinator, finance officer, assistant superintendent, and school district superintendent. He holds several teaching and administrative certificates. He completed his doctorate in educational leadership at the University of Kentucky in 1986. Barnett has led or served as a team member for AdvancED on many External Reviews, Diagnostic Reviews, STEM Reviews, and most recently Engagement Reviews both in the US and internationally. He also serves on the Board for Kentucky AdvancED. He continues to teach online courses for doctoral students for the University of the Cumberlands. Finally, Barnett serves as a founding board member for The Way, a decade-old Christian organization that financially supports an elementary school in Phnom Penh for children who live on or near the city dump. The Way also supports an orphanage located on the Meng Kong River about two hours north of Phnom Penh.</p>
<p>Dr. Walid Yassin Team Member</p>	<p>Dr. Walid Yassin has a Ph.D. and an M.A degree in Education and another degree in Master of Public Administration (MPA). Currently, he is the Head of Licensing and Accreditation at the Higher Education Sector, Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK), UAE. Since 2010, he served at a number of senior positions within Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in UAE. He was Head of Quality Assurance, then Head of Project Management Office at Abu Dhabi Center for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ACTVET). He was Quality Assurance Manager at the Institute of Applied Technology (IAT), where he was the focal point with AdvancED. He led all Accreditation and Re-Accreditation, initiatives and joint activities with ACTVET systems and institutions that include High Schools, Institutes and Colleges. He also served on a number of Engagement Review Teams with AdvancED.</p>
<p>Ms. Shifaa El Hajj</p>	<p>Ms. Shifaa El Hajj holds a degree in Social Work and is currently pursuing her MA degree in Business Administration at Balamand University. Ms. El Hajj joined AZM School, Tripoli, Lebanon (an AdvancED accredited school) in 2013. She was the Assistant Principal for the middle school and Assistant for the Academic Director and currently she holds the position of Assistant in the HR Department. She is also a supervisor for the 1st year students majoring in Social Work at the Lebanese University. Previously, she served in 2017 as an AdvancED Engagement Review Team member in Cairo, Egypt.</p>



advanc-ed.org

Toll Free: 888.41EDNOW (888.413.3669) Global: +1 678.392.2285, ext. 6963
9115 Westside Parkway, Alpharetta, GA 30009



About AdvancED

AdvancED is a non-profit, non-partisan organization serving the largest community of education professionals in the world. Founded on more than 100 years of work in continuous improvement, AdvancED combines the knowledge and expertise of a research institute, the skills of a management consulting firm and the passion of a grassroots movement for educational change to empower Pre-K-12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential.

©Advance Education, Inc. AdvancED® grants to the Institution, which is the subject of the Engagement Review Report, and its designees and stakeholders a non-exclusive, perpetual, irrevocable, royalty-free license, and release to reproduce, reprint, and distribute this report in accordance with and as protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States of America and all foreign countries. All other rights not expressly conveyed are reserved by AdvancED.