



On March 3-4 we will have our AdvancED Accreditation External Team visit. AdvancED will be sending a team to St. Columbkille to evaluate our school. Presently we are accredited by the State of Nebraska. AdvancED is considered a higher level of accreditation and is also approved and supported by the State Department of Education and the Archdiocese of Omaha. The visitation team will be looking at five areas:

1. Purpose & Direction
2. Governance & Leadership
3. Teaching & Assessing For Learning
4. Resources & Support Systems
5. Using Results For Continuous Improvement

One of the ways in which we collected data to prepare for this process was by surveying teachers, parents, and students. The results of those surveys let us know how various groups of stakeholders perceive our school. They helped us identify areas of strength and areas where we need to improve. We are now able to use those results to make decisions on how to improve our operations and our image with our various stakeholders.

Our parents told us that we provide a safe learning environment, we have high expectations for our students, and that we have qualified staff members to support student learning. However, they also told us that we didn't ask for their input when reviewing and revising our purpose statement. They said that we also lack support services for some identified student needs. In addition, they did not feel that we offered support services in counseling and career planning.

Our primary grade students felt that their teachers want them to learn and to do their best. But, they didn't feel that other teachers knew them.

In grades 3-5, the students felt that their teachers want them to do their best work and that the principal along with their teachers want them to learn. However, they felt that they weren't asked by the principal or their teacher what they think about school.

Students in grades 6-8 thought that principals and teachers have high expectations and that our school offers a high quality education. However, they don't think the school considers their opinions when planning how to improve school.

Our staff felt that our purpose is focused on student success. They also felt that our purpose is based on a shared vision and beliefs that guide our decision making. They felt that school leaders hold themselves and staff accountable for student learning. But, they indicated that we need to improve our grading system, that we need to develop a formal procedure to discuss student learning, and that we need to develop a mentoring system.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the surveys. During the next few weeks we will be finalizing our preparations for the External Team visit. We look at this process as an opportunity

for us to improve as a school. While we want to put our best foot forward, we also want them to see us as we really are. In order to continually improve ourselves, we have to be honest with what we do well and what we can do better.

For more information about the AdvancED Accreditation process, go to:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhjC-T5VxnY>

Yours in Christ,
Jim Makey, Principal