

AdvancED®

Performance Accreditation for Early Learning

Guiding the pursuit
of excellence.



Over 28,000 schools worldwide have selected AdvancED Performance Accreditation as their framework for powerful ongoing continuous improvement.

Accreditation is pivotal to leveraging improvement.

There is no question that the school and learning environment are at the heart of teaching and learning. However, increasing the learning, growth and development of young children involves more than improving instruction. Using a set of rigorous protocols and research-based Standards, the accreditation process examines the whole school — the programs, the cultural context, the community of stakeholders — to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of young learners. Schools that choose AdvancED Performance Accreditation for Early Learning know that it is not the outcome, but the process of accreditation that yields the greatest return on investment.

The AdvancED Performance Accreditation for Early Learning determination is based on a review of Standards, environmental observations and stakeholder involvement. This visionary protocol is a holistic approach that helps to align accreditation with accountability and places emphasis on the importance of the learning, growth and development of young children when evaluating school quality and organizational effectiveness.

AdvancED Standards for Quality

The AdvancED Standards for Quality provide a set of research-aligned Standards, Indicators and detailed criteria as the foundation for organizational excellence and effectiveness.

Standard 1: Purpose and Direction

The school maintains and communicates a purpose and direction that commit to a sense of community and relationships among young children and adults; developmentally appropriate cognitive, emotional, social, creative and physical growth and development; as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching, learning, development and care for young children.

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership

The school operates under governance and leadership that promote and support learning, growth and development in young children; family involvement; and school effectiveness.

Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning

The school's curriculum, instructional design and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and the developmentally appropriate cognitive, emotional, social, creative and physical growth and development of young children.

Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems

The program has resources and provides services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all children.

Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement

The school uses data about the developmentally appropriate learning, growth and development of young children and overall school effectiveness to guide continuous improvement.

Together, the five AdvancED Standards for Quality focus on practices within the school and systematic methods of driving excellence in young children's learning, growth and development.

Adjust, improve and excel.

AdvancED Performance Accreditation for Early Learning is not about earning a label for a one-time evaluation. Rather, it recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement.

Schools engaged in AdvancED Performance Accreditation will:

- Take stock of themselves in relation to research-based quality Standards.
- Access a framework and support system to help meet and exceed local, state, national and appropriate international requirements.
- Establish a vision, assess their current reality, implement an improvement plan, monitor progress and evaluate results.
- Enhance their best thinking with the insights and perspectives of an External Review Team.
- Receive customized and technical assistance from state, regional and worldwide offices to maximize improvement efforts.
- Utilize a state-of-the-art improvement management system that facilitates, documents and seamlessly integrates the continuous improvement and accreditation processes.
- Earn a distinctive mark of quality and integrity recognized around the globe as the standard for educational excellence.

The result?

The performance-based accreditation process provides each early learning school with a more comprehensive analysis to drive continuous improvement. AdvancED Early Learning Accreditation recognizes those schools that have sustained an exemplary commitment to continuous improvement AND exhibited excellence in supporting children's learning, growth and development.

AdvancED provides accreditation services for:

- Schools and School Systems
- Early Learning Schools
- State Education Agencies
- Education Service Agencies
- Digital Learning Institutions
- Corporations

AdvancED Performance Accreditation for Early Learning offers schools a road map for the pursuit of excellence in education and children's learning, unleashing their own power to transform.





AdvancED® Early Learning Accreditation

Step by Step

Application & Readiness

- 1 Contact an AdvancED operations office and complete an application.**
An AdvancED representative will contact you to prepare for a Readiness Review. This contact person will provide you support throughout the process. Once the Readiness Review is complete, you will receive a report from the review and be asked to confirm your commitment to move forward with the process.

Internal Review



- 2 Collect representative evidence** in conjunction with the Self Assessment to gain a comprehensive picture of school quality.



- 3 Conduct the Self Assessment** by analyzing data and using supporting evidence to rate performance against a series of evaluative criteria.



- 4 Gather stakeholder feedback** as part of the Self Assessment to get feedback from representative parents and staff during a specific time.



- 5 Write an Executive Summary** that describes and celebrates the school, defines purpose and direction and identifies achievements and challenges.



- 6 Create a quality improvement plan** based on analysis of data that aligns improvement goals for the learning, growth and development of young children and organizational effectiveness.



- 7 Demonstrate compliance with AdvancED, government and partnership requirements by:**

- ✓ Reporting substantive changes.
- ✓ Sharing a crisis/security management plan.
- ✓ Demonstrating an effective financial audit system.
- ✓ Engaging in continuous improvement.
- ✓ Maintaining license in good standing with the state.



External Review

- 8 Work with AdvancED to conduct and host an External Review.**

Led by an AdvancED-certified Lead Evaluator, a rigorously trained review team will visit your institution. This team will:

- Perform classroom observations using the **Environmental Rating for Early Learning™ (erel™)**.
- Review the representative evidence.
- Conduct internal and external stakeholder interviews.
- Determine the extent to which your institution meets *AdvancED Standards for Quality Early Learning Schools*.
- Examine additional artifacts and evidence.

Through the External Review process, institutions receive a comprehensive report of the team's findings with recognition of Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement and Improvement Priorities.



Post Review

- 9 At the end of the External Review, findings are presented and the accreditation recommendation is announced, pending approval by the local AdvancED Council.**

In January, March, June and October of each year, the AdvancED Accreditation Commission meets and approves an accreditation status.

- 10 Following accreditation, institutions should maintain momentum for continuous improvement by:**

- Engaging in ongoing self-reflection, internal review and stakeholder communication.
- Responding to Improvement Priorities for ongoing improvement.
- Submitting their Accreditation Progress Report within two years of the External Review.
- Celebrating the reward of hard work, success and dedication!



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 PreK-12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential.

The NCA Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) and the SACS Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.



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