

We received our final review from the AdvancED visitation team. Again, we'd like to remind our stakeholders that because we are new to the AdvancED system we are not embedded in their process. To be embedded the school must implement AdvancED's system for a minimum of three years. While our overall scores may appear low due to only having embedded AdvancED's ideas for less than two years, the visitation team was quite impressed with our school. Below you will find their full report:

The Engagement Review Team identified themes that support the continuous improvement process for Aquinas Catholic. These themes present strengths and opportunities to guide the improvement journey.

The culture of the school is outstanding and a testament to the Catholic nature of the school. Survey results and interviews with parents, students, and teachers indicate a high degree of satisfaction and support, and there is strong community support for Catholic education. The eleot observations showed students who were treated in a fair, clear, and consistent manner, demonstrated a positive sense of community, had congenial and supportive relationships with their teachers, and spoke and interacted respectfully with their teachers and other students. There is a high degree of collegiality among staff members, who are supportive of the mission of the school.

The school has gone through a quality, comprehensive strategic planning process, identifying over 80 target areas in five "pillars" or goals, most of which, outside of a few that are ongoing, have been met. The school has implemented a five-year budget planning process which will provide a firm financial foundation for the future and has been proactive in providing for facility upgrades.

This is the first time the school has participated in an AdvancED Accreditation Engagement Review, and they have only been exposed to the AdvancED process for approximately one year. Because of this, their ratings on the AdvancED standards, eleot observations, and the institution IEQ are relatively low, and are not reflective of the true quality of the school. This is mainly due to a lack of data in most areas. Observations and interviews showed teachers to be caring and committed to their students and the school. Students are receiving a quality education as indicated by standardized test scores, and are prepared for success after high school, as indicated in survey data. The school has had outstanding success in the fine arts and extracurricular activities. The Engagement Review Team has every expectation that, during the next review, the school will score much higher, and those scores will be a true reflection of the quality of Aquinas Catholic School.

The eleot observations indicated very little active engagement and differentiated learning by students. Classroom instruction often consisted of teachers talking with students who were sitting at desks taking notes. Students had limited opportunities to collaborate with their peers on projects, activities, or assignments during eleot observations.

There is currently no school-wide instructional model. The faculty has begun training in the Marzano instructional model during recently-instituted monthly late-start meetings and, according to faculty interviews, some of that training is being implemented in the classroom. Continued training and implementation of this model will benefit classroom teaching and student learning. The adoption of a classroom observation instrument as part of a broader teacher supervision and evaluation plan will aid the classroom implementation of the model. Continuation of monthly late-start meeting will enable opportunities for ongoing professional development of administration and teachers.

There was little to no technology use observed during eleot observations other than in actual computer classes, resulting in a low eleot rating for the Digital Learning Environment. The school offers one high school-level computer applications class. The integration of technology, not only in computer classes but across the curriculum, will equip the students of Aquinas Catholic for success in whatever post-secondary path they choose.

The school, in partnership with David City Public Schools, provides excellent opportunities for students with special needs. A dedicated special education teacher, along with two aids, provides services for 17 special education students. Classroom teachers work well with the special education teacher and aids, providing the support necessary for the success of those students.

Aquinas Catholic is providing a quality education for their students. The faculty and staff are dedicated to the mission and purpose of the institution. An increased familiarity with AdvancED procedures and processes will result in outcomes that are more reflective of the true quality of the school.