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May 21, 2010

Mr. Tim Scanlon
Riverside-Brookfield Township High School
160 Ridgewood Road
Riverside, IL 60546-2408

Dear Mr. Scanlon,

The North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), an accreditation division of AdvancED, is pleased to provide you with the report of the external review team that visited your school on April 26, 2010. We hope you and your faculty found the visit rewarding and professionally stimulating.

The enclosed report has been reviewed for quality by an AdvancED Reader. It has also been forwarded to Illinois NCA CASI state council for review. The state council has made an accreditation recommendation to the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which will take action on your continued accreditation at their next scheduled meeting in 2010. Following official action from the National Accreditation Commission, you will receive a letter informing you of the accreditation decision.

We hope you find the information in this report useful. We encourage you to use the report, particularly the direction provided in the "Recommendations" and "Next Steps" portions of the report, as a starting point for your continued improvement efforts. As part of the accreditation process, your school will submit an Accreditation Progress Report to share the progress on the "Recommendations" listed within the report. Your state office will notify you when this report should be submitted.

As you know, improvement is a continuous process. Use the report not only to celebrate your past accomplishments but also to stimulate action for continued and greater success. Now is an excellent time to review your school profile and improvement plan and make refinements in response to what you have learned from your self-assessment and the team report.

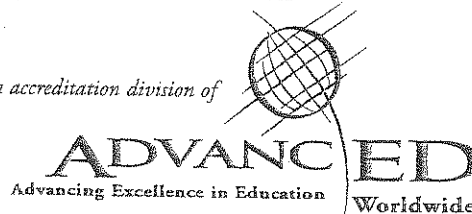
As you continue your improvement efforts, we encourage you to use NCA/AdvancED as resources. Take advantage of the expertise of state office staff, tap area Field Consultants, consult with your team chair, and connect with peer schools. Use our website (www.advanc-ed.org), handbooks, e-communications, and tools. Attend NCA CASI sponsored workshops which can be registered via www.nca.uillinois.edu/. Let us be your partner in improving school and student performance.

Thank you for your continued commitment to quality education for all children through accreditation.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Elgart, Ed.D, President/Chief Executive Officer

NCA CASI is an accreditation division of



www.advanc-ed.org

**Report of the
Quality Assurance Review Team
for
Riverside-Brookfield Township HS**

160 Ridgewood Road
Riverside, Illinois, United States 60546-2408

**Mr. Tim Scanlon, Principal
Dr. James Schouten, Chairperson - NCA-CASI-IL Team**

Review Dates: 04/26/2010 - 04/26/2010



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

Quality Assurance Review Report

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About AdvancED and NCA CASI/SACS CASI

Background. Founded in 1895, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) accredit public and private schools and districts in 30 states, the Navajo Nation, Latin America, and the Department of Defense Schools worldwide.

In April 2006, the 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 National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form one strong unified organization dedicated to education quality. That unified organization, known as AdvancED, creates the world's largest education community, representing 27,000 public and private schools and districts across the United States and in 65 countries worldwide and educating 15 million students.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. Through AdvancED, NCA CASI and SACS CASI have defined shared, research-based accreditation standards that cross state, regional, and national boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified accreditation process designed to help schools continuously improve.

The Accreditation Process. To earn and maintain accreditation from NCA CASI or SACS CASI, schools must:

- 1) **Meet the AdvancED Standards and Policies for Quality Schools.** Schools demonstrate adherence to the AdvancED standards and policies which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.
- 2) **Engage in continuous improvement.** Schools implement a continuous improvement process 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).
- 3) **Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.** Schools engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, schools host an external Quality Assurance Review Team once every five years. The team evaluates the school's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards, assesses the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and provides commendations and required actions to help the school improve. The team provides an oral exit report to the school and a written report detailing the team's required actions. The school acts on the team's required actions and submits a progress report following the review.

NCA CASI and SACS CASI accreditation engages the entire school community in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help schools be the best they can be on behalf of the students they serve.

Introduction to the Quality Assurance Review

Purpose. The purpose of the Quality Assurance Review is to:

1. Evaluate the school's adherence to the AdvancED quality standards and policies.
2. Assess the efficacy of the school's improvement process and methods for quality assurance.
3. Identify commendations and required actions to improve the school.
4. Make an accreditation recommendation for review by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission.

A key aim of the Quality Assurance Review is to verify that the school is operating with institutional integrity - that it is fulfilling its vision and mission for its students.

School Preparation. To prepare for the Quality Assurance Review, the school community engages in an in-depth self assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. The school identifies and describes the evidence that demonstrates that it is meeting each standard. Through this internal review, the school examines how its systems and processes contribute to student performance and school effectiveness.

Summary of Team Activities. The Quality Assurance Review Team is led by an AdvancED certified team chair and comprised of professionals from outside the school. The team reviews the findings of the school's internal self-assessment, conducts interviews with representative groups of stakeholders, reviews student performance data and other documentation provided by the school, and observes practices and daily operations. The team engages in professional deliberations to reach consensus on the school's adherence to the standards for accreditation. The team provides an oral exit report and prepares a written Quality Assurance Review Team Report designed to help the school improve.

The Quality Assurance Review Team Report. Following the visit, the review team completes the Quality Assurance Review report. After review by a nationally-trained reader, the report is submitted to the school. The report contains commendations and required actions for improvement.

Using the Report - Responding to the Required Actions. The school uses the report to guide its improvement efforts. The school is held accountable for addressing the required actions identified in the report. The NCA CASI/SACS CASI State Office is available to assist schools in addressing the required actions. At prescribed intervals, the school must submit a progress report detailing the actions and progress the school has made on the team's required actions. The report is reviewed at the state and national level to ensure the school is addressing the required actions.

Accreditation Recommendation. The Quality Assurance Review Team uses the findings from the onsite visit to make an accreditation recommendation that is reviewed at the state level and by the national AdvancED Accreditation Commission. Accreditation is granted by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission and communicated to the school following action from the commission.

Summary of Findings

A Quality Assurance Review Team representing the NCA CASI Illinois State Office (NCA-CASI-IL), a division of AdvancED, visited the Riverside-Brookfield Township HS in Riverside, Illinois, United States on 04/26/2010 - 04/26/2010.

During the visit, members of the Quality Assurance Review Team interviewed 16 members of the administrative team, 26 students, 8 parents, and 20 teachers. In addition, several non-certificated support staff and several security personnel were interviewed. The team also reviewed documents, student performance data, and other artifacts provided by the school. Specifically, the team examined the school's systems and processes in relation to the seven AdvancED standards:

1. Vision and Purpose
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Documenting and Using Results
5. Resource and Support Systems
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED standards focus on systems within a school and systematic methods of attaining high student performance and organizational effectiveness. The power of the standards lies in the connections and linkages between and among the standards. The Quality Assurance Review Team used the AdvancED standards to guide its review of the school, looking not only for adherence to individual standards, but also for how the school functions as a whole and embodies the practices and characteristics of a quality school.

Through its examination of the school's adherence to the standards, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following commendations and required actions.

Commendations

The Quality Assurance Review Team commends the school for the following strengths and accomplishments. While additional strengths are noted in the detailed review of each standard that appears later in this report, the commendations listed below are the strengths that the team believes are most deserving of being highlighted.

- **Stakeholders value the family-like culture in the school.**

In every stakeholder focus group interview, multiple members stated that one of the primary virtues of Riverside Brookfield High School is the feeling of family within the culture of the school. They talked about how the administration is open to ideas and that teachers, parents, students, and support staff work together for the benefit of all students.

When every person who has a vested interest in the school feels that his or her opinion is valued and when everyone works together for a common purpose such as helping all students succeed, then greater levels of goal attainment are possible.

- **All students are constantly encouraged to meet high expectations and provided with support to succeed.**

All students in Riverside Brookfield High School are challenged to perform at the upper limits of their abilities. This is reflected in the unusually high number of students who enroll and succeed in the Advanced Placement courses, as well as in the reports of students and parents who talk about the high expectations that administrators and staff members hold for students.

Students tend to achieve at a level that reflects the expectations set for them by parents, teachers, and other school personnel; when expectations are set at a high level and communicated directly to the students, then increased achievement usually follows.

- **Teachers are willing give and do more than they are contractually obligated.**

Because school personnel share the vision that "all students can learn," teachers make themselves available before and after school for no additional remuneration. Students and parents report that they value this dedication; teachers and administrators report that they are intrinsically motivated to provide this kind of support.

Students at any level often need clarification or reteaching of a concept or skill; when teachers are available outside of the normal school day, opportunities to higher achievement abound through mentoring sessions.

- **Opportunities are provided for shared leadership among all teachers and students.**

Riverside Brookfield High School provides many opportunities for teachers and students to share in decisions that impact the school, most often in the form of committee membership. A large number of such committees exist; teacher and student representatives are integral to the operation of the teams.

When a wider variety of people are involved in making decisions that affect the school, more stakeholder groups feel a sense of ownership in those decisions and implementation becomes more systemic and successful.

- **All stakeholders demonstrate enthusiastic support for the administrative team.**

Without exception, members of all stakeholder groups point with pride and respect to the leadership provided by the administrative and leadership team. Parents, students, teachers, and support staff members all mentioned specific examples of work done by these individuals that have led to the successful implementation of recent key initiatives.

When the building administrators are seen as visible, effective leaders who communicate the vision of the school and facilitate shared leadership to realize that vision, then a school is more focused on the ultimate goal: increased student achievement.

- **The school provides honest, transparent, information to all stakeholders.**

From the superintendent down through the hierarchy of the school, clear and unbiased information about student achievement and district finances is presented to stakeholders. As a result of having such information available, parents, students, teachers, support staff, and administrative leadership team members discuss difficult issues without trying to hide unfavorable results.

Only when stakeholders have access to all information does meaningful planning for improvement and the realization of significant results in student achievement occur.

Required Actions

In addition to the commendations, the Quality Assurance Review Team identified the following required actions for improvement. The team focused its required actions on those areas that, if addressed, will have the greatest impact on improving student performance and overall school effectiveness. The school will be held accountable for addressing each of the required actions noted in this section. Following this review, the school will be asked to submit a progress report on these required actions.

- **Continue to identify and expand strategies for generating, collecting, analyzing, and using student performance data to inform instruction (i.e., common assessments, data use, and training).**

Riverside Brookfield High School has begun the process of developing common assessments within school content departments that may be used to inform both larger curriculum alignment as well as classroom instruction, with some departments more advanced than others. Electronic scoring of these assessments provides for the rapid return of achievement data to the classroom teachers for instructional decision-making. Another strategy that is critical to this initiative is the training of all staff in the use of achievement data to guide decisions.

Meaningful, accurate data are necessary to inform both classroom-level and curriculum-level decisions, and training in the interpretation and use of such data is key to the successful deployment of any comprehensive assessment system.

- **Identify and implement strategies for ensuring involvement of a wider group of stakeholders (especially teachers and parents).**

Opportunities abound for leadership, usually in the form of committee membership. Many committees presently share the same teacher members and few contain parent or community members. Teacher and parent involvement could be increased by changing the rules for committee membership and the requirement for additional stakeholder representation.

When a wider variety of people are involved in making decisions that affect the school, more stakeholder groups feel a sense of ownership in those decisions and implementation becomes more systemic.

- **Continue to investigate support for discipline and security (i.e., PBIS, use of staffing, etc.).**

All stakeholder focus group members discussed the fact that Riverside Brookfield High School has only one Dean to support the maintenance of discipline in the building. Other reports presented the planned implementation of the *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)* program to address improvement of student behavior with a proactive approach, as well as the respect given to support staff members when they address student misbehavior in the school.

Support for discipline and security can take many forms, including the use of proactive strategies, the recognition that teachers and support staff members are a part of the team approach, and the judicious use of limited resources (e.g., one dean for a large student body).

Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools: The team reviewed the school's adherence to each of the AdvancED standards. The findings from this review are provided in the next section of this report.

Next Steps

The school should:

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with all stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the commendations section to maximize their impact on the school.
3. Develop action plans to address the required actions made by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward the required actions.
4. Use the report to guide and strengthen the school's efforts to improve student performance and school effectiveness.
5. Following the Quality Assurance Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the required actions. The report will be reviewed at the state and national level to ensure that significant progress is being made toward the required actions. Lack of progress can result in a change in accreditation status.
6. Continue to meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

Resources

AdvancED offers a range of resources to support your school as it acts on the findings in this report. The AdvancED Resource Network, available at www.advanc-ed.org/resourcenetwork, provides an online network of peer-to-peer practices, best practices, and resources and tools designed to help schools with their improvement efforts. Available any where, any time, the network can be queried for information on a variety of school improvement subjects. The AdvancED Research and Development division provides research, handbooks, and tools to assist schools with continuous improvement. In addition, your state office provides hands-on professional development and ongoing technical assistance. Contact your state office for more information on the range of resources available to you.

Celebrating Accreditation

Following the visit, the Quality Assurance Review Team submits an accreditation recommendation to AdvancED for state review and for action at the national level by the AdvancED Accreditation Commission, which confers accreditation and communicates it to the school. Upon receiving its accreditation, the school should celebrate its achievement with the school community. The NCA-CASI-IL accreditation seals are available at www.advanc-ed.org/communicationskit for accredited schools and districts to post on their website and to use in school communications. Flags, door decals, diploma seals, and lapel pins are also available and can be ordered from the website to help you share your accomplishment with your community.

Summary

The accreditation process engages the school in an ongoing journey of continuous improvement. The next steps in this journey are to build on the strengths and address the required actions noted in this report. Doing so will enable the school to advance in its quest for excellence and deepen the fulfillment of its mission for all students.

Review of AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools

The primary requirement for accreditation is that the Riverside-Brookfield Township HS demonstrates that it meets the seven standards for accreditation. The findings of the Quality Assurance Review Team regarding the standards for accreditation are summarized on the following pages.

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.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

The mission of Riverside Brookfield High School strives to establish an academic partnership with all school and community stakeholders to provide a comprehensive education in a safe and orderly environment. Key components of the school's mission guide the operation of the school and provide direction for school improvement efforts. The mission and vision of the school are incorporated as part of one descriptor. The vision is implied within school goals, developed and maintained as a high priority and guiding force behind school success and achievement. Standards call for a separate vision statement. The vision and mission statements are not currently stated with clarity and distinction.

The mission / vision drives and guides both the environment and curriculum: the mission / vision is reflected in all areas of the school facility as well as the website, curriculum guide, school calendar, planner, superintendent's newsletter, district profile, and promotional materials. School personnel and parents state that the school is concerned about the whole student, offering guidance and support through faculty and student tutoring, counseling, and academic programs.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The entire school community is true to its mission: students, staff, parents, and leadership council members all reiterate the significance of family values as well as the intellectual, aesthetic, personal, and social skills necessary in preparing all of their students to be effective members of a diverse and changing world.
- The Patrons' Council supports and maintains the school's family culture and helps plan various events to support academic and environmental goals.
- School goals are a curricular and instructional priority and part of the decision making process for improvement.
- The school fosters intellectual, emotional, and social growth and stresses family values through its co-curricular programs, recognition celebrations, and classroom instruction.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Continue to strive for academic excellence and to incorporate all aspects of student development as described in the mission through instructional, curricular, environmental, and aesthetic planning.
- Develop strategies to offer more opportunities for student, staff, and community involvement in the development of school improvement goals.

- Develop a formalized system to review and to articulate the vision, distinguished from the mission as a separate statement, and purpose of the school that reflects changes in the school climate and academic goals while still remaining true to the school's mission.

Finding: Riverside-Brookfield Township HS has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 2. Governance and Leadership

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

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Riverside Brookfield High School demonstrates a strong tradition of excellent governance and leadership. Its policies and procedures provide for the effective operation of the school. It has a comprehensive Board of Education Policy Manual that provides policies and procedures for the effective operations of the school. The documents reviewed and the focus group interviews provide evidence that the school district does recognize and preserves the executive leadership of the administrative head of the school; however, it was notable that the policy manual contains language that allows any board member, administrator, staff member, student, parent, or community member to suggest issues for policy that can improve the school. While respecting the administrative role, it provides stakeholders avenues for direct input to the policy considerations of the district. The effectiveness of the policies and procedures are reflected in the school's "Fully Recognized Status" granted by the regional superintendent of schools and the state superintendent of education. The procedures for fire, severe weather, and other emergency situations and the use of security cameras demonstrate clear efforts to maintain a safe, orderly, and productive environment that is legally required.

The leadership of the school and its procedures and policies are designed to provide a clear focus on learning and the improvement of learning opportunities for all students. The school improvement initiatives driven by the administrative procedures demonstrate a commitment to the value that "all students can learn and succeed." Policies and procedures surrounding curricular and extracurricular activities are designed to embody this vision by maximizing the involvement of all students in these activities. Evidence of inclusive policies in regards to access to Advanced Placement coursework and extracurricular opportunities are seen in the data showing the numbers of students participating in these activities. The responsiveness of the school to the needs of its students is seen in co-curricular policies that fostered the organization of the Organization for Latin American Students (OLAS) from a student identified need. The school's movement to professional learning communities represents a formal recognition of the school's drive to engender collaborative efforts to improve and a community dedicated to learning. The school's evaluation system promotes opportunities for staff to grow professionally and to work together toward improvement. The development of a professional learning community made of those who are responsible for staff evaluation demonstrates the integration of the community of learners and its focus on improving learning.

Riverside Brookfield High School's policies and procedures clearly encourage stakeholders to take on meaningful roles in the decision-making process. The members of the Patrons' Council, the central parent organization, note that they engage administrators in an active two-way dialogue in which the administration provides information to the parent group and the parent members raise issues of importance to them. Similarly, the student association members note that they are able to actively bring issues to the administration and that the administration is responsive to these issues. Faculty members from a variety of groups note that the administrative policies and procedures encourage staff members to be involved in opportunities to make decisions. Presently, no policies and procedures that ensure that a wide range of stakeholders, students, parents, and community members, to have meaningful roles in the actual decision making processes exists.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The school has a comprehensive set of policies that governs its actions as evidenced in the Board of Education Policy Manual. A policy exists that allows stakeholders to recommend issues for policy consideration.
- The policy and procedures for student and parent groups promote and encourage communication and input into the decision-making processes of the school.
- Clear evidence exists that curricular and extracurricular policies maximize meaningful involvement of a wide range of students in the school's learning opportunities; examples include Advanced Placement enrollment and the beginning of OLAS.
- The school's teacher evaluation system focuses on improving learning outcomes, and there is a professional learning community focused on improving the consistency of the evaluation system across the school.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Consider the development of policies and procedures that go beyond encouraging participation to ensure the participation of a wider range of stakeholders (e.g., limiting the number of committees on which any one staff member can participate or requiring representation of staff, students, parents, and community members on decision-making groups.)
- Expand meaningful access to the analysis and review of student performance and school effectiveness data to a wider range of stakeholders. Appropriate involvement of students, parents and community members in the review and analysis of data could enhance the understanding and use of these data.
- Investigate the potential benefit of a general community advisory group that represents a cross section of each stakeholder group.

Finding: Riverside-Brookfield Township HS has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 3. Teaching and Learning

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

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Riverside Brookfield High School's written Curriculum Guide shows that the school's curriculum is aligned with both the *Illinois Learning Standards* and the *American College Testing College Readiness Standards*. Daily instruction correlates to these standards, and expectations are shared with students and parents through course syllabi, common rubrics, and teacher websites. Students agree that daily instruction centers around what they are learning, rather than what they are doing. On a recent survey, 93.1% of students schoolwide agree with the statement that their "teachers hold high expectations for student learning." The school's commitment to higher-level thinking and rigorous, relevant curriculum, is evidenced by the school goals: to decrease the number of D's and F's, while requiring a rigorous curriculum; and raising *Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE)* performance to become one of the top 5% of Illinois schools.

Statistics provided by the school and the state-produced *School Report Card* reflect success in these areas. The school has been recognized nationally for its academic excellence. *Newsweek* has placed it in the top 150 of "America's Best High Schools" for the last four years, and there were 160 College Board Advanced Placement Scholars, and citation granted to students who receive scores of three or higher on three or more Advanced Placement examinations, in 2009. Additionally, the *School Report Card* indicates that the school met adequate yearly progress targets in all categories in 2009.

Instructional strategies, as reported by both students and teachers, reflect best practices, and teachers agree on the ready acceptance of innovative ideas. In a student survey, 96.1% said that "teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and learning activities" that help students learn.

The school has a well-developed Response to Intervention (RtI) plan in place with a variety of support available to students. Again, the student survey shows that 99% of students agree that "teachers are available outside of class time," that struggling students receive additional support, and that learning opportunities support the full range of student needs. Students and staff alike report this to be true when interviewed.

Media services and technology are appropriate and supportive of learning. The school has strong technology support, including instructional technology and media personnel. In the student survey, 98% of students agree with the statement that "students have access to a variety of resources to help them succeed in their learning, such as technology, media centers, and libraries."

School climate is monitored by administrative, faculty, and support staff visibility in hallways and classrooms, and validated through student climate surveys. Overwhelmingly, stakeholders agree that this is a school with positive working relationships, mutual respect, and effective communication.

Articulation and alignment are accomplished through weekly professional learning community meetings, in addition to vertical team meetings with feeder districts. The learning community structure also provides "sacred" time for teachers to utilize data to drive curricular and instructional decisions. Discussions with

both the leadership team and teachers, however, indicate a need for assistance, including training, in this area. Several suggested the use of a "data coach" to facilitate this process. This is especially true for those teachers in the humanities areas.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Riverside Brookfield High School's professional learning communities meet weekly for the purpose of examining student progress and making curricular, instructional, and assessment decisions.
- The school is focused on, and provides instructional support for, reading across content areas.
- Curriculum, instruction, and climate support student learning.
- Both teachers and students view the principal as an instructional leader.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Develop strategies to facilitate teacher understanding of data collection and analysis in order to improve the decision-making ability of professional learning communities.

Finding: Riverside-Brookfield Township HS has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

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.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Riverside Brookfield High School has a comprehensive assessment system in place for analyzing and reviewing data through professional learning communities. All staff has been trained on the learning community strategies. Leadership is cognizant of trend data in comparison to other area schools and state averages and readily shares this information with stakeholders such as faculty, parents, and community leaders. Abundant test data are available for analysis. Assessment information is communicated and discussed with faculty and staff.

Growth in student performance is evident in the state tested subjects and Riverside Brookfield High School met Adequate Yearly Progress targets in all categories in 2009. Students are placed in freshmen classes based on the results of the *EXPLORE* test and teacher recommendation. Students requiring intervention in reading and math may be placed in Team A for one-and-a-half periods of reading and math providing more intensive intervention.

Students are identified for more intensive assistance, Response to Intervention, through participation in the universal screeners of *EXPLORE* and *AIMSweb* as well as *Gates-MacGinitie* Reading assessment for all freshmen and sophomores. Interventions occurring during the school day may require a schedule change if students were not identified at the beginning of the school year.

Teachers note that raw data and data analyses are readily available to them. Improvement goals and strategies are developed at the school level through professional learning communities. In addition to summative data, the school has worked on developing common formative assessments across the departments to better assess student progress and provide consistent high expectations for student learning. Staff perception data is gathered through surveys administered to faculty. The surveys focus on satisfaction issues regarding goals and instructional programs.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Teachers are aware of performance on state mandated assessments and are willing to work collaboratively towards improvement.
- All teachers have been trained by Rick and Becky DuFour on professional learning communities.
- Learning communities provide a venue for analysis of data to inform instructional decisions. Riverside Brookfield High School has looked at the data more globally this year, across multiple subject areas.
- The leadership team meets weekly and reviews academics as well as policies.
- A collaborative plan to address student tardies was instituted and infractions decreased 40%.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Continue to identify and interpret data in order to best determine student needs.
- Conduct training with staff on using data to inform and drive instruction and on the development of assessments, particularly for new staff and as new data gets added.
- Continue to expand the development of common departmental formative assessments in all areas to establish high expectations for student learning.

Finding: Riverside-Brookfield Township HS has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

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.

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Riverside Brookfield High School recruits, employs, and mentors quality staff, stating specifically that they try to recruit experienced teachers and have no restrictions in their professional bargaining agreement limiting years of experience for placement on the salary schedule.

Riverside Brookfield High School devotes time to essential curriculum tasks. After examining several research-based models, the school moved to a professional learning community model of teaming to develop curriculum, research best-practice, and develop and interpret common assessments. Currently teams are working to develop common formative assessments and effective ways to interpret and use data.

The school made a commitment 13 years ago to move more students into additional honors and Advanced

Placement courses, which resulted in high achievement for a larger-than-average percentage of students. Resources in both training and personnel are committed to their belief that "all students can learn and succeed." They continually rank in the top 5% of school achievement in Illinois.

The guidance department is actively involved in supporting students, not just in course placement, but also in promoting classroom success. Eight guidance counselors support 1,450 or more students. This guidance staff also provides additional staff training through Strand Credit, credit towards advancement on the salary schedule. The guidance staff is also involved in the Response to Intervention programs as well. Administrators and teachers both convey a willingness to solve problems at any time and feel empowered to take chances in reaching students who struggle. They do not seem stymied by bureaucracy for approval.

The building, originally constructed in 1917 with additions constructed several times in the ensuing years, is well-maintained, and the newest addition and renovations create a cohesive presence to the interior of the campus. It is brightly lit, clean, and orderly.

Students and staff express a sense of safety on campus. Four security guards, thirty-six cameras, one dean and the assistant principal for student affairs hold primary responsibility for safety. The maintenance staff members unofficially serve as evening security and express a sense of respect allotted them by students in keeping order both during the day and evening. The stability and socio-economics of the district contribute to a sense of security. Security staff note that additional training in security is in the planning stages and that a retired police officer is part of their staff and able to teach security personnel effective techniques. Clerical staff feel they know their jobs, receive updates, and are able to fill in for one another. The dean's office is constantly busy.

Budget cuts, which include staff reductions and the uncertainty of passing a referendum, are of some concern for maintaining current level of services. However, the culture seems particularly strong and committed to helping students; this fact may offset some of the effects on students by these cuts.

Teachers are encouraged to develop Strand Credit, which allows staff to receive information and training over the course of time that can be used for salary advancement on the bargained salary schedule.

Riverside Brookfield High School works carefully and smartly to maintain a positive relationship with Brookfield Zoo and has harnessed the Zoo's experts to develop cutting-edge programs such as the School of Environmental Education (SEE Team), the Zoology course, and the Hard Oak reforestation program.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The school maintains and supports a competent and well-staffed guidance department.
- The leadership team includes all department chairs; many of these department chairs also teach one to four courses.
- The school exhibits a culture of commitment to student achievement, resulting in teachers and leaders willing to do what it takes to ensure student success: volunteer tutoring, training in Advanced Placement, sacredness of professional learning community time.
- The school demonstrates a responsive and flexible commitment to the Response to Intervention (RtI) initiative for students which empowers teachers and all levels of leadership to make change as needed.
- Riverside Brookfield High School is a clean and safe school where all staff members, certified and support, take pride in the building's appearance and share the responsibility for student safety.
- Teachers and classrooms have a clearly defined crisis plan and appropriate maps/signs.
- Special needs services are award-winning, including Best Buddies and Autism programs.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Involve all stakeholder groups, including parents, in the revision and implementation of discipline policies. Leadership team members and students noted involvement in the development of a new tardy policy, but teachers do not express the same level of involvement.
- Find creative ways to address the projected cuts as enrollment continues to increase and revenues decline, in order to maintain the focus on student achievement and teacher empowerment.
- Consider committing to data coaching (or at least to additional professional development for all teachers and certificated support staff) as a necessary resource for teaming, RTI implementation, and student achievement improvement activities.
- Expand the professional development strand for support staff that dovetails with teachers' commitment to making sure all students succeed, perhaps through the new PBIS initiative training or other programs.
- Continue to operate with transparency, including with the budget projections, that educate stakeholders on the district's growth, achievement, finances, and other needs.

Finding: Riverside-Brookfield Township HS has earned the overall assessment level of "Highly Functional" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

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

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Communication with stakeholders about student successes and achievements is critical, and Riverside Brookfield High School regularly and strategically employs a wide variety of communications. Examples of the diversity of these approaches include: maintenance of an accessible and informative website, including the Parent Portal to student-related information; production of a myriad of brochures, newsletters, videos, and marketing pieces provided on the website and distributed by mail; publication of Curriculum Guides, Parent-Student Handbooks, and other standard documents; personal appearances by key school personnel at community functions, at Patrons' Council meetings, Student Association meetings, and various events, especially those promoting the school's environmental goals.

Administrators and faculty members respond to concerns or requests expeditiously and return parent and community calls very quickly, usually within a day.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- The school provides professional-looking informational documents for public consumption related to student achievement in academics, activities, and athletics, transportation, finances, as well as operational concerns and successes.
- The school disseminates a wide variety of information to its faculty, students, parents, and other community members through its daily announcements, professional publications, website, and Parent Portal.
- The school leadership: provides planning time for faculty members to work on curriculum and

instruction; holds regular meetings with the School Board, faculty, Leadership Council, Patrons' Council, Student Association, and school improvement teams; and schedules time for students to meet with teachers for tutoring and academic help.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Continue to communicate with school and community stakeholders through already well-developed means of disseminating information and through regular dialogue with various school groups, and develop additional means of encouraging and engaging all stakeholders in goal setting and student learning.
- Explore opportunities and develop strategies to involve a greater number of school and community stakeholders in the development and implementation of goals.
- Foster more collaboration with staff, students, and community members to support student learning and to enhance the work of the school through meaningful opportunities for input and collaborative goal setting.

Finding: Riverside-Brookfield Township HS has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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

Description - The team noted how the school met the intent of the standard based on the preponderance of evidence:

Riverside Brookfield High School utilizes a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns most of the school functions with expectations for student learning. The internal stakeholders are committed to the continuous refinement of goals and objectives that are essential in continuously improving student performance. All supportive documents demonstrate efforts in sustaining progress in improving student performance. Special attention is being given to the demographic shifts within the school population which affect student behavior and performance. These new shifts in demographics have shown that the school has realigned essential financial and human capital to address student needs.

Strengths - The team noted the following successful practices deserving of recognition:

- Opportunities for in-house stakeholders to become involved in the school governance and many school processes are readily available.
- The school has high expectations for students, faculty, and parents.
- The school has a family atmosphere and places a great amount of pride in student / faculty connections.

Opportunities - The team offers the following opportunities for improvement for consideration by the school:

- Continue to expand training on strategies and methods for utilizing student performance data to drive learning, community processes, and classroom instruction; especially for the most challenged students.
- Develop strategies to increase parent involvement, such as inviting Booster Presidents to serve on the School Improvement Team.
- Develop an internal structure to identify, create, and disseminate positive information to the local media.

Finding: Riverside-Brookfield Township HS has earned the overall assessment level of "Operational" and has met this standard for accreditation.

Conclusion

The commendations and required actions in this report are designed to focus the school on those areas that will have the greatest impact on student performance and school effectiveness. While powerful in potential, the commendations and required actions only have meaning when acted upon by the school. The strength of this report lies in the school's commitment to using the findings to continuously improve. The key is action. The school is encouraged to use the report as a call to action, a tool to sustain momentum in the ongoing process of continuous improvement.

The team identified required actions for improvement that the school will need to address. Following this review, the school will be required to submit a progress report summarizing its progress toward addressing the team's required actions.

The Quality Assurance Review Team expresses appreciation to the School Administration, members of the professional staff, students, parents and other community representatives for their hospitality throughout the visit. The team wishes the school and its students much success in the quest for excellence through NCA-CASI-IL accreditation with AdvancED.

Appendix

Quality Assurance Review Team Members

- Dr. James Schouten, Chair
- Dr. Bruce Lane, Team Member (Lockport Twp. HS Dist. 205)
- Dr. Savka Mladenovich, Team Member (Oak Forest High School)
- Dr. Terry Rusin, Team Member (Illinois State Board of Education)
- Lynn Merrick, Team Member (Lincoln-Way North High School)
- Mr. Milton Patch, Team Member (Proviso East High School)
- Ms. Kellee Hill, Team Member (Minooka Community High School)

AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools

The AdvancED Standards for Quality Schools are comprehensive statements of quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for schools to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness. As schools reach higher levels of implementation of the standards, they will have a greater capacity to support ever-increasing student performance and organizational effectiveness. Each of the seven standards listed below has corresponding indicators and impact statements which can be accessed at www.advanc-ed.org.

Vision and Purpose

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

Governance and Leadership

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

Teaching and Learning

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

Documenting and Using Results

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

Resource and Support Systems

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

Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

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

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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