



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.

Standards Assessment Report

Herbert J. Dexter Elementary School

99 Yeager Avenue Fort Benning, Georgia 31905-1967

Prepared for the AdvancED Quality Assurance Review

Report Status : Accepted

Report Open Date : October 9, 2009

Report Due Date : March 15, 2010

Report Submitted Date : March 14, 2010

Report Accepted Date : March 18, 2010

Standards Assessment Report

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Introduction & Purpose of the Report

Introduction

Purpose of the Report

The Standards Assessment Report is designed to serve as a valuable self-assessment and as a tool to help schools prepare for their Quality Assurance Review (QAR). The report is based on the AdvancED standards, which serve as the foundation of the accreditation process. In order to earn and maintain accreditation, schools must meet the AdvancED standards, engage in a process of continuous improvement, and host a Quality Assurance Review at least once every five years.

The Standards Assessment Report engages the school community in an in-depth assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. In completing the report, the school identifies the data, information, evidence, and documented results that validate that it is meeting each standard. This self assessment helps the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

The Standards Assessment Report also serves as the primary resource for the Quality Assurance Review Team, which uses the report to prepare for the visit to the school. The team uses insights gathered from the report and information obtained during the on-site visit to provide feedback to the school and to make an accreditation recommendation.

Structure of the Report

The Standards Assessment Report is organized by the AdvancED standards. For each standard, the report includes four sections: 1) Indicators rubric; 2) Indicators evidence; 3) focus questions; and 4) overall assessment. Each section reinforces the other sections by asking a question that builds on the prior section.

The Indicators rubric enables the school to assess the degree to which practices and/or processes are in place that indicate adherence to the standard and Indicators. For each Indicator, the school may check if the practices and/or processes are highly functional in the school, operational, emerging, or not evident. The school should use the rubric as an opportunity to ask itself challenging questions and to respond with accurate answers geared toward self-improvement. After completing the rubric, the school can quickly see areas of strength and opportunity. The section asks, "To what degree are the noted practices/processes in place?"

The Indicators evidence allows school personnel to think about the practices and/or processes being implemented and identify evidence that will support its responses to the Indicators rubric and focus questions. This section helps school stakeholders engage in a discussion about how it knows it is adhering to the standards. The section asks, "What practices/processes are being implemented, and are they effective?" or said another way, "How do we know we are doing what we say we are doing?"

The focus questions allow the school to expand on and think more deeply about the responses to the Indicators rubric. The focus questions provide an opportunity for the school to describe the systematic and systemic processes that are in place to support its ability to meet the Indicators. The section asks, "How are the

practices/processes implemented?"

The overall assessment describes how well schools are implementing practices and/or processes and the impact these practices and/or processes have on student results and overall school effectiveness. The overall assessment helps schools judge where they are in relation to each standard. The "operational" level is required in order to demonstrate meeting the standard. The section asks, "How well are we meeting the standard overall?"

Together, the Indicators rubric, Indicators evidence, focus questions, and overall assessment provide a comprehensive view of how schools address each of the standards.

Demographics

Public/Non-public:	Public
School Type:	Elementary
Charter School:	
Enrollment:	261
Gender at School:	
Grade(s):	PK,K,1,2,3,4,5
Location Type:	

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.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it commits to a shared purpose and direction. The school establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the school's vision that is supported by school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school effectiveness. The school's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

1.1 Establishes a vision for the school in collaboration with its stakeholders:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Leadership demonstrates stakeholder support

Mission Statement visible throughout school and/or district

Policies/Procedures manuals/handbooks demonstrating stakeholder involvement in development of mission

Stakeholder perception data used to develop mission

Stakeholders are knowledgeable about vision, mission

Strategic Plans include mission

1.2 Communicates the vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Handbooks include vision, mission

Meetings incorporate elements of vision, mission

Newsletters include vision, mission

Signage includes vision, mission

Stakeholders are knowledgeable about vision, mission

Website/page includes vision, mission

1.3 Identifies goals to advance the vision:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Goals distributed through publications and communication

Goals that are data-driven and measurable

School improvement plan includes vision, mission

School improvement planning incorporates vision, mission

Stakeholders demonstrate involvement in and knowledge of goal setting

Strategic Plan includes vision, mission

Strategic planning incorporates vision, mission

1.4 Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the school, its students, and the community:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Annual Report

Community-based data

Newsletters, articles

Publications, brochures, handbooks

School Improvement Plan

School/district profile is used during parent/community meetings

School/district profile is used during staff meetings

1.5 Ensures that the school's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Curriculum demonstrates alignment with vision, mission

Instructional practices demonstrate alignment with vision, mission

Lesson plans demonstrate alignment with vision, mission

School Improvement Plan demonstrates alignment of vision, mission with teaching and learning

School improvement planning demonstrates alignment with vision, mission

Staff and Parent Handbooks demonstrate alignment of vision, mission with teaching and learning

Strategic Plan demonstrates alignment of vision, mission and teaching and learning

Student report cards demonstrate alignment with vision, mission

1.6 Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes for strategic planning demonstrate review

Strategic Plan demonstrates review

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for establishing and building understanding of and commitment to the vision statement among stakeholders?

The stakeholders of Dexter Elementary School are proud of the processes used to establish our vision. The important collaborative efforts that shaped our strong vision have unified the Dexter community. The result is a powerful statement that guides all forward progress in our school. It is our belief that Dexter's vision statement will guide intelligent and responsible service to our 21st Century students, who will live and must thrive in a highly competitive, globally focused workplace. Toward that end, the vision statement of Dexter Elementary is:

Dexter School – where we learn from the past to create our own future.

As we review the processes that underpinned the evolution of our vision statement, it is important to identify the stakeholder groups that contributed to the vision. At Dexter Elementary school, the parents, students, teachers, paraprofessionals, Partners In Education, local community members and DoDEA's larger world-wide community are identified as stakeholders in Dexter's success.

Establishment of the vision began with collaboration between the faculty, staff, and our Partners in Education (PIE) leader, LTC Thomas Carlisle. With LTC Carlisle's leadership, the Dexter faculty and staff were able to understand how our vision must guide everything we do at Dexter. A clear vision is needed to accomplish any

mission. LTC Carlisle taught us to begin the process of establishing vision by creating a list of core beliefs, drafting a vision statement, and inviting all stakeholders to provide input.

With these steps in mind, over a period of six months various stakeholder groups refined initial ideas and Dexter's core beliefs and draft vision statement began to take shape. In March, 2009, Dexter Elementary School officially adopted its vision statement and took steps to share the vision with all stakeholders.

Next, the Dexter Elementary School community began building a deeper understanding of the vision statement and developing our stakeholder's commitment to it. Classroom discussions led Dexter's students to new understandings about how the past affects their future. Our students used the school's intercom system to lead the morning announcements and recitation of the vision statement, which helped build commitment among all students within the school. Communication of the vision statement to parents and community stakeholders through our Student Handbook, our school website, and via posters throughout the school helped build understanding of the vision for visitors to the school. Official communications, newsletters and faculty and staff e-mail signatures began including the Dexter vision statement, signifying our individual commitments to the vision.

Dexter's vision of preparing our students to create their own futures continues to grow and flourish. The vision statement underpins the work of administrators, teachers and students at Dexter. It inspires and guides the steps we take as the past we create becomes the foundation of our student's future.

2. What is the school's process for developing a profile and systematically maintaining and using information that describes the school, its students, and their performance?

Dexter Elementary School has a process for using the school profile to document the status of the school at the beginning of each school year. The school profile serves as a "snapshot" of the school at one point in time. The Fall 2009 school profile is now archived as a historical document. The current, living profile is the document that is currently being updated with information that documents progress toward CSI goals. This process of updating the school profile is continuous, culminating in the fall of each school year.

Our school profile is systematically developed through our profile process. At the beginning of the school year, the members of the CSILT review the living profile. The CSILT members and school-wide committees are assigned different sections of the profile to review and update. Each committee researches and updates sections of the profile, to include all information needed to reflect conditions affecting Dexter Elementary School, its students and their performance. The committees return revised profile sections to the Continuous School Improvement Leadership Team (CSILT), who synthesize the work of the committees and prepare a draft document for review by the faculty.

Once the draft profile is in place, the faculty meets to review the updated student learning data, the community data, and the updated environmental scan. The faculty uses these refreshed data points to confirm the appropriateness of the school's two CSI goals. This review process is designed to inform the faculty and the public of trends that verify school effectiveness. As the data are reviewed, the faculty members make decisions about the efficacy of the two research-based interventions that are being systematically implemented across the school. Do the data reveal that the interventions are impacting student achievement? If student achievement is improving, what steps can be taken to ensure that the interventions are institutionalized? Close inspection of the data often reveals patterns that can be used to make effective school-wide instructional decisions. For example, data may reveal that one grade level is not maintaining patterns of improvement that are characteristic of the school-wide trend. In such a case, many innovative strategies can be identified to improve trends in the underperforming grade level. Faculty may suggest using peer-mentoring and co-teaching to help their colleagues implement successful, results-based lessons. This type of discussion leads the faculty to analyze the data, to form

conclusions based on facts, and to shape implications for improved teaching and student learning.

The information in the school profile is used in several ways. Initially, the information is used to improve student performance by identifying goals for school improvement. By reviewing the profile data over time, we are able to establish and monitor the success of our school improvement goals and, if necessary, make adjustments to School Improvement Action Plans when they are needed. Profile data also allows us to track our improvement efforts over time, confirming the efficacy of the interventions as student learning improves.

The profile system is used to document school effectiveness over time. A review of historical profiles offers a detailed record of the school's performance and effectiveness over school years.

The profile is also a source for informing parents, community members, faculty and staff of past and current school status. First, the profile community snapshot provides the location of the school, describes the classrooms, lists the number and types of teachers, tells some of our history, and lists the numerous awards and achievements of the school. In addition, current ethnicities of our students, ranks of our sponsors, and a description of the changes in the student population are also accessible in the school profile.

Second, the profile provides information about learning data for the school. The profile provides insight into trends over time in the form of school-wide test results and recent results of standardized and local assessments. Stakeholders can read about the school support services such as gifted, resource, speech, and remedial reading. Survey results as they pertain to learning are available as well.

Third, the profile provides a summary of our environmental scan – a picture of the world-wide conditions that impact our students' futures. Overall the profile offers a picture of how the school is focused on improving student performance. By making our profile a tool for informing our stakeholders, we are able to use it to improve school effectiveness.

3. How does the leadership ensure that the school's vision, purpose, and goals guide the teaching and learning process?

The leadership team at Dexter School is composed of the principal, Dr. Matthew Kravovich, the Continuous School Improvement Leadership Team (CSILT), chaired by Mary Barnette, and flexibly grouped Grade Level Teams led and monitored by the principal. This leadership structure ensures that every professional at Dexter is integrally involved in activities and decisions related to the school's vision, purpose, and goals as they guide the teaching and learning process.

Dexter Elementary School's purpose, or its mission, complements the school vision and serves as a cornerstone for all actions that guide the teaching and learning process. Dexter's mission statement is:

To provide a safe and supportive learning environment enabling military children to develop to their fullest potential.

At Dexter, we strive to offer all students the support and risk-free conditions needed to achieve the skills and confidence necessary to develop as independent thinkers – capable of creating a vision for their own future. The very essence of our school vision statement, "Dexter School—where we learn from the past to create our own future," is the catalyst that guides the teaching and learning process.

As the faculty and Dexter community come to deeply understand the school's vision and mission, we are all increasingly aware that every yesterday becomes a part of Dexter's past, no matter how recent. In a like manner,

every student at Dexter is learning that one's prior learning experiences help to shape new understandings as they work to design and create their own futures. These deep understandings create a sense of urgency for teachers, parents and community partners. We realize that each day is significant in the lives of our students. We are challenged to make each day count as students assimilate the knowledge and gain the experiences needed to guide their own futures. Implementing a complex vision and a rigorous mission that empowers students to shape their own future is an exciting challenge that requires considerable restructuring of traditional learning environments. At Dexter, the full impact of the vision and the mission becomes more apparent to all stakeholders each day. The essence of the powerful vision and mission statements drives, energizes, and inspires the Dexter community's forward movement.

Two learning goals that exemplify the essence of Dexter's vision and mission were determined through the school's Continuous School Improvement (CSI) efforts. The two goals work to ensure that the vision and mission are advanced in current teaching and learning practices. The current CSI goals are:

- (1) All students at Dexter Elementary School will improve their ability to communicate mathematical ideas across the curriculum.
- (2) All students at Dexter Elementary School will improve reading comprehension across the curriculum.

At the administrative level, the principal works to embed the school's vision and mission into the teaching and learning process by leading faculty to work collaboratively to ensure that all students receive a future-focused education that is grounded in research-based best practices. The administration uses regular small group, grade level meetings to promote this collegial approach. The work of the grade level teams is guided and monitored by the principal.

At the faculty level, the members of the CSILT also work to embed the school's vision and mission into the teaching and learning process. They do so by organizing professional development and collaborating with teachers as they implement the school's improvement goals. The CSILT members meet and interact with grade level teams as well as with individual teachers. Because the members of the CSILT are closely involved in implementation of the school's vision, purpose, and goals, they frequently provide feedback to the principal and to the faculty concerning progress in achieving the school improvement goals.

Dexter's leadership teams work in concert to ensure that the school's vision, purpose, and goals guide the teaching and learning process. Because all members of the faculty are involved in this process at some level, the school's vision, mission and goals are rapidly becoming a force that is driving changes in the school's culture.

4. What process is used to ensure that the vision and purpose of the school remain current and aligned with the school's expectations for student learning and school effectiveness?

The processes used at Dexter to ensure that the vision and purpose of the school remain current and aligned with standards-based teaching and overall school effectiveness are implemented on two levels.

First, processes are in place to guide the day-to-day and month-to-month implementation of activities that impact student learning. To ensure that the vision, mission, standards and CSI goals remain in the forefront of instructional planning, all instructional staff members attend regular Faculty Meetings and Grade Level Team meetings. The agendas for these meetings are focused on implementation of the interventions selected to infuse research-based, innovative practices into daily classroom teaching. The importance of these regularly scheduled meetings cannot be minimized. The continuous focus of the entire staff on the valued work to improve student learning and school effectiveness is essential to systematic implementation of the interventions. In addition, the school's leadership consistently monitors the systematic implementation of the interventions, often using Faculty

Meetings to report on the status of implementation across the school.

Second, processes are in place to guide the year-to-year implementation of activities to ensure that the school's vision and purpose remain current and aligned with the school's expectations for student learning and school effectiveness. Toward this end, Dexter Elementary School has drafted and is in the process of implementing a strategic planning process that documents progress in the continuous school improvement process while enabling a forum in which to plan for future growth. The following steps in the strategic planning activity are currently in draft form and under faculty review. The proposed Dexter Strategic Plan will likely be approved by the full faculty by the end of the 2009-2010 school year. The steps in the strategic planning process include:

I. Review of Vision and Mission

At the beginning of each school year, both the vision and mission are reviewed by the Continuous School Improvement Leadership Team (CSILT) for the entire faculty and staff. Should any changes need deliberation, the CSILT will lead the discussion. Since the vision and mission were both finalized last spring, there have yet to be any changes.

II. Review of Environmental Scans

At the beginning of each school year, the CSILT leads the Dexter faculty in a review of our previous year's environmental scan. This list of research concerning effective schools is analyzed in light of our school's mission and purpose. Once the environmental scan from the previous year is reviewed, the CSILT presents new research to the faculty. The faculty discusses the research and determines if any of the new research needs to be added to the environmental scan and if previous research should be removed. The resulting list of research is then placed in the school's profile.

III. Review of School Improvement Goals

After the faculty has completed the environmental scan, we begin review of the school improvement goals. This begins with an analysis of the current Terra Nova Assessment results as well as analysis of the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Student progress is analyzed for growth in each of the goals. Next we evaluate the current strategy being implemented throughout the school. This is achieved by analyzing Exemplar and A-Z assessment results. If any adjustments to the strategies are needed, they are made at this time. If additional strategies are needed, they are added. The adjusted strategies are then placed into the Action Plan.

IV. Review of Local Assessments

The next step in the process is to evaluate local assessments. By utilizing the data from the Terra Nova 3rd edition as a basis for Dexter Elementary's school improvement goals, we selected the Exemplars program and the Reading A-Z as the local assessments that would directly correlate to the goals that were selected for continuous school improvement. These assessment tools and the rubrics used to evaluate the student formative assessments are evaluated in light of the assessment analysis and implications. If areas of concern arise, adjustments are made to the assessments. Once finalized, these local assessments are placed in the Action Plan as well.

V. Revise School Profile for New School Year

The last step in the process is the finalization of the new school year's profile. Justifiable revisions that were noted in the previous steps of the process are finalized and placed in the school profile. The faculty approves the final changes and the profile is then archived as the historical profile.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school has committed to a shared purpose and direction. The school has clearly defined expectations for student learning aligned with the school's vision that is supported by school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school effectiveness. The school's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 2. Governance and Leadership

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

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has leaders who are advocates for the school's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The school's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school operates under the jurisdiction of a governing board that:

2.1 Establishes policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the school:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes of governing authority meetings

Governance Policy handbook: board, district, school

Governing authority affirms understanding of their role in the operation of the school/district

Local, state, and federal policy handbooks

Organizational chart

Procedural policies: emergencies, contact information, calling tree, discipline, due process, logistics, placement and transfer

Staff and students affirm their understanding of emergency and operational procedures

Staff and/or student handbooks

Stakeholders affirm understanding of operational procedures

Students and staff affirm their understanding of discipline policies and due process

2.2 Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership prerogatives of the administrative head of the school:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Governing Board Policies demonstrate leadership prerogatives

Organizational chart

Policies demonstrate protocols for remediation and due process

Roles and responsibilities of governing board, advisory councils, and ad hoc committees are clearly outlined

Staff are knowledgeable about leadership prerogatives

Staff are knowledgeable about organizational chart

Staff demonstrate knowledge about due process

Succession plan demonstrates leadership transitions

2.3 Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Documentation of access to legal counsel

Documentation of adherence to ethical business practices

Documentation of compliance with all regulations regarding copyright law, intellectual property, and international restrictions

Documentation of resolutions of any complaints

Documentation of State and Federal Compliances and Assurances, including NCLB/Title I, EEO, Title IX

Documentation of utilization of all requirement elements of curriculum standards

Documentation with all regulations that apply to accreditation by NCA CASI, SACS CASI, or AdvancED

Staff are knowledgeable about access to legal counsel

Staff are knowledgeable about curriculum standards

Staff demonstrates use of curriculum standards in the teaching and learning process

Stakeholders affirm compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity practices and procedures

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school has leadership that:

2.4 Employs a system that provides for analysis and review of student performance and school effectiveness:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Record of student performance data analysis

Student database management system

Student performance data are used during staff meetings

Student performance database for formative assessments

2.5 Fosters a learning community:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

All stakeholders are knowledgeable about the rules of engagement and behavior

Artifacts displayed throughout the school/district demonstrate inclusion of all stakeholder communities

Professional learning plan includes all stakeholders

Rules of appropriate engagement and behavior are prominently displayed

Stakeholders affirm a sense of belonging and engagement

Website provides forum for feedback and dialogue

2.6 Provides teachers and students opportunities to lead:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Accreditation team members are representative of staff and students

Agenda and minutes of meetings demonstrate shared leadership with staff

Staff affirm their involvement in shared leadership opportunities

Staff and students affirm their involvement in the accreditation process

Student governance is formalized with bylaws, policies, and procedures

Students are involved in student governance

2.7 Provides stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Accreditation team members are representative of stakeholder groups

Calendar, agendas, minutes of stakeholder meetings

Committee members are representative of all stakeholder groups

Parent/community compacts

Stakeholders affirm their involvement in the accreditation process

Stakeholders affirm their involvement on committees

2.8 Controls curricular and extracurricular activities that are sponsored by the school:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Policy demonstrates roles, responsibilities, and compensation for staff responsible for co-curricular and extra-curricular organizations, events, and activities

Record of co-curricular organizations and activities: calendars, membership, sponsors

Record of extra-curricular events and activities: calendars, rosters, chaperones

Staff and students affirm involvement in co-curricular organizations and activities

Staff and students affirm involvement in extra-curricular events and activities

2.9 Responds to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Record of Advisory Committee: calendars, membership, minutes

Stakeholder survey data

Stakeholders affirm that leadership hears and acts upon their suggestions and recommendations

2.10 Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Documentation of salary schedules

Handbooks demonstrate staff evaluation system

New staff orientation materials

Policies demonstrate evaluation criteria, timelines, and termination processes

Policies demonstrate professional growth opportunities

Professional development plan for all staff

Staff are engaged in professional learning opportunities

Staff are knowledgeable about opportunities for professional growth

Staff are knowledgeable about their evaluation criteria and timeline

Walk-about demonstrate review of instructional practices

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for establishing, communicating, and implementing policies and procedures for the effective operation of the school?

At Dexter Elementary School, the policies and procedures that govern the operation of the school are established through a progression of steps that are designed to communicate expectations for effective school operations to all stakeholder groups.

Dexter's Faculty Handbook and Student Handbook are the primary source of information regarding the school's operational policy and procedures. The handbooks are developed and maintained under the leadership of the school principal in accordance with local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations. These handbooks outline the guidelines for the day-to-day operation of the school.

Dexter's Student Handbook communicates organizational information needed to prepare students for participation in the school's operational plan. The Student Handbook is composed of seven sections that address topics of interest to students and parents.

Part I - Community Strategic Plan

Part II - Instructional Programs

Part III - General Information and Policies

Part IV - Partnerships

Part V - Safe and Orderly Schools' Program

Part VI - Milestones and Memories

The Student Handbook can serve as a reference for common questions about the school's many programs, dress code, emergency procedures, policy for use of the cafeteria, and policy regulating student attendance. Topics of special interest to students include Classroom Parties, School Assemblies and Programs, and Extra-Curricular Activities. At the beginning of each school year, all classroom teachers review the Student Handbook with students ensuring that students become familiar with the rules and regulations that govern the school. Students, in turn, share the Student Handbook with parents, who review the policies and procedures with their child before signing a statement indicating that the handbook has been read and reviewed with the student.

Dexter's newly refreshed Teacher Handbook details specific policy that governs the work and functions of the teachers in the school. Teachers can reference the Teacher Handbook for information about the faculty evaluation system, lesson plan requirements, teacher absences, substitute teacher requirements, staff dress code, and other important logistical procedures including emergency procedures, cafeteria regulations, and attendance and lunch

count reporting requirements. The principal will review the Teacher Handbook at the beginning of each school year, setting clear guidance and expectations for teacher performance.

Copies of Dexter's Student Handbook and Faculty Handbook are available in the main office, which is accessible to all visitors. These handbooks are also posted on the school website for ease of access to current and future students and parents.

Once Dexter's stakeholders are introduced to and advised of the school policies and procedures, the administration expects that all members will comply with the clearly stated policy and procedural regulations. This process, which has been in place and is consistently updated to better serve the community, has proven to be effective in establishing, communicating, and implementing policies and procedures that govern the effective operation of the school.

2. What process does the school's leadership use to evaluate school effectiveness and student performance?

Dexter Elementary School's leadership is engaged in a focused effort to improve student performance and to refine the processes used to evaluate school effectiveness.

Student performance is Dexter's primary focus. Attention to the performance of our students is considered to be foundational to overall school effectiveness. Therefore, the steps used to document, monitor and impact student performance are ordered and systematic. Using tools provided through DoDEA's comprehensive assessment system, both formative and summative data sources are used to continuously inform the instruction a student receives during an academic year. This process unfolds over the academic year in the following manner.

In the Spring of the 2008-2009 school year, the principal released the results of DoDEA's norm-referenced achievement test, the TerraNova, Third Edition (TN3). Students and their parents received individual reports of student performance. Teachers received reports of individual student performance and class performance reports, which were used to inform parents during end-of year parent conferences. Because testing is done each Spring in the DoDEA schools, all teachers begin each new school year with the standardized achievement test scores for each student assigned to their class. These summative data sources familiarize the teacher with the student's strengths and learning needs before the student arrives for the first day of school. Teachers use these data to begin shaping instruction for the new school year.

Throughout the school year, teachers use formative assessments in reading comprehension to keep them well informed on student progress. During the 2009-2010 school year, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) is administered to K-2nd graders three times during the school year. The diagnostic features of this test enable teachers to identify specific areas for re-teaching, re-grouping and instructional intervention. The Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) is administered to students in 3rd – 5th grades each quarter. The results of this assessment are used to inform teachers about student performance in reading comprehension over time. In many cases, teachers use these data sources to make decisions for flexible grouping of students for guided reading instruction.

In the fall of SY 2009-2010 Dexter's faculty began use of two performance-based assessments of student learning to guide instruction in reading comprehension and math problem solving/communication. Baseline student performance data was collected in the fall, at midyear, and end-of-year assessments will be administered in May 2010. The faculty worked together to develop testing and scoring conventions that would accurately measure the learning of students. This new process is creating an awareness of the value of authentic assessment of student work. It is teaching our faculty to look closely at the processes students use to comprehend and solve problems. These formative data sources are beginning to impact the instructional decisions of individual teachers. In some

cases the formative data are driving collaboration among grade level teams who work together to address specific student learning needs made apparent in the student's own work samples.

Dexter also uses various internal structures and data sources to ensure that all students are served in a manner that supports optimal performance. The Student Support Team (SST) routinely identifies students that exhibit characteristics that indicate need for support in academic, behavioral or emotional areas. These needs are addressed as the Case Study Committee (CSC) makes recommendations for support services. The school principal, Dr. Matthew Kravevich, consistently monitors classroom activity using high profile classroom walkthroughs. He engages students and teachers in informal discussions to informally assess student performance.

The school leadership calls upon the Department of Defense Educational Activity (DoDEA) Performance Appraisal system to guide and support teachers as they guide students toward higher levels of performance. Clear teacher performance expectations are established during the performance appraisal process and specific steps are implemented to guide all teachers toward improved and effective teaching practice. During the performance appraisal process, the principal identifies customized professional growth opportunities for all teachers based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the performance appraisal. In this way, teacher performance is consistently directed toward improving student performance.

At Dexter, school effectiveness is viewed as an outcome of high-level student performance. It is clear, however, that judgments about student performance cannot be limited to measures of student learning. Many factors in a school contribute to the students' overall well-being. At Dexter, school effectiveness is monitored by leadership through a review of multiple data sources. Two surveys are emerging as useful tools for gauging our customer's reaction in areas related to school effectiveness. The DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) offers perception data that provide insight into the concerns of students, parents and the community on topics such as academics, school safety, faculty qualifications, and school lunch programs. The Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) survey, a web-based tool which is accessible via the school website, solicits input and provides immediate feedback to anyone who cares to comment on the effectiveness of Dexter School. This source of continuous feedback promises to become an invaluable tool for assessing customer satisfaction.

Other internal sources that offer a more complete picture of school effectiveness include data gleaned from the Partners in Education (PIE) After Action Reports, Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Status Reports, records of participation in extracurricular activities, numbers of "hits" on the school website, numbers of visitors to the school, and numbers of school lunches purchased. In all of these ways, Dexter's leadership strives to stay well informed regarding student performance and all aspects of school effectiveness. Through these processes of continuous monitoring, student performance and school effectiveness at Dexter Elementary School are consistently positioned for individual student growth and continuous improvement in all aspects of school effectiveness.

3. In what ways are stakeholders, including staff, given opportunities to provide leadership and to contribute to the decision-making process?

The leadership at Dexter Elementary school is committed to distributed leadership and shared governance. Believing that opportunities to provide leadership abound, the Principal ensures that the decision-making processes are embedded at several levels and distributed in multiple forums.

At Dexter, the teacher-leaders are encouraged to share responsibility with the principal as members of the Continuous School Improvement Leadership Team (CSILT). These highly influential positions carry responsibilities that include leading Continuous School Improvement (CSI)-related faculty meetings, planning for and providing faculty professional development, overseeing formative assessments and collecting, aggregating

and reporting student learning data to teachers and to stakeholders in the CSI process. These teacher leaders are invaluable in the leadership process. As peer-mentors, they work closely to encourage teachers that have difficulty implementing new practices. As content experts, they coach colleagues who struggle with implementation of new strategies. As professionals they study and guide the faculty in understanding of new pedagogy and new designs for student learning.

All Dexter faculty and staff members participate in the CSI-related activities. Each teacher is a member of one of two CSI Committees--Reading and Math—which support the two CSI goals. As committee members, these teachers conceive and direct activities to advance progress toward the school goals.

A new forum for teacher leaders is developing at Dexter. The principal has established grade level team meetings designed for horizontal and vertical collaboration. Although the Dexter faculty is small, and grade level teams are small, combined grade level meetings are generating a new enthusiasm for all aspects of teaching. The grade level team meetings have an intimacy that appeals to educators who are reluctant leaders. Most teachers use these small group meetings to discuss topics related to teaching, student learning, and assessment. For many teachers, these collaboration sessions are invigorating and encouraging. Often, the principal attends grade level meetings, seeking input to guide academic decision-making. Participation as members of grade level teams is an empowering growth experience that offers opportunities for leadership.

Dexter's students enjoy opportunities to lead and be recognized. Our students compete with other schools in Sport Stacking events. Dexter's 09-10 Elementary Sport Stacking team performed well at the Southeast Regional Championship in Rome, GA. Two students will represent Dexter Elementary at the 2010 World Championship event in Denver, CO. Our student ambassadors are skilled at welcoming guests to our campus. Recently the ambassadors provided school tours for the Director of DoDEA and for the family of Major Herbert Dexter. Occasionally, the student ambassadors participate in community service projects. Most recently the ambassadors read stories to preschool aged students at the post day care center. Another established path for students to gain leadership skills is through service in the school safety patrol, where students lend assistance to others and model appropriate behavior and conduct for the student body. This year, the principal instituted a new student leadership forum which will act as a conduit for students to share ideas and concerns from the student body. As this fledgling initiative takes form, students will become increasingly involved in decisions that affect their school community.

Dexter's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is an active organization that invests in the school with financial and human capital. Because this group is large and active, many events are sponsored offering leadership opportunities for many parents. For example, parent volunteers assumed the responsibility of the Dexter Elementary School yearbook project this year. They sponsor carnivals, book fairs and class parties.

Our community partnerships also build leaders. Dexter's Partner in Education program pairs our school with the 1-10 Field Artillery and the 1-29 Infantry. During the school year, active duty soldiers visit Dexter to serve as Math tutors, to support Reading Rangers, and recently, to train teachers to use Myers-Briggs Type Indicators. These unique and special activities demonstrate that all members of the Dexter community can play a meaningful and decisive role in shaping the present and the future for Dexter's students.

4. What policies and processes are in place to ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation?

Dexter Elementary School functions as a unit of the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). As a government school, Dexter draws from the DoDEA's policies which ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students. Equity for all students is maintained within the organization by enforcement of common policies that impact student learning and performance. For example, DoDEA provides common structures for the fiscal

operation of all schools that provide for equitable spending based on common funding formulas. Common program guidelines are in place to regulate equitable access to high quality curriculum and instructional materials. The DoDEA Curriculum Standards set common criteria for student performance that standardize learning expectations across and between grade levels. A common standardized assessment system is implemented with provision to accommodate students with special needs. Common Special Education guidelines ensure equitable opportunities for all students to learn and optimize potential. Schools across the DoDEA system are held to common Continuous School Improvement guidelines with expectations for improved performance. All DoDEA schools adhere to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards, which establish research-based expectations for school effectiveness across the school system. These non-negotiable commonalities across the organization establish a systemic baseline of school operations that ensure equitable services for all students. At Dexter Elementary School, the principal carefully monitors implementation of these DODEA policies, thus ensuring that our students benefit from these equitably distributed resources and services.

At the school level, the principal addresses equity for all students by hiring and retaining qualified teachers. The principal monitors the instructional practices of teachers and ensures that all participate in professional growth opportunities to stay current in practice and instructional methodology. In instances where teacher performance needs improvement, the principal uses the DoDEA Performance Appraisal system to remediate low performance while monitoring progress for improvement. The principal also manages local inventory and financial resources to provide equitable learning opportunities for all of Dexter's students.

Within this culture that values the learning needs of all students, Dexter's leadership strives to spark innovative approaches to teaching and learning that ensure all students have equitable opportunities to apply critical thinking to challenging tasks that require communication, collaboration, creative problem solving, computing and opportunities to make cross cultural connections. Innovative practices are emerging at Dexter as teachers embrace the uses of modern technologies to enhance and extend learning. Increasingly, students are engaged in projects that require the use of presentation and publication software for individual and group presentations. Students use interactive electronic whiteboards to share projects with others. More teachers are introducing students to relevant, real-world projects. Recently, students in the multi-age class used their small garden as an inspiration to solve problems in math, science and the language arts. A fifth grade class recently used compelling world events to create a poem that is being considered for publication. To reinforce the Army value of selfless service, a class recently led and managed a clothing and toy drive for children of less fortunate families. The school Physical Education teacher leads the Mileage Club which encourages Tuesday and Thursday morning laps before school. Walkers collect one straw per lap with the goal of walking the length of the United States before the year's end. These types of authentic, participatory learning activities have deeper impact on students as they learn in meaningful relevant contexts. They are valued and reinforced in our school for their alignment to the school's vision statement—Dexter School – where we learn (authentically) from the past to create our own future.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school has leaders who are advocates for the school's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and systematically allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The school's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation. While these processes and conditions are being implemented, the implementation is not systemic across the school, and the results are varied. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 3. Teaching and Learning

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

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

3.1 Develops and implements curriculum based on clearly defined expectations for student learning: *Operational*

Evidence Provided:

Curriculum pacing guides

Formative assessments: quarterlies, etc.

Graphs, charts, displays of student learning goals

Lesson plans that indicate learning objectives

Master schedule

Policy on grading criteria

Special program promotion, completion requirements

Staff can articulate curriculum sequencing and grouping

Staff can articulate student learning expectations

Staff meet regularly to discuss student progress and remediation

Staff meetings highlight discussions of student learning expectations

Student Handbook outlines student learning expectations

Students affirm their knowledge of what is expected of them

Textbooks are aligned to learning goals, curriculum

3.2 Promotes active involvement of students in the learning process, including opportunities for them to explore application of higher-order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Lesson plans that show how students are involved in establishing their own learning goals

Master schedule

Peer editing

Samples of student work

Staff meet to share student work

Student discussion groups

Student mentoring programs

Students affirm their involvement in their own learning

3.3 Gathers, analyzes, and uses data and research in making curricular and instructional choices:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Assessment data

Grade reports

Professional development calendar and topics

Staff can identify research used to align instruction

Staff meet to analyze data and align instruction

Staff meet to review current research

Staff meetings regularly include data analysis

Surveys

3.4 Designs and uses instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that are research-based and reflective of best practice:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes of staff/grade level/department/program meetings

Lesson plans

Professional development calendar and topics

Professional development plans

Professional learning opportunities focus on best practice instruction

Professional organization membership

Staff meet to share best practices

Staff meetings regularly include discussions about effective instructional design and delivery

Student display of project-based learning opportunities

Student portfolios

Variety of instructional design and delivery strategies

3.5 Offers a curriculum that challenges each student to excel, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Curriculum includes attention to diversity

Master schedule

Promotion, graduation criteria

Staff are knowledgeable about state and national curriculum standards

Staff are representative of the school and community demographics

Standards-based curriculum: state and national standards

Students affirm that there are opportunities to excel

3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Instructional calendar: days, hours

Lesson plans are followed during teacher absence

Master schedule

Policies demonstrate that substitute teachers are responsible for delivery instruction

Staff affirm that their instructional time is protected

There are few instructional interruptions: PA system, visitors, etc.

3.7 Provides for articulation and alignment between and among all levels of schools:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes of staff meetings indicating vertical and horizontal articulation

Articulation agreements between agencies

Content-specific staff are knowledgeable about each other's course syllabus

Staff are knowledgeable about student learning expectations of previous and subsequent grade levels

Transition policies

3.8 Implements interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

After-school programs

Community-based programs

Counseling programs: curriculum, schedules, staffing

Online support

Policies for student orientation, interventions, remediation

Schedule of opportunities, activities that support special learning needs

Staff affirm that there are multiple opportunities for students to get support

Students affirm that they have opportunities to explore their interests and career options

Students affirm that they have opportunities to get support for their school experience

Wrap-around programs

3.9 Monitors school climate and takes appropriate steps to ensure that it is conducive to student learning:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Database of student behavioral incidents

Parents/community indicate that the school/district focuses on positive school/district climate

Peer intervention programs; peer counseling

Policies for student behavior, remediation, due process, appeals

Reward system for positive behavior

Staff meetings provide time for discussions about climate

Stakeholder Compact: adult and student expectations

Stakeholder satisfaction survey data

Students affirm that they are involved in promoting positive school climate

Team-teaching is a regular part of the instructional program

3.10 Provides comprehensive information and media services that support the curricular and instructional programs:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Budget allocating appropriate funds for media services

Calendar and schedule of media services to students

Facilities map indicating media services location

Labor agreement that outlines media services responsibilities

Media services staff demonstrate the use media resources to support student achievement

Staff affirm the use of media services in their curriculum and instructional programs

Staffing chart demonstrating allocation of appropriate media staff

Students and staff affirm their involvement in media services program

3.11 Ensures that all students and staff members have regular and ready access to instructional technology and a comprehensive materials collection that supports the curricular and instructional program:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Budget allocating appropriate funds for technology - software, hardware, and infrastructure

Calendar and schedule of technology services to students

Facilities map indicating technology services/lab

Staff affirm that technology supports their curriculum and instructional programs

Staffing chart demonstrating allocation of appropriate technology staff

Students and staff affirm that technology is embedded within the teaching and learning process

Technology staff/services demonstrate their involvement in support of student achievement

Focus Questions:

1. How does the school ensure that the curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments are aligned and articulated across grade levels in support of the expectations for student learning?

Over the past decade, schools across the DoDEA organization and those across the nation began to understand that standards must be carefully written to communicate depth of learning rather than a broad spectrum of discreet skills. In 2009, the DoDEA curriculum standards withstood a curriculum audit conducted by the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (MCREL), an advocacy organization for standards-based school improvement. MCREL analyzed DoDEA's curriculum standards and upgraded the English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies standards to add breadth, depth, clarity, specificity and purpose. The updated DoDEA Curriculum Standards are in place and now guide student learning at Dexter Elementary School.

With the upgrade of the curriculum standards, specific examples that depict what a standard looks like in practice were added to improve the clarity and specificity of each standard statement. This important step was taken to ensure alignment of the curriculum standards with the instructional practices teachers employ on a daily basis. At Dexter, all teachers have been supplied with copies of the DoDEA curriculum standards for the grade level taught and for the grade levels below and above their current assignment. In this way, teachers have access to specific examples of standards in practice at three distinct learning levels. As part of Dexter's internal professional development efforts, all teachers were encouraged to view videos of the revised standards in practice. Links to the 2009 Standards Update video modules can be found on the Dexter Elementary School webpage for all to access.

Instruction at Dexter and in all DoDEA schools is based on and driven by the DoDEA Curriculum standards. The standards statements are aligned to DoDEA's current summative assessment tools. This important correlation between the curriculum that is taught and the assessments of student learning is essential to defining and measuring progress in student learning. At this point, DoDEA is standardizing all curriculums, aligning all instruction to the curriculums, and aligning all assessments to curriculums and instructional practice. This important effort to align curriculum, instruction and assessment is leading toward a coherent curriculum that benefits all of Dexter's students.

Implementation of the updated standards at Dexter is facilitated through structures that enable teachers to plan for revised and improved instructional practices. In the master schedule, a daily common planning time is in place for each grade level and a separate, weekly collaboration time is appropriated for each grade level. During horizontal collaboration sessions, teachers review and discuss standards-based lessons. They become very familiar with the standards that set expectations for student learning and clearly articulate these learning expectations to students through standards-based lessons. They work collaboratively to plan innovative activities to engage students in deeper and higher levels of learning in support of the new curriculum standards. To ensure that the revised standards are implemented in practice, the principal consistently monitors lesson plans and conducts

administrative walkthroughs to ensure that these new curriculum standards are being taught consistently and with fidelity across the school.

Throughout the school year, regularly scheduled faculty meetings are used to promote vertical collaboration. In these sessions, teachers have opportunities to collaborate with teachers from the previous grade level and the following grade level. This process enhances all teachers' capacity to understand the vertical alignment of the DoDEA standards. Over time, Dexter's teachers will be able to articulate learning expectations for students that span three academic years, preparing them to be skilled in differentiating instruction in response to individual student needs.

Dexter is also engaged in a systematic implementation of research-based instructional interventions that are aligned to standards and to the Continuous School Improvement (CSI) goals. In mathematics, teachers are preparing students to use a four-step problem solving method to resolve real-world problems with mathematical solutions. In so doing, students are learning to apply the math process standards identified by the National Council for Teaching Mathematics (NCTM) and adopted by DoDEA. To improve reading comprehension, teachers are guiding students to make connections between text and self, text and other texts, and text to environments or the world. Students use a variety of graphic organizers and respond to questions that extend the meaning of text across the curriculum. The alignment of the DoDEA Curriculum Standards to the CSI goals is very tightly correlated. Instruction to implement selected, research-based interventions is tightly connected to the standards and the CSI goals. To ensure that assessments are also tightly aligned to CSI goal implementation, Dexter has implemented local formative assessments to track student progress as they become better problem solvers/communicators and demonstrate improved ability to read with comprehension. These assessments are administered to collect baseline, mid-year and end-of year student performance data.

These efforts have positioned the faculty at Dexter to ensure that the curriculum, instruction, and assessments are aligned and articulated across grade levels in support of the DoDEA Curriculum Standards and the school's CSI goals.

2. In what ways does the school ensure the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that facilitate achievement for all students?

Dexter Elementary School's instruction is implemented with the support of adopted textbooks and materials selected through a well-defined source selection process. The process that guides adoption of these textbooks and materials for use in the DoDEA schools ensures that all final adoptions are closely aligned to the DoDEA Curriculum Standards. These materials are further selected based on demonstrated alignment to research-based instructional strategies. As the materials are reviewed and considered for adoption, careful attention is paid to the quality and veracity of the academic content. Most important, the instructional materials are reviewed for their potential to drive innovative applications of knowledge to active and engaging student learning. Because the adoption of instructional materials is a rigorous process, the activities that are presented in the adopted instructional materials have potential to engage students in creative ways as they master academic content.

At Dexter, the Continuous School Improvement (CSI) process is also used to ensure that research-based instructional interventions are employed as teachers teach and students learn to communicate their mathematical thinking as they solve problems and read with comprehension. Dexter's CSI Action Plans clearly describe the steps teachers and students will take to implement research-based strategies that offer potential to drive student progress toward reaching CSI goals.

In math, the school ensures the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities through specific action steps taken by teachers. Those action steps ensure that teachers will:

1. Model and teach the use of mathematical vocabulary, strategies, models, diagrams and pictures across each academic discipline. This practice will occur bi-weekly using Polya's 4 step method to solve open-ended problems in mathematics.
2. Practice with students using Polya's 4- step method.
3. Use open-ended questions to assess students' progress in communicating mathematical ideas while solving open-ended tasks three times each year.
4. Work in collaboration groups to assess samples and evaluate the students' open-ended responses using the Exemplars assessment rubric.

In reading, the school ensures the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities through specific action steps taken by teachers. Those action steps ensure that teachers will:

1. Model and teach use of the grade level Making Connections graphic organizer and demonstrate how to construct a response to an open-ended question. This practice will occur at a minimum, biweekly at the student's independent reading level.
2. Practice with students using the Making Connections graphic organizer and constructing open-ended responses.
3. Use leveled readers and an open-ended question to assess students' ability to extend meaning of text at the beginning, middle and end of the year.
4. Work in collaborative groups to assess samples and evaluate the student open-ended responses using the Making Connections assessment rubric.
5. Modify their instructional practice to include differentiated instruction through the use of appropriately leveled text for students who need challenge, reinforcement, or re-teaching in extending meaning.

The principal monitors instruction to ensure the systematic implementation of the CSI action steps across the school and works to verify that all teachers are implementing the research-based interventions with fidelity to the CSI model. Each week the principal requires teachers to submit their lesson plans for review prior to implementing the week's lessons. This affords time for the principal to review the lessons and to suggest revision, if necessary. In addition, the principal monitors classroom instruction each week to ensure that all students participate in these CSI-related activities and that the activities offer many opportunities for student innovation and creative application of their skills as learning takes place.

3. What processes are implemented to ensure that teachers are well-prepared and effectively implementing the curriculum?

Dexter's faculty is largely a seasoned group of teachers who have taught successfully for many years using traditional teaching practices. As Dexter migrates toward newer instructional practices that research has confirmed will engage students and add depth to their learning and understandings, the need to upgrade the knowledge, skills and abilities of the faculty have become apparent.

As the CSI Action plans were conceived and developed at Dexter, the faculty members appropriately identified the need for professional development to build capacity to teach problem-solving and mathematical communication using open-ended questions and to provide explicit instruction in reading comprehension to develop skills in extending meaning. Careful attention was focused to these expressed needs as the school's Results-Based Staff Development plan was conceived and adopted. Dexter's plan for professional development includes sequential opportunities to guide teachers in gaining knowledge about new strategies. Further, the plan includes opportunities for teachers to learn to apply the new strategies through models and demonstrations delivered by skilled specialists. Then, as teachers begin to implement new instructional strategies in the classroom, teachers are supported by the principal and Instructional Systems Specialists as they practice new skills

with students.

To date, Dexter's faculty has been provided the following professional development experiences related to infusion of new instructional strategies into day-to-day practice:

1. Professional development on criteria for attaining Operational status in AdvancED Standard 3: Teaching and Learning.
2. Professional development on best practices in teaching math communication.
3. Professional development on use of the Exemplars rubric for teaching and learning in mathematics.
4. Professional development on using the Exemplars rubric, to guide students in solving open-ended problems in mathematics.
5. Professional development on administration of the Developmental Reading Assessment and uses of the diagnostic results to guide instruction.
6. Professional development on use of graphic organizers in the reading classroom.
7. Professional development on use of the physical environment in early childhood education classroom to build student knowledge in math and reading.
8. Professional development on applications of cooperative learning strategies to instruction.

Throughout the implementation process, faculty members benefit from opportunities to collaborate with colleagues during Faculty Meetings during which best practices are shared and success stories are highlighted. Faculty members are further supported during grade level collaboration meetings where teacher teams examine student work samples and discuss the instructional strategies that contributed to student success. Teachers' new skills and abilities are further supported during grade level collaboration sessions and Faculty Meetings dedicated to analysis of formative data. These high-level discussions authenticate and reinforce the teachers' ability to implement new strategies and to analyze the impact of their instruction on student learning.

All of these steps are a part of Dexter's intentional plan to ensure that teachers are well-prepared and effectively implement a rigorous, standards-based curriculum that is characterized by active and innovative student learning opportunities.

4. How does the school provide every student access to comprehensive information, instructional technology, and media services?

Dexter's Information center offers all students opportunities to develop information literacy skills as teachers and the Information Specialist (IS) collaborate to help students learn to find and evaluate information critically, and to use information accurately and creatively as they master the DoDEA curriculum standards. The Information Center is guided by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) guidelines and the National Standards for Information Literacy, Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs, which were adopted by DoDEA in 2005.

Dexter's Information Center (IC) is intended to serve as the information hub of the school. Recently, the IC was remodeled and updated to reinforce its central role by making the learning space more inviting and conducive to student learning. As the information hub, the IC provides comprehensive information and media services that support all curricular and instructional programs as it functions to meet the learning needs of all students. The IC operates under an open scheduling policy which ensures equitable access to the center and allows for visits by whole classes and small groups, as needed to support classroom instruction. The IC is open for individual student use throughout the school day and immediately after school. The IC provides a place for students to conduct research, to collaborate in small groups, to read independently, and to gain information literacy skills through instruction and application. The IC provides the print materials and seven computer workstations to support

curriculum and instruction in response to the DoDEA Curriculum and Information Literacy Standards.

The Information Specialist (IS) collaborates with teachers and the school's Education Technologist (ET) to plan lessons and activities that incorporate curriculum standards with information literacy standards and technology standards. In this way, the IS and the ET assist teachers in ensuring that the standards are addressed and all students have opportunities to master standards through their learning experiences. The IS offers support services to teachers which include: collaboration in lesson planning, co-teaching lessons and units, augmenting instruction with small groups of students, and teaching a lesson in support of the teacher's curriculum. Additionally, when funds are available for purchasing materials for the information center, the IS seeks input from teachers to identify materials that support curricular and instructional needs.

Dexter Elementary School's technology infrastructure and hardware distribution plan ensures that all students and staff members have regular and ready access to instructional technology. Technology on the Dexter campus is widely accessible for use by teachers and students. Computer technology is available and accessible in the school's Information Center, in all classrooms, and in the 28 work station computer lab. Each classroom is equipped with least one teacher computer and three or four student computers, a data projector and a wide assortment of creativity and productivity software. Many classrooms have access to interactive whiteboards and two have access to visual presenters.

Dexter's technology expectations for student learning are guided by the ISTE NETS (International Society for Technology in Education, National Education Technology Standards for Students). The school's Education Technologist (ET) operates under an open scheduling policy which ensures equitable access to ET services and allows scheduling of services by whole classes, small groups, and as needed to support classroom instruction. The ET is available to assist individual students and teachers as they use technology throughout the school day and immediately after school. The ET works with teachers to assist in planning lessons that integrate technology through use of standards-based activities. She researches, designs lessons, co-teaches lesson and units, and provides technical support for software and some hardware issues. The ET works with students to ensure that technology is optimized to support student research, to present projects, to foster independent study, and to gain technology literacy skills through instruction and application. The ET provides the print and digital resources to support curriculum and instruction in response to the DoDEA Curriculum and the National Education Technology Standards for Students.

Dexter Elementary School is diligent in providing every student access to comprehensive information, instructional technology, and media services as evidenced by the services provided by the school's ET and IS. Because Dexter's faculty is largely composed of veteran teachers, the transition to collaborative designs for uses of the Information Center and the services of the ET and IS are evolving over time. With that said, it is clear that the students at Dexter benefit from the services of the ET and IS as collaborative planning and teaching become the pervasive model for integrating information and technology into all instructional programs.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The school demonstrates evidence of alignment between the curriculum and instructional practices with systematic implementation across the school. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students regular feedback to improve their performance. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

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.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

4.1 Establishes performance measures for student learning that yield information that is reliable, valid, and bias free:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

All stakeholders are knowledgeable about behavioral standards

All stakeholders are knowledgeable about grading and appeals

All stakeholders are knowledgeable about learning expectations and targets for student performance

Assessment system that records multiple assessments

Assessment system that safeguards validity, confidentiality, identification

Database that records graduation, completion, GPA, placement, retention rates

Policies that outline targets for behavioral standards: attendance, discipline

Policies that outline targets for student performance and are aligned to state/national standards

Staff affirm the use of multiple measures for student performance

Staff use data to inform their practice

Student/Staff Handbook that outlines grading scales, syllabus criteria, and appeal process

4.2 Develops and implements a comprehensive assessment system for assessing progress toward meeting the expectations for student learning:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes from staff meetings indicate utilization of data systems

Calendar of assessment activities

Data graphs, charts display student performance expectations

Examples of student work are prominently displayed

Online assessment system

Policies outline administration of multiple assessments and their purpose

Record of multiple assessments administered, including program-specific required assessments

Staff meet regularly to discuss student work

Staff utilize assessment data for the purpose of instructional and program planning

Stakeholders are familiar with the administration and purpose of multiple assessments

Students affirm knowledge about their learning expectations

The development and administration of multiple assessments consider limited-language learners, students with disabilities, and multiple learning styles

4.3 Uses student assessment data for making decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning processes:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes from staff meetings indicate use of data to drive instructional planning discussions

Criteria for evaluation of staff performance include the use of data for instructional planning

Criteria for feedback on performance

Staff affirm their understanding of how data are used to evaluate their effectiveness

Staff are knowledgeable about how to use student performance data for the purpose of instructional planning

Staff demonstrate the use of data when planning instruction, through vertical and horizontal articulation

Student performance data reports, charts, graphs indicate system-wide use of data for instructional planning

4.4 Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness and uses the results to improve student performance:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Database that records graduation, post-graduate engagement

Staff utilize perception data from surveys to guide program planning

4.5 Communicates the results of student performance and school effectiveness to all stakeholders:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes from meetings where student performance and school effectiveness were highlighted

Criteria that establishes student performance data as a component of parent-teacher conferences

Newsletters demonstrate communication of student performance and school effectiveness

Stakeholders affirm their familiarity with student performance and organizational effectiveness

Stakeholders affirm their involvement in meetings in which the topic of student performance and organizational effectiveness were highlighted

4.6 Uses comparison and trend data of student performance from comparable schools in evaluating its effectiveness:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agenda, minutes of meetings in which comparative data were highlighted

Reports that outline comparable data analysis - across programs

Reports that outline comparable data analysis - across schools, districts, states, nationally

Staff affirm their involvement in meetings in which comparative data were highlighted

4.7 Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Data reports disaggregate student performance growth

Data reports utilize identified growth model that is valid, reliable, and psychometrically appropriate

Data reports verify growth in student performance

Staff can identify reasons why student performance has increased/decreased

Staff can identify strategies for increasing student performance

Stakeholders can speak to and support the growth data

4.8 Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Policies that outline the conditions for safeguarding and transferring transcripts

Policies that safeguard accuracy and security of all data

Staff affirm their comfort with the level of data accuracy and security

Stakeholders are knowledgeable about the conditions under which transcripts are safeguarded and transferred

Focus Questions:

1. How is the assessment system currently used in your school to analyze changes in student performance?

One of the most exciting aspects of the Continuous School Improvement (CSI) effort at Dexter Elementary School is the influence of data-driven decision-making on the individual practices of classroom teachers and the subsequent impact of these instructional decisions on school programs. Although our efforts to fully depend on data sources as the genesis for all actions are at the practitioner's level, it is safe to say that Dexter's faculty and staff are becoming confident in the use of data sources to drive classroom instruction and to impact student performance.

DoDEA's comprehensive assessment system is used to analyze student performance. The system is described in terms of the assessment instruments that are employed, the data they yield, and the processes employed by the school to optimize the use of these data to continuously inform practice and improve student learning and performance.

TERRANOVA3 (TN3)

The data generated by the standardized achievement test, TerraNova 3rd Edition, are used in a summative manner to analyze student growth over an academic year. The TN3 findings and their implications for instruction are used to guide decisions that have potential to improve student performance levels. At Dexter, teachers are encouraged to use three interpretations of a student's performance to better understand how to guide teaching and learning.

National Percentile Rankings (NPR) – Teachers use the NPR to identify the percentage of national norm group whose scores fall below a given student's score.

Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) – Teachers use the NCE to identify where a student falls along the normal curve. NCEs are used when studying overall school performance, and in particular, in measuring school-wide

gains and losses in student achievement.

Objective Performance Index (OPI) – Teachers use the OPI score to gain accurate objectives-level data for use in instructional planning and improvement. In this way, instruction focused on the identified needs of students can increase the skills assessed by the TN3.

At the beginning of each school year, teachers are provided with their students' NPRs, NCEs and OPIs for use in planning for initial instruction. These data can be used to establish flexible groups and differentiates lessons for early instruction.

DEVELOPMENTAL READING ASSESSMENT (DRA)

The DRA data are used both formatively and summatively to analyze reading achievement for students in grades K-2. The DRA is administered at the beginning of the year, at the middle of the year, and at the end of the school year. Based on a student's DRA scores, teachers are able to select appropriately leveled texts for reading instruction. They are able to form small flexible groups for focused work in oral reading fluency and comprehension. Teachers at Dexter track DRA data throughout the school year and maintain data sheets that offer easy access to a student's current performance levels. These data are helpful during parent conferencing and in planning learning activities at a student's instructional level.

At the end of the school year, DRA scores are used to make summative assessments of growth in reading levels within the school year.

SCHOLASTIC READING INVENTORY (SRI)

The SRI data are used both formatively and summatively to analyze reading achievement for students in grades 3-5. The SRI is administered five times per year; once at the beginning of the year and at the end of each quarter. Based on a student's SRI scores, which generate Lexile Levels, teachers can select appropriate leveled texts for small group instruction. Teachers track the SRI Lexile Levels throughout the school year on a student data sheet which affords easy access to a student's performance level. These data are helpful during parent conferencing and in planning learning activities at a student's instructional level.

At the end of the school year, SRI scores are used to make summative assessments of growth in reading levels within the school year.

LOCAL ASSESSMENTS FOR CSI GOALS

Local assessment data are used formatively to analyze all students' progress toward the reading comprehension and math problem solving and communication goals.

To assess student's progress toward the math goal, students solve problems and communicate solutions in an authentic context three times each year. A real-world problem with a mathematical solution (Exemplars) is posed to students at each grade level. Students respond to the open ended task by using a 4-step problem-solving method and employing strategies to communicate a solution. The process a student uses to solve the problem is evaluated by teachers who randomly score student work using analytic scoring rubrics. Students receive a rating of Novice, Apprentice, Practitioner, or Expert. Results of each assessment are kept by the teacher on a student data sheet to track growth throughout the year as progress is made towards the math goal. Student learning data derived from the math assessments are used by teachers to offer specific feedback on a student's performance. For example, a student that received an Apprentice rating is counseled by the teacher on specific steps that can be taken to achieve Practitioner status.

To assess student's progress toward the reading goal, students read trade books at their independent Lexile Level. At the end of the reading, students respond to an open-ended comprehension question. The process a student uses

to respond to the question is evaluated by teachers who randomly score student work using holistic scoring rubrics. Students receive a rating of Novice, Apprentice, Practitioner, or Expert. Results of each assessment are kept by the teacher on a student data sheet to track growth throughout the year as progress is made towards the reading comprehension goal. Student learning data derived from the reading assessments are used by teachers to offer specific feedback on a student's performance. For example, a student that received an Apprentice rating is counseled by the teacher on specific steps that can be taken to achieve Practitioner status.

The comprehensive assessment system at Dexter is driving significant change in the way teachers teach and how students learn. The genesis of these changes is the teacher's focused analysis of multiple data sources for the purpose of customizing instruction to ensure that all students experience deep, connected learning. Again, Dexter's vision drives the methodology. Authentic student learning that is transferable to life in the real world is becoming common practice at Dexter. In this way, Dexter's students are prepared each day in empowering ways that enable them to plan for their own futures.

2. What are you doing to ensure that assessment results are timely, relevant, and communicated in a way that can be used by teachers, students, parents, and external stakeholders to aid the performance of individual students?

Dexter's comprehensive assessment system yields assessment results throughout the school year. Because Dexter is a data-driven school, every effort is made to communicate timely assessment data to teachers, parents and especially to students, who are learning to accept responsibility for their own learning and performance.

TERRANOVA3

The results of the TerraNova3 are communicated annually to stakeholder groups. As soon as the TN3 results are received, typically in the Spring of each school year, the teachers are briefed on results. Teachers are provided the Group List Report (GLR) which provides a snapshot of class achievement. It presents norm-referenced scores including averages and individual student scores. This first glimpse enables teachers to consider their class performance status and the performance status of students in their own classroom. This summative feedback is useful to teachers who use it to reflect on their practice and to plan for focused instructional improvements during the next school year.

Two Terra Nova reports are provided to parents in the student's final report card. Parents receive the Home Report (HR), which presents test information in a meaningful, easy-to-understand way that invites parents to become involved in their student's learning. The HR is a graph that summarizes the student's achievement in the content areas tested. Parents also receive the Individual Profile Report (IPR), which clearly identifies an individual student's strengths and needs.

External stakeholders may access TerraNova3 performance data for Dexter Elementary School in the online School Report Card, which was recently released by DoDEA in an effort to provide more information on school performance and accountability.

DEVELOPMENTAL READING ASSESSMENT (DRA)

Teachers assess their own students using the DRA. They compile DRA data on student data sheets and use the results to make decisions about flexible grouping for reading instruction. The teacher communicates DRA assessment results to students and their parents during individual conferences.

DoDEA Headquarters compiles grade level DRA results and uses them to assess progress in reading comprehension across the DoDEA's world-wide school network.

SCHOLASTIC READING INVENTORY (SRI)

Teachers assess their own students using the SRI. They compile SRI data on student data sheets and use the results to make decisions about flexible grouping for reading instruction. Often, teachers use SRI data to assist students in setting their own goals for increasing Lexile Levels. The teacher communicates SRI assessment results to students and their parents through SRI Reports and during individual conferences.

DoDEA Headquarters compiles grade level SRI results and uses them to assess progress in reading comprehension across the DoDEA's world-wide school network.

LOCAL ASSESSMENTS FOR CSI GOALS

This is the first year that Dexter has implemented a school-wide formative assessment program. Therefore, the school is still formalizing ways to best communicate formative assessment results to stakeholders. To date, the most effective venue for communicating formative results has been the school's CSI Data Wall. The data wall uses graphic representations to depict the learning gains achieved toward math problem solving/communication and reading comprehension goals. Teachers are reintroduced to the data wall each time new formative data sets are posted. They are provided with copies of school-wide data, grade level data, and individual class data. Teachers use these data to inform students about the progress their class and grade level are making toward goal attainment. In some cases, teachers are using the class data to challenge students to set individual learning goals. The data generated by these local assessments are critically important to the CSI process. These data are the closest and most meaningful data to students, and, as such, have the greatest impact on student motivation and performance. Students are able to "read" and interpret the school and class data walls. They are well informed about the relationship between the data and their own performance. In many cases, the students are assuming "ownership" of these data, demonstrating their understanding that their individual performance contributes to class, grade level, and school success. The many life lessons learned through this process are evidenced in improved student performance toward CSI goals.

It is important to mention that Dexter continues to report information about student performance through School Report Cards that are issued each nine weeks. At the midpoint of each term, progress reports are issued to identify students who are experiencing difficulty. This timely communication is intended to strengthen the home and school partnership by inviting parents to work with the school as students strive to achieve academic success.

Parents of students in fourth and fifth grades have access to Gradespeed, a web-based electronic grade book that enables day-to-day follow-up on a student's academic progress. The Gradespeed program is updated weekly as grades are entered in the teacher's grade book. In this way parents may work closely with teachers as their child progresses throughout the school year.

The evidence is clear that Dexter Elementary School makes every effort to optimize the use of assessment results in a timely and relevant manner. It is also clear that teachers, students, and parents eagerly respond to relevant information about student performance. Dexter continues to grow in the area of data-driven decision making. New ways and venues for communicating information to stakeholders surface on a daily basis. This is an exciting journey in which all stakeholders are learners, and all are joined in a learning community that strives to better serve our students.

3. How are data used to understand and improve overall school effectiveness?

Dexter Elementary School is in a period of rapid transition that is changing the student population as the school grows to accommodate students who live in burgeoning new neighborhoods. Because the school is morphing in many ways, data is constantly analyzed to understand the changes and to make decisions that ensure continued instructional and organizational effectiveness.

In the fall of 2009, the DoDEA Consolidated Warehouse became available to school principals. This robust program offers comparative data analysis across programs and across schools in the DoDEA system. This powerful database enables Dexter's principal to examine a host of data sources to draw implications about the effectiveness of Dexter Elementary School when compared to comparable schools in the DoDEA school system. Although the Consolidated Warehouse is new, and the databases are limited to SY 08-09 TN3 data, the tool promises to be an invaluable resource for assessing school effectiveness. Over time, the Data Warehouse will house multiple data sources giving principals the capability to compare all of the information in the performance functions to any school within the DoDEA system. This type of comparison is invaluable when assessing school effectiveness. It is increasingly valuable in a school that is literally shifting in demographics and population size. In Dexter's case, the Data Warehouse enables the principal to make school comparisons even as Dexter transforms to serve new and diverse student populations.

Given the data that is currently available to Dexter, many steps are taken to ensure school effectiveness. For example, individual student learning data is used to guide decisions that help all students receive the services they need to optimize learning. For example, data helps to identify students for services including gifted education, special education, and support programs such as READ 180, which serves struggling readers. According to Dexter's local assessment data, the READ 180 program has been very successful in improving reading achievement. Meticulous data sets demonstrate three or more years' growth for 25% of current Read 180 students. This kind of data causes pause, and compels a second look. What teaching strategies are used in the READ 180 program that can benefit all students? What might we learn in this circumstance that offers potential to improvement? Careful attention to data at many levels unveils new possibilities for improved school effectiveness.

The continuous school improvement process makes powerful use of data sources to guide improvement efforts leading to improved school effectiveness. While TN3, DRA and SRI data pointed to the need to improve instruction in reading and mathematics, it was data from current and former student surveys that overwhelmingly convinced the faculty to focus learning on reading comprehension and math problem-solving/communication. Essentially, former students, now in middle schools, pointed to these areas as a place to improve instructional effectiveness.

Dexter pays close attention to survey data that offers insight into school effectiveness. The Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) Survey is an online tool available on the school website, that allows our community to rate the services provided by Dexter Elementary School. The ICE comments and ratings are used to improve the products and services Dexter provides. The DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey, which is administered bi-annually, solicits the comments and concerns of education stakeholders. This important survey is used at the school and district level to improve services to teachers, students and the families we serve.

At Dexter, data are used in many forms and in many ways to understand the areas that need attention and require improvement to enhance overall school effectiveness.

4. How are teachers trained to understand and use data in the classroom?

The 2009-2010 school year was defined as the awareness year for the introduction of "Using Data to Differentiate Instruction (UDDI)," a DoDEA sponsored training event developed in response to the 2006-2011 DoDEA Community Strategic Plan.

UDDI is a six year process that began with the first two trainings in the 2009-2010 school year. The phases of UDDI are titled: Orientation, Development, Implementation and Application, Full Implementation, and

Sustainability/Accountability. Over the six year period, teachers are expected to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable full implementation of differentiated instruction at the end of the six year period. Throughout the UDDI training period, teachers are expected to integrate the tenets of differentiation into their teaching to positively impact student learning in the classroom.

Dexter's faculty members were first exposed to UDDI during a workshop led by the principal over the course of two faculty meetings. The training activities were designed to help teachers understand what UDDI was and what it was not. An open discussion forum provided opportunities to clarify understandings through the exchange of questions, answers, thoughts and ideas.

During the 2009-2010 school year, all classroom teachers received a copy of the Teachers Guide to the TerraNova, Third Edition. Trainings delivered by the principal prepared teachers to use the Terra Nova Teacher's Guide to plan lessons and instructional activities that offer the rigor necessary to meet the performance requirements in the DoDEA Curriculum Standards. Particular attention was directed to the Depth of Knowledge levels, which clarify the cognitive load of various thinking and learning tasks. Trainings related to the TN Teachers Guide were completed in November 2009.

A series of school-based trainings designed to familiarize the faculty with the criteria for Operational status in AdvancED Standard 4: Documenting and Using Results were conducted. These workshops capitalized on discovery approaches by encouraging teachers to visit classrooms to search for evidence of a comprehensive assessment system, student performance assessments, effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, interventions, and timely and accurate uses of information. Upon return, the teachers' findings were compiled and made available through email for access by all. This activity was helpful because it provided an opportunity to learn with and from others.

The 2009-2010 school year has been a genuine learning and growth experience for Dexter's teachers. While training about the use of data in the classroom has been important in building new understandings, the teachers' actual use of data to guide classroom instruction served to cement their understandings in practical and meaningful ways.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

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.

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The school employs and allocates staff that are well qualified for their assignments. The school provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. The school ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

5.1 Recruits, employs, and mentors qualified professional staff that are capable of fulfilling assigned roles and responsibilities:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes, decisions for IEP meetings

Appropriate space is provided for special need support programs

IEP: Individualized Education Plans

Personnel policies ensuring appropriate hiring practices

Personnel policies ensuring certification, licensure, evaluation, training

Professional learning opportunities

Program descriptions: Special Needs Populations

Schedules

Staff can affirm that special needs students receive needed support

Staff Handbook

Staff schedules and assignments

5.2 Assigns professional staff responsibilities based on their qualifications (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience):

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Labor agreement

Personnel policies ensuring appropriate placement

Personnel policies ensuring certification, licensure, evaluation, training

Policies regarding NCLB highly qualified teachers

Professional learning opportunities

Staff can affirm that they are teaching in their major area of study

Staff Handbook

Staff schedules and assignments

Staffing of both administrative and teaching positions is appropriate and adequate

5.3 Ensures that all staff participate in a continuous program of professional development:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Budget demonstrates appropriate allocation for PD

Calendar, agenda, summaries of PD opportunities

Evaluation of PD data

Personnel policies that stipulate PD requirements

Professional development plan

Staff are actively engaged in discussions that have resulted from their professional development experience

Staff are aware of the requirements for continuous learning

Staff can affirm their involvement in professional learning opportunities

Staff implement effective strategies based on their professional development experience

5.4 Provides and assigns staff that are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Budget demonstrates appropriate allocation for staffing

Class size indicates appropriate and effective support of student learning

Master schedule

Personnel policies and practices

Policies regarding NCLB highly qualified teachers

5.5 Budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Annual budget

Facilities plan

Facilities protection documentation: insurance, amortization

Fiscal policies: use of all funding, including donations, reserves, discretionary

Infrastructure plans: short and long range

Practices that support appropriate use of allocated funds

Purchasing/replacement policies: adherence to EEO

School-level budgets

Space is adequate and appropriate to support student learning

5.6 Monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Audit reports

Fiscal protection plans: insurance

Organizational oversight of fiscal authority

Payroll and purchasing policies and processes

Practices that support appropriate use of fiscal resources

Refund policies

Secure management of all fiscal processes

5.7 Maintains the site, facilities, services, and equipment to provide an environment that is safe and orderly for all occupants:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

All facilities on school/district property are maintained

Calendar of safety drills: fire, tornado, emergency crisis

Facilities maintenance reports and plans

HAZMAT (hazardous materials): policies and training

Policies and processes regarding safety

Policies and processes related to student/staff injury

Policies regarding dispensing prescription medications

School/District environment is clean and safe

Staff are involved in developing and implementing safety policies

Support staff are knowledgeable about safety policies

5.8 Possesses a written security and crisis management plan with appropriate training for stakeholders:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Crisis intervention committee

Emergency procedures

Health support staff are available

Secure record system

Staff and students are knowledgeable about emergency procedures

Staff are involved in the crisis intervention team

Staff Handbook

Student Handbook

Wellness policy

5.9 Ensures that each student has access to guidance services that include, but are not limited to, counseling, appraisal, mentoring, staff consulting, referral, and educational and career planning:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Advisory plan and program

Community based programs

Curriculum for Career Preparation

Enrollment data

Professional development: calendar, topics

Staff are knowledgeable in all aspects of appropriate social/emotional support for student learning behavior

Staffing of Counseling and Guidance programs

Student referral policies and practices

5.10 Provides appropriate support for students with special needs:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Classroom instruction demonstrates variety of instructional methodologies to support all students

IEP: committee, minutes, calendar, agenda, sign-in sheets

Labor agreements demonstrating appropriate special needs staffing

Master schedule demonstrating support for special needs

Policies and procedures that are ADA and IDEA compliant

Professional development calendar and topics

Staff affirm their use of instructional strategies that support special needs inclusion

Student referral process and procedures

Students and staff affirm their understanding of special needs populations

Teacher certification, licensure, etc. supporting special needs

Translated materials demonstrate communication to special needs population

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for recruitment, induction, placement, development, evaluation, and retention of qualified teachers, administrators, and support staff?

In an effort to provide consistency and fairness to all applicants, a uniform employment application system is used to guide the process of recruitment and placement of personnel in DDESS schools. Position announcements are posted online via USAJobs.com where candidates can apply using the online Employment Application System (EAS). During the open application period, applicants submit credentials as indicated on the vacancy announcement. Once the application period closes, a list of qualified applicants is created at the Area Service Center (ASC) and provided to the District Superintendent's Office (DSO). The DSO conducts administrative interviews, and school principals and their designees conduct teacher interviews. Common interview questions and scoring rubrics are used for the interviews to ensure consistency and fairness for all candidates. Recommendations of candidates are submitted to the ASC and DoDEA Headquarters in order of local preference. DoDEA headquarters makes the final selection of candidates based on the recommendations and the candidate is notified by the Human Resources Office at the ASC of the selection.

Once hired, the induction, development, evaluation, and retention of qualified teachers, administrators, and support staff is a responsibility shared by DoDEA headquarters, the ASC, the DSO, and the school. Acting as the official hiring agent for the organization, a representative will contact the candidate and make a formal job offer. Once accepted, the DSO, as the first point of contact, will assist with the in-processing of the new employee to include items such as personnel benefits, government ID card, vehicle registration and fingerprints.

Upon arrival at Dexter Elementary, the new employee is greeted by the principal, given a tour of the campus and led to the assigned classroom. Additionally, the new employee is introduced to other members of the Dexter Elementary family. New teachers are partnered with another experienced teacher (preferably at the same grade level) in order to provide further orientation to the campus. Finally, the new member of the Dexter Elementary family is provided with a network identification and an email account. This type of access is requested by the principal and the subsequent procedures (introduction of acceptable use policies) are completed by the campus educational technologist.

2. How does the leadership ensure that the allocation of financial resources is supportive of the school's vision, educational programs, and its plans for school improvement?

The Department of Defense Education Agency (DoDEA) uses funding formulas to equitably budget federal resources for facilities protection (insurance), staffing and operation of educational programs, and professional development in the schools. The funds provided by DoDEA are sufficient to support and implement the school's education programs and the current plan for improvement. At Dexter Elementary, the campus budget provides discretionary funds that are managed by the principal to support our vision, mission and goals.

Funds are approved through a process of prioritizing teacher requests and completing the purchasing process. A teacher will initiate the process by requesting materials or resources from the principal. The request is then approved by the principal for the supply technician to begin conducting research on the items. Such research includes different vendors, price, and verifying that the appropriate funds are available and not fenced for specific items. Also, the supply technician must ensure that appropriate parameters are followed when conducting the research such as vendor rotation and ceilings on the amount that can be spent. Once the research has been completed, the supply technician selects the appropriate vendor and completes the purchase order, which is signed by the principal and forwarded to the budget office for final approval.

Local funds are first made available to the campus under the direction of the District Budget Officer. Funds can be made available for general supplies or fenced for specific types of purchases. General supplies funds are based on student enrollment as of 30 September. Furthermore, funds are distributed to campuses on a quarterly basis. Requests for resources and materials are prioritized to ensure that the most urgent of requests are addressed first.

This would include health/medial needs, materials that would help sustain a special program or subject area, logistical items to support or enhance the educational opportunities of students, and replenishing supplies for the school.

Outside of the normal distribution of funding through the budget allocations, special funding may be granted through a process involving the district leadership. A request is made by the principal and forwarded to the assistant superintendent, who reviews the information and will pass to the superintendent for approval. Once this process occurs, it is the District Budget Officer who will allocate the requested funds.

3. How does the leadership ensure a safe and orderly environment for students and staff?

Emergency procedures are intact at Dexter Elementary, and the principal is the main point of contact for emergency procedures. Each room is equipped with a Safe and Orderly School Handbook. Within this resource, procedures for various emergency situations are outlined in a step-by-step format. Additionally, points of contact and specific responsibilities are identified within this manual. Furthermore, there is an emergency resource kit in a book bag in each room. Within this kit, there are supplies to aid in a variety of emergency situations. Each of the emergency procedures contained in the Safe and Orderly School Handbook identifies staff members with specific responsibilities. Whether it is ensuring that an area is clear of students/staff or ensuring accountability of students, everyone has a role in keeping Dexter Elementary safe.

Dexter Elementary ensures a secure and organized environment for the well being of all students and visitors to our school for a variety of situations. As safety is addressed in our school mission, we hold this concept true to our modus operandi and identify procedures to respond to a multitude of procedural and emergency situations.

Arrival and dismissal times are planned events at Dexter Elementary. Students are permitted in the building at 8:35 every morning while the instructional day begins at 8:45. 8:35 was designated as an appropriate time to ensure that students would be supervised at all times. Dismissal of students occurs when our students who receive services through the transportation department are picked up from the classroom by educational aides. These students are escorted to the west end of the school to wait for the bust to pick up the students. While students are waiting for the bus to arrive, educational aides continue to monitor the safety of students by managing a structured environment at the bus stop.

Dexter Elementary utilizes the Student Management System (SMS) to ensure authorized pick-up of students. Upon registration of each student, a sponsor must designate an emergency contact that has permission to pick up a child. When this occurs, the adult that has been designated to pick up the child must show a valid form of identification, which is compared to the emergency information contained within SMS prior to calling the child from class.

In an effort to identify visitors and volunteers at our campus, sign in/out logs and identification tags are required. Each person coming to Dexter Elementary must sign in and out using one of the designated notebooks placed at the entrance of the office. Persons wishing to enter the campus must leave a valid form of identification with the school secretary, who then exchanges the identification with a visitor's badge. The same process is included with substitute teachers.

Managing student discipline is explained in the code of conduct, which is identified in the Parent/Student Handbook. A signature sheet is obtained from each parent registering a child acknowledging receipt. Additionally, this resource is also published on the Dexter School website:

http://www.am.dodea.edu/Benning/dexter/WebsiteNew/PoliciesProcedures/Handbook_2009-2010_Web.pdf.
Among the potential administrative consequences for misconduct are, conference with student/parent, lunch

detention, detention (before or after school), in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, parent shadow, referral to district level discipline tribunal. Teachers are expected to employ a thorough battery of discipline management techniques for minor student misconduct prior to referring the student for administrative intervention. To aid in managing student discipline and safety during non-instructional times, a safety patrol has been implemented consisting of students monitoring a safe and secure environment at Dexter Elementary and on the bus.

Dexter Elementary splits a DARE officer with another campus. While on our campus, the DARE officer is responsible for delivering the DARE curriculum to fifth grade students. Additional duties of our DARE officer is assisting with the monitoring of the brief recess period for students as well as providing lessons about decision making to all students.

Communication on campus has been optimized by telephones, hand held radios, and a panic button. Each classroom has a telephone that is capable of communicating with the main office. While outside, the PE teacher and educational aide take cellular telephones for PE and recess in case immediate communication is necessary with the office. During times of emergency, a limited number of hand held radios can be used to communicate on campus, and one hand held radio is designed to communicate with the DSO in certain emergency situations. A panic button is present in the front office and is intended to alert military police in the event of an emergency when phone contact is not an option.

During times when school is not in session and messages need to be delivered to stakeholders, the One Call Now system is used to accomplish such a task. Additionally, an emergency staff phone tree is utilized by the principal and secretary to inform staff members of emergency information during off duty times.

Campus and student safety is further strengthened through the presence of classroom safety locks in all classrooms and practicing emergency drills (lockdown, fire, tornado, bus evacuation, and building evacuation) in accordance with district and legal guidelines. For emergency dismissals, each classroom has their own unique route to follow for evacuation situations. Upon evacuation, teachers are expected to take specific items with them (i.e. grade book, Safe and Orderly School Handbook). Every month while school is in session, a fire drill is scheduled and the fire inspector will oversee the drill and perform checks on the campus for compliance with expectations within the fire code.

DoDEA has sanctioned regular and routine trainings to cover a variety of topics. The school nurse annually covers standards on allergic reaction, blood borne pathogens, and medical needs of students. Faculty and staff must complete sexual harassment training and anti terrorism training online before the end of September. Also, a representative from the ASC delivers Equal Employment Opportunity training annually for all employees.

4. What process is used to ensure and monitor that each student has access to guidance and resource services that meet the needs of the student?

Supporting our student population with specialized personnel at Dexter Elementary creates an atmosphere where unique needs are addressed and fulfilled. Procedures are in place to ensure that each student has access to guidance and resource services monitored in accordance with all applicable laws. A student identified as having a need which requires response generally begins with suspicion from the regular education teacher. Depending on the nature of the situation, the teacher usually begins by reporting the issue to the principal, which will be referred to the appropriate personnel.

A school counselor is available on Monday, Tuesday and half of the day on Wednesday to address students in whole group, small groups, to students who have parents that are deployed and individually as needed, or by

request. Additionally, the guidance counselor is responsible for reviewing student records to assess individual needs and growth. Upon entry to Dexter Elementary, the school counselor will review the student's file to determine whether a student already has an existing individual education plan. Also, when a teacher suspects that a child is experiencing difficulty with content beyond the typical rigor of the curriculum, the concern will be referred to the counselor to begin the Student Support Team (SST) process.

As a precursor to the special education program, a SST team will convene to make efforts to assist a student in finding an appropriate program of study designed to foster academic and personal success. The SST team consists of the school counselor, principal, parent, current teacher, and other personnel as appropriate. If the SST is not successful in its mission, then the student is referred to the Case Study Committee (CSC) which is comprised of campus and district personnel and the student's parent. This group will determine eligibility for special education services and to what extent the services will be provided.

It is imperative to mention that parents are an integral part of the entire process. In accordance with special education law, each parent is provided the Procedural Safeguards prior to each special education meeting to ensure that a parent is aware of all rights concerning their child and special education. Utilizing input obtained from parents affords the CSC team an opportunity to make the best decision about the child's educational future. Furthermore, the parent is thoroughly involved with every part of the SST and CSC process. Decisions are made unanimously when all parties agree on the direction of the educational services after all of the testing has completed. Copies of minutes from meetings, the individual education plan, and all testing results are provided to parents at the conclusion of the meeting.

Special education services are available through both a special education teacher and special education aide. Services are delivered in a resource and inclusion setting depending on the specifications of the individualized education plan for special education students. The instructional aide is assigned to assist with special education and is fully aware of all students receiving special education services. Furthermore, the instructional aide assists the special education teacher in completing necessary paperwork to ensure compliance with special education laws.

A speech pathologist serves students in a resource setting at Dexter Elementary on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and a school psychologist also provides services as needed as his time is split with two other campuses. The scope of his duties is to conduct observations of students and administer specific cognitive and emotional assessments to students requiring this type of attention in order to determine the best educational placement for the student. Occupational and physical therapists assist designated students in meeting developmentally appropriate tasks in relation to curricular standards and IEP guidelines.

Students who receive special education services have their records reviewed at a minimum of once per year. Every three years, a student receiving special education services will receive an entire battery of tests to determine eligibility to continue receiving special education services. Servicing special education students occurs throughout the time period they are eligible for special education services as stated in the individual education plan.

Teachers are critical members of the CSC team. Therefore, informing teachers of updated IEPs and accommodation plans to raise awareness of the decisions made by the team as it relates to the child's education is compulsory. For teachers outside of the regular education teacher, a copy of the IEP/accommodations will be distributed to other teachers who have that particular student.

Students in the gifted and talented program receive services every day by a full time gifted and talented teacher. The curriculum is highlighted with critical and creative thinking opportunities that require students to extend the depth and breadth of the DoDEA curriculum.

A part-time nurse is on campus daily between the hours of 10:00 and 2:00. During these hours, she manages student health concerns to include regular administration of medicine, attending to minor health concerns, and health screenings. Also, the school nurse delivers training to the Dexter faculty and staff over the topics of blood borne pathogens, Automated External Defibrillators and the Heimlich maneuver.

An additional community resource that is available to parents as an extension of services for military families is the Army Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP). The EFMP is based on Public Law 94-142 which entitles handicapped children to free education and all medically related services in pursuit of education. The EFMP includes all family members with special medical and educational needs.

Soldiers enroll through their local Army medical treatment facility. The military sponsor and the attending medical or educational specialist complete enrollment forms. The completed forms are forwarded to the regional EFMP team to review and forward this information to PERSCOM. Exceptional Family Member enrollment needs to be reviewed at least every three years. When a soldier who is enrolled in the EFMP is nominated for assignment, PERSCOM will coordinate with the gaining command to determine if services are available. When services are not available, PERSCOM considers alternative assignment locations based on existing assignment priorities or sends the soldier in an unaccompanied status.

Dexter Elementary utilizes numerous opportunities to aid in promoting community resources to support special needs. Involving parents through gatherings such as principal's coffee sessions, sneak-a-peek, and PTO meetings, as well as communicating through newsletters, email, and One Call Now are all examples of providing opportunities to disseminate information to parents. Partners In Education are used for tutoring support, mentoring, and extra curricular activities. Martin Army Community Hospital (MACH) supports children with special needs by providing professionals and/or physicians that have knowledge of developmental milestones and specific disabilities to help with proper diagnosis and medical support, medical referrals, etc. Assisting with respite care, Child Development Centers provide interventions for children with special needs. Finally, Educational & Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS) is a partnership that is used for community screenings, child find services, and transition of school-age children to our schools.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school has human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The school employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The school provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness, including both professional and support staff. The school ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships

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

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. School personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes, calendar of parent meetings

Calendar of events that promote stakeholder involvement

Internship/partnership agreements with community-based business and agencies

Parents and community members regularly volunteer time in school/district

Policies regarding suggestions, grievances

Staff affirm that stakeholders are involved in many aspects of school/district

Stakeholder survey data

Stakeholders affirm that they are involved in many aspects of school/district

6.2 Has formal channels to listen to and communicate with stakeholders:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Calendars, agendas, minutes of parent meetings

Emails, phone answering system

Newsletters, brochures, letters, memos

Parent - Teacher conferences schedule

Policies regarding formal inclusion of stakeholder involvement

School Improvement Committee: agendas, minutes, membership

Stakeholders affirm they have variety of opportunities to be formally involved in life of school/district

Steering Committee meetings: agendas, minutes, membership

Web page dedicated to parents/community members

Wide variety of stakeholder communication documents/avenues

Other: Parents are provided a folder that has information of volunteer procedures

Other: PTO sponsors new parent coffee

6.3 Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the school:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Calendar, agendas, minutes, committee membership

Policies regarding volunteer involvement

Schedule of volunteer activities

Staff affirm that they regularly include community in preparing instructional delivery activities

Stakeholder survey data

Stakeholders affirm that their suggestions and recommendations are acted upon

Stakeholders affirm that they are actively involved in providing expertise

6.4 Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Brochures, pamphlets

Newsletters about student performance

Online calendar, schedule, and news/updates

Parent -teacher conferences

Parent Handbook

Parents and students are involved in developing individualized learning plans for students

Regularly published newsletters to community

Stakeholders affirm that they are knowledgeable about student learning

Student Handbook

6.5 Provides information about students, their performance, and school effectiveness that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Parent - Teacher Conferences

Policies regarding reporting schedule

Report cards

Focus Questions:

1. How does the school's leadership ensure that the school is responsive to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction?

DoDEA's leadership community—from Headquarters, to the local command and district, to the school level—is responsive to community expectations and stakeholder's satisfaction.

At Dexter, our responsiveness is shown in several ways. First, community expectations are solicited, clarified and monitored. On military posts, all schools are named in honor of fallen military heroes. Our school is named for Major Herbert J. Dexter, a member of the Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne. Losing his life in heroic action during the Battle of An Ninh, Major Dexter was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Since all of our students are dependents of active military personnel, the school's name provides a connection to members of the community. Led by our school's leadership, nine years ago we commissioned the statue of Herbie the Eagle to honor Major Dexter. Selection of our school colors of red, white and blue appropriately represent the courage and bravery of both our namesake, Major Dexter, and all of our students' Soldiers.

Another way our responsiveness to the community is shown is through our Partners in Education (PIE) program. Dexter Elementary has partnerships with two military units, the 1/10 Field Artillery and 1/29 Infantry. PIE provides a forum for community involvement within our school through numerous activities throughout the year. One activity is our Math Mentors Program which supports our school improvement math goal. Each Thursday,

our PIE partners arrive at our campus to lend their support by tutoring math to struggling students, mentoring students who need a role model, or mentoring students who have a deployed parent.

This year, to support our reading goal, Dexter Elementary and the 1/29 Infantry piloted our Reading Rangers Program. It is an initiative affiliated between the 1/29 Infantry and the Read 180 program where students are challenged to read books. As students read books, they complete a corresponding test in our Reading Counts program for accountability purposes. Students tally their progress through the use of specialized Ranger Pacecounter Beads. Certified Rangers come to Dexter every 2-3 weeks for a “bead ceremony” and to discuss the importance of being a Ranger, perseverance, teamwork, and going the extra mile. Along with this motivational discussion, the Rangers raise the beads of students as proof of the number of books read and lead the recitation of the Reading Rangers Creed.

This year marked the 40th anniversary of Dexter School. This event was celebrated with a week of events that correlated the life of Herbert J. Dexter to instructional activities and school goals while involving our PIE, the Dexter community, and members of the surrounding area. Additionally, each of the activities was designed around the school vision of learning from the past to create our own future. The involvement of our Partners in Education was critical in making this event successful. Some of the activities included a 1940’s Army boot camp, learning Russian phrases, creating medals for today’s heroes, practicing paratrooper jumps, and sessions to learn about Major Dexter and Vietnamese orphans. The week’s activities concluded with a ceremony hosted by LTC Carlisle, former commander of our 1/29 IN PIE unit. Major Dexter’s children, grandchildren, former teachers and students, military dignitaries, and members of the Dexter community attended the ceremony making it a highlight of our PIE partnership.

In the spirit of the holiday season, Santa Claus arrived at Dexter Elementary in a Stryker, courtesy of the 1/29 IN PIE partners. Santa and his PIE elves spread holiday wishes to our students and staff. While Santa was listening to some students’ holiday wish lists, other students were riding in Strykers with our PIE partners.

At the beginning of the year, students were treated to a field trip to one of the Fort Benning firing ranges for a HOTEX (Hand-On Training Exercise) demonstration. This event featured an explanation and demonstration of military weaponry by our PIE partners of the 1/29 IN.

In addition to direct interaction with our students, our PIE has provided valuable service to our faculty and staff. Chaplin Dan Hardin of the 1/29 IN delivered a training module on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator in an effort to bring to light what personality traits the faculty and staff possess and the benefits of each personality type. Additionally, he explained how these personality types impacted teaching and learning. All of our PIE activities provide opportunities for community involvement with Dexter.

Dexter responds to comments and concerns of the community through the use of the DoDEA Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE). This short, online survey, found on our school’s home page, provides data directly to the district superintendent and Dexter’s principal. The Likert scale reports levels of satisfaction a stakeholder has with our campus by asking broad questions and providing an opportunity to leave a specific comment. Stakeholders are encouraged to leave their name and contact information, but it is not required to complete the survey. Through Dexter’s involvement and responses with PIE and ICE we are able to solicit, clarify, and monitor community satisfaction.

In addition to community satisfaction, stakeholder satisfaction is also solicited, clarified and monitored. The DoDEA Customer satisfaction survey is one method used to address comments and concerns of stakeholders. Results from the 2006 survey were used to aid Dexter Elementary in soliciting information during the development of the school vision and mission statement. Results from the 2008 survey provided data to aid in the selection of our school improvement goals.

The local chapter of the Federal Education Association, the Benning Education Association (BEA), is another method of addressing comments and concerns of stakeholders. The BEA oversees teachers within the district and campuses. In an effort to maintain a quality work environment and adherence to the Master Labor Agreement, the campus BEA representative and the principal maintain frequent dialogue regarding any concerns or initiatives on campus. This partnership has aided in successful resolution of grievances from both the management and teacher perspectives as it exemplifies a working relationship that models respect and collaboration.

Our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is a third method of addressing comments and concerns of stakeholders. The parents of Dexter Elementary are critical in their support of our mission and their children. Without their support, accomplishing our mission and vision would be substantially more difficult. This organization recruits members during our Sneak a Peek activities before the school year starts and throughout the year as new families arrive to the community. The PTO conducts regularly scheduled monthly meetings to discuss upcoming projects, spending reports, and concerns regarding the campus. On a weekly basis, newsletters from the PTO are generated and made available to parents via email and flyers left in the front office. Also, one of these newsletters is sent home to each family in the students' Friday Note envelopes. By maintaining frequent contact with administration and faculty members, the PTO is informed of the various financial or service needs of the campus and the organization meets those needs to the best of their ability.

A fourth method of addressing concerns and comments of stakeholders is the use of Gradespeed, our online gradebook. This program satisfies parent need to monitor student progress by allowing them to view their student's academic progress which is updated by the classroom teacher on a weekly basis.

2. How does the school's leadership foster a learning community?

Dexter Elementary's school leadership builds a community of learners within the school through several regularly scheduled activities and forums which support student learning.

One activity is the morning announcements. Each morning, two students lead the school in the Pledge of Allegiance, Dexter Elementary's vision statement and the K-Club pledge. This is one way new students are introduced to the school's vision.

Bulletins are provided to all teachers and staff every day via email to provide notice of upcoming events, teacher absences, changes in enrollment, faculty meeting topics, and collaboration topics.

Our school wiki provides a place for teachers to manage student assessment data and a forum to exchange ideas. Here teachers input formative assessment data results which can later be analyzed in collaborative sessions.

The school website is a resource-rich tool that provides information and links for teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders. Information concerning classes, curriculum, resources, contact information, and school improvement can be found on our web site.

Faculty meetings are held each Tuesday to discuss topics relating to best practices, data, curriculum, assessment, continuous school improvement and special events. These meetings include paraprofessionals and a parent representative in addition to school faculty.

The Campus School Improvement Leadership Team meets frequently to monitor adherence to the school improvement plan. Additionally, their efforts are geared at ensuring that formative assessments are disseminated,

collected, and organized to record for data collection purposes.

Collaboration Meetings are built into the master schedule once per week for each grade level and special areas. During these meetings teachers share best practices, innovations, review data, and address needs of the school.

The student leadership team is composed of one teacher-nominated student from each class. These students act as spokespersons for the campus. This team provides a forum for students to address school-related issues, collaborate on possible solutions, and provide feedback to the school administration.

All parents and teachers are invited to attend the monthly PTO general meetings. These meetings focus on recent efforts and accomplishments of the organization, advise those in attendance of upcoming initiatives or events, and vote on PTO-sponsored projects to improve the school. Examples of PTO efforts include assisting with school pictures, construction of the school yearbook, purchasing digital projectors for classrooms, funding special events, assisting with H1N1 vaccination by organizing students waiting to be vaccinated, and lending support with the beautification of our campus.

Teachers are advised to maintain frequent, regular contact with parents through a variety of mediums including phone, email, and face-to-face conferences to keep them informed of their child's progress in school. This communication not only provides an opportunity for teachers to learn and update student information, it provides an avenue to address overall school issues or concerns.

The school leadership extends collaboration with stakeholders and community members beyond the school through the following activities and forums that benefit student learning:

Volunteer groups provide services to Dexter School in several ways. Currently, the schedule of the Fort Benning schools allows students from the middle school to come to Dexter Elementary to assist students with tutoring. But volunteers also come from Dexter. By request, Dexter students have been special readers at events on post and 5th grade students read to pre-school aged children at a neighboring day care center.

Special event groups offer another opportunity to extend collaboration beyond the school. Our PIE partners were instrumental in the success of our 40th anniversary events. The 1/29 IN and 1/10 FA provided training sessions and activities to help make our vision of learning from the past to create our own future come alive for students. At the annual fall festival, PTO, faculty and staff, Partners in Education, and other community members came together to host a memorable event where students were entertained with several events focused on family fun. This event also doubles as a fundraiser, providing most of the funds the PTO uses to fund its yearly educational projects. In addition to groups directly related to our school, local chapters of the Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts use the building to hold their regular meetings.

Community speakers and expert guests are another forum for extending collaboration with stakeholders and community beyond the school. Ketia Swanier, a member of the WNBA champion Phoenix Mercury, visited Dexter Elementary in October of 2009. She delivered a message of hope and commitment to students while taking the time to visit each classroom to pose for pictures and distribute Dexter Elementary t-shirts to students who did not have one. Jason Robertson, a local author, was part of our 40th anniversary celebration. He shared his story of being a Vietnamese orphan adopted by an American soldier and raised in the United States. Mr. Robertson's participation in our 40th anniversary celebration provided insight into the time, culture, and effects of the Vietnam War, the war in which Major Dexter was killed in action. Cy Dietrich, a former Dexter Elementary teacher and visionary for the Herbie Memorial Garden, was also part of our 40th anniversary celebration. Mr. Dietrich told his story of the birth of Herbie the Eagle and its relationship with the tragedy of the September 11th attack on the Pentagon. Pam Alexander, a children's author, led a lesson on the history of Georgia, read some of her books to

students, and autographed these books for students. Mrs. Lamback, a survivor of heart disease and a triple bypass surgery, spoke to the gifted students on National Heart Awareness Day in February. All of these special groups provide opportunities for Dexter to extend collaboration with stakeholders and community beyond the school.

3. What avenues are used to communicate information to stakeholders about students, their performance, and school effectiveness?

Dexter uses several avenues to communicate useful and meaningful information about students and their performance to stakeholders.

Gradespeed, the electronic gradebook, provides weekly grades for students in grades 4-5. Students and parents can view the name of the assignment, the grade the student earned, and the date of the assignment. This service allows parents to monitor student progress at any time and from anywhere Internet service is available. This is especially helpful to parents who are deployed in foreign countries.

Quarterly report cards are issued by teachers, reviewed by the principal, and sent home to parents. In grades 4-5, the report cards contain subject grades, attendance information, teacher comments, and a principal's comment. In grades Pre-K-3, subject grades are replaced with information indicating whether students have met, are approaching, making limited progress, or have not met the subject standard. Mid-term progress reports are sent at the middle of the quarter.

First quarter parent-teacher conferences are intended to be an informative session for parents so the teacher can provide updates on their child's performance as well as have a face-to-face meeting. This provides the opportunity for open communication between the teacher and parent and sets up a foundation for continued communication. The conference is mandatory, and report cards are issued during the meeting.

Parent-teacher-administrative conferences are utilized on an as needed basis. Parents or teachers can request administrative presence to ensure focus to the meeting. These conferences provide an opportunity for parents, teachers, and administrators to discuss concerns about student performance as well as create plans for continued growth and monitoring.

Special Education conferences are also called CSC (Case Study Committee) meetings. These conferences consist of members that have a direct educational impact on the student and are intended to ensure the student is eligible for services and that each child is given the best opportunity to be successful in our school. During these meetings, classroom teachers, instructional support staff, and others who have direct contact with the children share information concerning the student's progress or needs and use that information to plan successful strategies for the student.

Parent/student handbooks are a resource outlining pertinent procedural information regarding Dexter Elementary School. The handbook provides performance expectations for students as well as general information about the school. Each parent must acknowledge receipt of the handbook upon registration into our school.

E-mail provides an additional method for teachers and parents to communicate information concerning student performance. Each teacher has access to parent e-mail addresses through the School Information Management System (SIMS) and correspondence is encouraged. This is often a more efficient way to communicate information since phone access is limited to the school office. In addition, e-mail allows parents who are deployed to be involved in communications about student performance as well.

Data walls, a method of visually displaying student evidence of performance, allow school-wide and grade-wide

data to be available to anyone in the school building. These walls display information such as Terra Nova Objectives Performance Index (OPI) results used to lead to school improvement goals. Additionally, the walls display formative assessment results as a school and by grade level. Data walls allow all stakeholders access to information about student performance.

Dexter also uses several methods to communicate information to stakeholders about school effectiveness. School newsletters and classroom newsletters are one method used. The school newsletter is used to inform stakeholders of upcoming school events as well as reports on past events and their success. Additionally, each teacher prepares a weekly newsletter of events occurring in the classroom. These newsletters also cover upcoming events or recent activities and are sent to parents each week.

Our school website also provides information on school effectiveness. It contains information regarding upcoming events, curricular resources, campus resources, classroom websites, links to other helpful websites, contact information, and many additional pieces of information.

The campus wiki account is a password protected website where teachers can participate in a discussion forum regarding several topics. Also, this convenient site is one method that the campus utilizes to store and utilize data from our formative assessments.

School-wide events can also provide information on school effectiveness. Our PIE Annual Partnership of the Year application is submitted by Dexter Elementary to the Columbus Chamber of Commerce each year. The application showcases all of the PIE events of the school year and is used by the Chamber to judge the partnership's effectiveness. A decision is then made by the Chamber to determine the best PIE partnership in the Columbus, Georgia/Ft. Benning area. During SY05-06, Dexter Elementary was selected elementary school partnership of the year. Other years we have finished in the top 10.

D.A.R.E. is a fifth grade program that teaches drug resistance and other positive decision-making skills. The program concludes with a graduation and awards ceremony honoring students' successful completion of the course as well as outstanding essays concerning resisting drugs.

Meet the PIE Partners Day is the first contact that the PIE partners have with our students during the school year. Students create banners celebrating the partners commitment to working with our school for the upcoming year and thanking them for the previous year's commitment. Each of these events is an avenue for Dexter to communicate information to stakeholders about the effectiveness of our school.

Overall Assessment:

Highly Functional: The school has the understanding, commitment, and support of all stakeholders. School personnel actively promote and provide regular, systematic opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among all stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts and can demonstrate a high level of meaningful participation by most shareholder groups. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "highly functional" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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

Impact Statement: A school is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the school demonstrates progress in improving student performance and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school. The responses to the rubric should help the school identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school's responses to the focus questions and examples of evidence.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the school:

7.1 Engages in a continuous process of improvement 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):

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Continuous/School/District Improvement Plan

Professional Development Plan: agenda, topics

Record of student performance improvement efforts

Specific program initiative to support continuous improvement

Staff affirm their involvement in a specific program that supports continuous improvement

Staff affirm their involvement in continuous improvement committees

7.2 Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Calendar, agendas, minutes, sign-in sheets demonstrating stakeholder involvement in school improvement

Policies, procedures for school improvement committee work

School Improvement plan indicating membership of committees

Stakeholders affirm their involvement in continuous improvement process

7.3 Ensures that plans for continuous improvement are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school and expectations for student learning:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Calendar, agendas, minutes of school improvement meetings

School improvement plan demonstrates alignment with vision, purpose

Staff affirm their understanding of the impact of programs that support student learning

Staff demonstrate capacity for changing methodologies to increase student performance

Staff, students affirm their understanding of student performance targets

Student performance targets are communicated to all stakeholders

Vision, purpose posted in school/district facility

7.4 Provides professional development for school personnel to help them implement improvement interventions to achieve improvement goals:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Continuous/School/District Improvement Plan

Professional Development Plan: agenda, topics

Staff affirm their involvement in professional learning

7.5 Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Annual Report

Parent-Teacher conferences

Staffing assignments support monitoring and reporting of continuous improvement efforts

7.6 Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Postsecondary engagement: employment, college

Staff affirm that they regularly use data to inform their practices

Staff meetings regularly use data to inform their discussions and decisions

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for continuous improvement used by the school and what are the results that this process is delivering for student performance and school effectiveness?

Dexter Elementary followed format provided by DoDEA in pursuit of continuous school improvement. The guide is divided into eight clearly defined phases and ensures an orderly, sequential process. Phase one of the continuous school improvement began with efforts to gain the full commitment of all Dexter stakeholders to the school improvement process. The effort to achieve 100% “buy in” has been led by five principals in the past six years and the pursuit of full commitment continues. Early activities designed to focus the Dexter community included establishing the school vision and presenting an overview of the Continuous School Improvement (CSI) framework. These were major milestones of this first phase.

In the second phase, a school improvement committee was formed. Several teacher-leaders have served as chairpersons over time. Roles of the principal and faculty in the school improvement process were clarified. Holding consistent with Stephen Covey’s idea in *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, we began with the end in mind by establishing a timeline for progression through the eight phases.

Third, collecting and analyzing data were necessary to proceed with the process. During this phase, examining student learning data, community data, and environmental scan data led to the creation of the school profile. The data collected and archived in the profile were analyzed, disaggregated, and triangulated leading to goal selection.

Developing Dexter Elementary’s mission and goals were the fourth step of the continuous school improvement process. Identifying the school’s mission was an important step, which drew heavily from the data found during the environmental scan process. Based on the triangulation of multiple data sources, reading and a math were identified as our school improvement goals. Beyond the selection of goals, the essence of each goal was identified.

Phase five of the process saw the development of the school improvement plan. Identification of research-based interventions aligned with the goal and identification of assessments to measure progress towards each goal were accomplished. Also created was a results-based staff development plan to ensure that teachers succeeded in the pursuit towards each school improvement goal.

Implementing the school improvement plan marked the sixth phase of the process. Notable events in this phase were collecting the baseline performance data for use in measuring the selected goals. The interventions and assessments were executed.

The seventh phase involved monitoring the implementation of the school improvement plan and documenting evidence of student success toward goal attainment. In this phase slight modifications to the plan were implemented as needed to refine the implementation. Over the span of school years, this phase encompasses review and updating the school profile and completing annual status reports. Discussing, examining, and celebrating indicators of success during the implementation of the plan during faculty and collaboration meetings became the norm in this phase.

Finally, ensuring a continuous process of school improvement is the last phase of the process. Celebrating the achievement of goals as they are met and developing a process to maintain positive practices are indicators of this phase. Preparing for the continuous school improvement process to repeat itself also occurs with the re-triangulation of data to develop new goals and the re-formation of a school improvement committee to revise the school improvement plan.

Student performance has been positively impacted through the continuous school improvement process. There is an elevated focus on data and how it impacts instruction and empowers students to focus on their own learning. This has challenged teachers to reach beyond traditional expectations. Such empowerment has raised student accountability at Dexter Elementary, which demonstrates their commitment to continuous school improvement.

Using data to differentiate instruction is more than a DoDEA program in its infancy stages. At Dexter Elementary, data are analyzed at the school level, grade level, and classroom level. Findings, analysis, and implications are developed at each level to inform stakeholders of the progress towards school improvement goals. Based on the findings, analysis and implications of the data, instruction is altered according to a student's readiness and interest. Thus, a shift from a teaching style that focuses on facts and memorization becomes one that necessitates conceptual thinking.

Students have begun setting learning goals for themselves, which are connected to the larger school improvement goals. Because students are setting their own learning goals, a sense of focus and accountability is added to student learning. More importantly, a sense of pride and satisfaction is celebrated once the student successfully reaches the goal.

Dexter Elementary is undoubtedly transforming from a campus that was dependent on traditional pedagogical methodology to an organization that has embraced the power of a 21st century education. Through the evolution of the continuous school improvement process, our faculty and staff now appreciate the logistical process necessary to accomplish school improvement goals. Additionally, there is a new respect for collaboration, assessment, the power of data and how it can guide decision-making when pursuing school improvement goals.

Collaboration among stakeholders reinforces a sense of professionalism at Dexter Elementary where the exchange of ideas regarding data and pedagogy has surfaced to provide potent implications for student learning. Teachers are now engaged in discussions that document the pursuit of accomplishing school improvement goals. Teachers are emerging as leaders among their peers as they offer insight to improve instruction.

Assessment is critical in determining effectiveness of the interventions. At Dexter Elementary, we have two types of assessment. First, there is an assessment for learning, which are our local, formative assessments. Second, we have an assessment of learning, which includes summative review of learning. Both assessments yield powerful information germane to accomplishing school improvement goals.

As previously mentioned, the use of data to impact instruction is a method of demonstrating effectiveness of student learning and success. Understanding what and how assessment data is conveying through findings, analysis and implications provides stakeholders an informed report of how decisions are made with respect to research-based instructional methodology.

2. What steps are taken to ensure that the improvement goals reflect student learning needs that are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school?

When examining the alignment of the vision and mission with the school improvement goals, we must first revisit Dexter Elementary's school improvement goals, which address identified student learning needs.

1. All students at Dexter Elementary School will improve their ability to communicate mathematical ideas across the curriculum.
2. All students at Dexter Elementary School will improve reading comprehension across the curriculum.

After an extensive review of the literature related to mathematics and reading education, Dexter's faculty identified research-based instructional interventions to help students reach the two school improvement goals. Faculty examined the Dexter community and identified characteristics that are unique to our student body. Further, the faculty extended the environmental scan, to include a review of the world and the national trends that impact schooling in the 21st Century. Using all of these data sources to identify goals, ensures that the improvement goals meet student learning needs.

Reflecting on the 2008-2009 school profile, the standardized data identified math communication as an area for targeted improvement. A survey of former students supported these data. Additionally, respondents of the DoDEA customer satisfaction survey indicated that math needed more attention at Dexter Elementary School. These data confirm that the goals address student learning needs.

When examining the reading goal, data pointed to a need to improve reading comprehension. Again, a survey of former students supported these data. Middle schoolers indicated that preparation to construct responses and use sophisticated vocabulary was needed. These data confirm that the goals address student learning needs.

The review of world and national trends that impact schools in the 21st Century, suggested that a rigorous focus on higher levels of learning, applying research-based teaching and learning strategies, and extensive use of student learning data to guide instruction would help students reach higher levels of performance. Active, collaborative, student-centered, real-world projects that evoke student's interests and passions were recommended. It was suggested that the role of teachers should change - shifting from lecturer to facilitators and coaches of learning to meet the diverse needs of students. Authentic forms of assessment were recommended. This important look into the future - and its implications for our students' education ensured that our goals addressed student learning needs.

The trends that offer implications for 21st century education are aligned with Dexter's vision and mission. The vision: "Dexter School – Where we learn from the past to create our own future", lends itself to multiple facts of the 21st century style of education. Specifically, in creating their own future, the classroom environment must be student-centered and considerably more open-ended. Learners must work collaboratively with classmates and others around the world in an integrated and interdisciplinary curriculum to meet the learning needs of a modern student.

The DoDEA mission: "Providing an Exemplary Education that Inspires and Prepares All DoDEA Students for

Success in a Dynamic, Global Environment" supports Dexter's vision, mission and goals. It confirms that the goals Dexter has selected address the needs of the military child in the 21st Century.

3. What process is used to ensure that the school personnel are provided professional development and technical assistance to implement interventions and achieve improvement goals?

At Dexter, our research based staff development plan structures the process used to ensure that school personnel are provided professional development and technical assistance to implement interventions and achieve improvement goals.

Dexter professional development is taking steps to build knowledge of the intervention strategies for the CSI goals. The two interventions are:

1. Using Polya's four step problem solving method to communicate mathematical ideas; and
2. Using graphic organizers and asking questions to make connections in comprehending text.

For math this knowledge base was developed by providing staff with training on using mathematical vocabulary, diagrams and pictures to communicate mathematical ideas in open-ended responses, and in using the Exemplar protocols. For comprehension, this knowledge base was developed by providing training with conversion charts, selecting appropriately leveled texts, developing a Making Connections graphic organizer, developing a rubric to assess making connections, and establishing protocols for reading assessments.

The next step in our process was modeling and demonstrating uses of the interventions. For math, we used both classroom teachers and Instructional Support Specialists (ISS) from the Area Service Center. Teachers were provided opportunities to respond to open-ended math questions and have the responses evaluated collaboratively with the guidance of the demonstrator. For reading, school personnel demonstrated successful lessons which had been implemented with students at various reading levels and made those lessons available to staff.

Next, the faculty practiced implementing the interventions in low-risk environments. For math, Area Service Center ISSs returned to lead practice in the classroom with students. Teachers were released from class to observe the presentation of the open-ended math question with a class and then worked with students as they answered the question and assessed their own work. For reading, practice occurred in a faculty meeting with school faculty members leading the lesson.

Next, the faculty began on-the-job practice. This occurs at least bi-weekly for both math and reading. Teachers use a bank of open-ended response questions with children to practice using Polya's four-step problem solving method to communicate their mathematical thinking. They practice with students using the Exemplar rubric to assess student work. In reading, teachers use the Making Connections graphic organizer to lead students to make connections to extend text while using various graphic organizers and questions to craft responses to appropriately leveled texts. Teachers then practice using the Making Connections rubric with students as they assess their open ended responses.

Our next step in the professional development process was follow-up. In collaboration meetings, teachers shared lessons and student work samples in both math and reading. During these meetings, the principal and CSILT could determine if teachers needed further assistance. If needed, assistance was provided.

The last step in our process is long term maintenance. This is accomplished through collaboration meetings and through analysis of the student math and reading assessments. Collaboration meetings reveal growth of teacher confidence with the interventions while the formative assessment analysis leads to implications for changes in the

implementation of the interventions. Modifications are made as they are needed.

Our research based staff development process that focus on building knowledge, modeling and demonstrating, providing low-risk practice, on the job practice, follow up and long term maintenance ensures that Dexter's faculty are provided the professional development and technical assistance needed to implement interventions and achieve improvement goals.

4. How does the leadership ensure that the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated to stakeholders?

At Dexter, the leadership ensures that the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated to stakeholders in several ways.

The principal and members of the CSILT monitor implementation of the School Improvement Action Plan. Implementation and monitoring occurs on three levels. Initially, lesson plans are evaluated and walk-throughs are conducted by the principal to ensure teachers are planning, modeling and teaching the interventions for both CSI goals at least every other week.

If instruction are not being delivered on a regular basis, the principal conferences with the teacher to determine if additional resources or training are needed. If needed, assistance is provided. When formative assessments are administered, the principal and CSILT coordinate the administration of the assessments and make the assessment materials available to all teachers. The CSILT then collects the assessments and distributes them in faculty meetings for collaborative evaluation. After the assessments have been evaluated, the principal evaluates lesson plans and conducts walk-throughs to ensure that teachers are using the assessment data to modify instruction for individual students based on the assessment results.

Formative assessment occurs three times during the year: beginning, middle, and end of the year. Following assessments, the CSILT guides small groups of teachers as they assess student data. The CSILT helps teachers enter the assessment results in our online school wiki where data are merged into a spreadsheet. The CSILT uses the spreadsheet to organize and present the data as school-wide, grade level, and class level graphs. The graphs are shared with teachers and posted to data walls.

The reading and math committees analyze the data and offer implications for instruction at each grade level. At the midyear assessment, growth toward the goals indicated the strategies were working successfully and that students are making progress toward the two goals.

At the end of the year, the principal and CSILT will lead the staff in analysis of 2010 TerraNova 3 results. These results, combined with DRA, SRI, and end of the year formative assessment results will be used to determine if growth in math communication and extending meaning in comprehension has been achieved.

The principal and CSILT are responsible for communicating progress to Dexter stakeholders. The leadership encourages and assists the faculty in communicating results by displaying student work samples, rubrics, and action photographs of students at work in classrooms and in Dexter's hallways. Posting records of progress on data walls and on the school website also communicates progress to all stakeholders

All of these practices are used by Dexter leadership to ensure that the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated to stakeholders.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns most functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the school demonstrates progress in improving student performance and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process. The preponderance of the evidence supports an overall assessment of "operational" and is substantiated in the responses to the Indicators Rubric.

Conclusion

The following focus questions reflect the school's overall analysis of its internal evaluation of the accreditation standards.

Focus Questions

As you review your responses to the standards, what major trends, themes, or areas of focus emerge that cut across the seven standards?

Three major trends, themes or areas of focus emerge in Dexter Elementary School's responses to the seven accreditation standards.

TEACHER LEADERS: The emergence of a strong cadre of teacher leaders is a phenomenon that is recognized, valued and rewarded. Throughout the school improvement process, the leadership provided by teacher leaders has been central to success in each phase of the school improvement cycle. At Dexter, the teacher leaders share joint responsibility with the principal for sustaining improvement and providing the best possible education for all students. Dexter's teacher leaders are those who accept and embrace changes in the style of teaching and the designs for learning that are needed to prepare students for their futures. These teachers embrace research about teaching and learning. They use data to drive instruction. They take risks and participate in school decision making. This select group demonstrates expertise in instruction. They plan innovative lessons, shape student-centered classroom environments, and engage in collaboration with colleagues to improve teaching and learning. These teacher leaders locate and take advantage of opportunities for the professional growth and personal development that increase their capacity for leadership. This important trend—teacher leaders—is a powerful, but unexpected outcome of the school improvement process.

RESEARCHED-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS: As Dexter's teachers reviewed professional literature and researched promising, evidence-based instructional strategies for use as interventions to meet school improvement goals, a growing area of focus began to emerge. In hindsight, what began as a search for best practices in mathematics and reading education became a theme that is revisited across all disciplines and programs at Dexter Elementary School. Clearly, the conversation has changed over recent years at Dexter. No longer do teachers seek out low-level lessons designed to entertain children. Rather, the faculty searches for methods and strategies that research confirms will improve student learning and performance. This new focus on research- and evidence-based teaching methodology is a noteworthy theme that evolved as an outcome of the school improvement effort.

DATA-DRIVEN TEACHING – The school improvement process has led Dexter's faculty toward use of a variety of data sources to monitor student learning and make specific instructional decisions. This process is leading teachers toward a more effective and efficient use of time and resources by targeting specific student learning needs. Although Dexter's faculty is relatively new to data-driven teaching, a trend is surfacing and emerging as an acceptable norm. Dexter's teacher leaders are using benchmark data, monitoring student progress, and using this knowledge to inform instructional decisions and communicate high expectations at the student, classroom, grade, and school-wide levels.

These three emerging themes have tentacles that have roots in each of the seven accreditation standards.

Based on your review of these cross-cutting themes/trends and each of the seven standards, what would you consider to be your school's greatest strengths?

Based on review of the cross-cutting themes and trends in each of the seven standards, it is clear that Dexter's teacher leaders are our greatest strength.

Throughout our school, teacher leaders are emerging. They are committed to the school improvement process. This cadre of teachers has embraced our school's vision whole-heartedly, supported the CSILT with peer modeling and collaboration, participated in student data analysis with enthusiasm and purpose, implemented the strategies with fidelity, and continued adjusting instruction to meet the needs of individual children.

These self-directed teachers lead collaboration meetings by carrying weekly topics to deep levels of analysis and bring their peers with them. They are thoughtful and analytical when working in the reading and math committees, offering creative insights and options. They are constantly immersing themselves in new research, using knowledge gleaned from the research to support, or sometimes change, their own teaching strategies. When the call for peer assistance goes out, these are the ones who answer with a high level of energy, enthusiasm, and willingness to do whatever it takes to get the job done. These teacher leaders are the dedicated to research-based and data-driven instruction. They are the core - and the heart - of Dexter's school improvement process.

What would you consider to be your school's greatest challenges?

Two challenges emerge as Dexter Elementary School's greatest challenges.

TRANSIENT POPULATION

Dexter Elementary School is a Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) that serves children of military families. Because military families frequently relocate, it is rare that a child begins and ends their elementary experiences at Dexter Elementary School. Additionally, faculty and staff members are subject to frequent relocation. While transiency is an accepted and respected attribute of the military culture, it presents challenges to Dexter's continuous school improvement efforts. For example, throughout the school year the attrition among faculty challenges forward movement as new professionals are brought "onboard" with the school improvement effort. This challenge is not insurmountable. Transiency is acknowledged, however, as a reality that invites innovative solutions to assimilating new teachers and students into the CSI process in a timely manner.

COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORMATION

Many aspects of schooling will change as schools are transformed to better serve the students of the 21st Century. Evidence of changes at Dexter Elementary School abound. Technology is accessible and available. Goals and standards for student learning are in place. Authentic forms of assessment are becoming the norm, and data drives decision-making. Still many changes are needed to best serve our students. Transforming traditional schools into active, thriving, relevant school houses that prepare students for the real world is a challenge. The challenge lies in the hands of Dexter's stakeholders. Research on school transformation and transformational leadership suggest that schools evolve and reform practice under certain conditions. These conditions have largely been implemented at Dexter through the CSI process. The school as a whole has:

1. Identified core beliefs.
2. Created a shared vision.

3. Identified gaps between the vision and the current reality.
3. Collected and analyzed data to define goals.
4. Identified the interventions to close the gaps between the reality and the vision.
5. Developed and implemented an action plan that supports teachers in the change process.
6. Embraced collaboration, accountability and responsibility for closing the gaps.

Yet, while Dexter is taking steps toward transforming, the current reality is that all stakeholders are not fully and deeply committed to the transformation process. Understanding that the process of change is slow and often difficult, it remains that gaining full stakeholder commitment to transformation is a challenge at Dexter.

How will you use the insights gained from this self-assessment to inform and enhance your quality assurance and continuous improvement efforts?

Completing the Standards Assessment Report (SAR) is an invaluable exercise in the thorough processes associated with AdvancED Accreditation. Insights have been gained as a result of this self-assessment that will inform and enhance Dexter's quality assurance and continuous improvement efforts. Very specifically, the insights gleaned in the process of completing the SAR reveal three topics that warrant attention and deserve focus as school improvement continues. The three topics to be addressed include: 1.) Professional collaboration; 2.) Interdisciplinary, technology-enhanced project-based learning; and 3.) Parent participation in the continuous school improvement process.

Collaboration is blossoming at Dexter Elementary. Albeit a relatively new practice on our campus, it has already created different types of professional discussions. It is beginning to morph into a forum where teachers share best practices, examine student work samples and data, and discuss current research in education. As we continue to remain true to the process, the potency of collaboration will continue to have profound impact on student achievement.

Project-based learning that includes elements of interdisciplinary studies and technology is becoming more and more prevalent as teachers shift from traditional styles of instructional delivery. Collaboration for this phenomenon is paramount between our teachers and instructional support staff in order to deliver a lesson that addresses the diverse needs of students.

Parents are an extremely valuable and active part of Dexter Elementary School. As such, they must become a vital and integral part of Dexter Elementary's continuous school improvement processes. Embracing the input parents can provide to our efforts will enhance the effectiveness of our school improvement efforts. To encourage parent participation in the CSI activities, we must better enlighten them about the continuous school improvement process and the components of the school improvement plan. Clarifying the initiatives and the research behind our efforts will aid in harnessing their support. By educating parents about the benefits of school improvement, they will come to understand that students are placed at the epicenter of our CSI efforts. They will learn that our mission is never complete. They will come to see that focused, continuous improvement ensures that Dexter's students are - and will continue - to receive an exemplary education that inspires and prepares their children for success in a dynamic, global environment.

Standards Assessment Report Summary

Standards & Indicators	Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
1. Vision and Purpose				
1.1 Establishes a vision for the school in collaboration with its stakeholders			✓	
1.2 Communicates the vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support			✓	
1.3 Identifies goals to advance the vision			✓	
1.4 Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the school, its students, and the community				✓
1.5 Ensures that the school's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process			✓	
1.6 Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate			✓	
2. Governance and Leadership				
2.1 Establishes policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the school			✓	
2.2 Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership prerogatives of the administrative head of the school			✓	
2.3 Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations			✓	
2.4 Employs a system that provides for analysis and review of student performance and school effectiveness			✓	
2.5 Fosters a learning community			✓	
2.6 Provides teachers and students opportunities to lead			✓	
2.7 Provides stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership			✓	
2.8 Controls curricular and extracurricular activities that are sponsored by the school			✓	
2.9 Responds to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction			✓	
2.10 Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel			✓	
3. Teaching and Learning				
3.1 Develops and implements curriculum based on clearly defined expectations for student learning			✓	
3.2 Promotes active involvement of students in the learning process, including opportunities for them to explore application of higher-order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning			✓	
3.3 Gathers, analyzes, and uses data and research in making curricular and instructional choices			✓	
3.4 Designs and uses instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that are research-based and reflective of best practice			✓	
3.5 Offers a curriculum that challenges each student to excel, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity			✓	
3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning			✓	
3.7 Provides for articulation and alignment between and among all levels of schools			✓	
3.8 Implements interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning			✓	
3.9 Monitors school climate and takes appropriate steps to ensure that it is conducive to student learning			✓	
3.10 Provides comprehensive information and media services that support the curricular and instructional programs			✓	
3.11 Ensures that all students and staff members have regular and ready access to instructional technology and a comprehensive materials collection that supports the curricular and instructional program			✓	
4. Documenting and Using Results				
4.1 Establishes performance measures for student learning that yield information that is reliable, valid, and bias free			✓	
4.2 Develops and implements a comprehensive assessment system for assessing progress toward meeting the expectations for student learning			✓	
4.3 Uses student assessment data for making decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning processes			✓	
4.4 Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness and uses the results to improve student performance			✓	
4.5 Communicates the results of student performance and school effectiveness to all stakeholders			✓	

4.6 Uses comparison and trend data of student performance from comparable schools in evaluating its effectiveness			✓	
4.7 Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance			✓	
4.8 Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations			✓	
5. Resource and Support Systems				
5.1 Recruits, employs, and mentors qualified professional staff that are capable of fulfilling assigned roles and responsibilities			✓	
5.2 Assigns professional staff responsibilities based on their qualifications (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience)			✓	
5.3 Ensures that all staff participate in a continuous program of professional development			✓	
5.4 Provides and assigns staff that are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school			✓	
5.5 Budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement			✓	
5.6 Monitors all financial transactions through a recognized, regularly audited accounting system			✓	
5.7 Maintains the site, facilities, services, and equipment to provide an environment that is safe and orderly for all occupants			✓	
5.8 Possesses a written security and crisis management plan with appropriate training for stakeholders			✓	
5.9 Ensures that each student has access to guidance services that include, but are not limited to, counseling, appraisal, mentoring, staff consulting, referral, and educational and career planning			✓	
5.10 Provides appropriate support for students with special needs			✓	
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships				
6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning				✓
6.2 Has formal channels to listen to and communicate with stakeholders				✓
6.3 Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the school			✓	
6.4 Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders				✓
6.5 Provides information about students, their performance, and school effectiveness that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders			✓	
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement				
7.1 Engages in a continuous process of improvement 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)			✓	
7.2 Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement			✓	
7.3 Ensures that plans for continuous improvement are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school and expectations for student learning			✓	
7.4 Provides professional development for school personnel to help them implement improvement interventions to achieve improvement goals			✓	
7.5 Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders			✓	
7.6 Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement			✓	