Congratulations to Lee High School: Accredited by the AdvancED!

What is an AdvancED Accreditation Visit?

AdvancED is the largest community of education professionals in the world. They are a non-profit, non-partisan organization that conducts rigorous, on-site external reviews of PreK-12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential. Their expertise is grounded in more than a hundred years of work in school accreditation. They are far from a typical accrediting agency. Their goal isn’t to just certify that schools are good enough. Their broader goal is to help schools continually improve.

The AdvancED external accreditation team visited our school on February 9th and 10th. During these two days, they spent their time observing classrooms, interviewing teachers, parents and students. They visited with students in formal groups and also spoke with them during transitions in our hallways. Although their official report won’t be available until later in the school year, the team did provide some verbal feedback that I am excited and proud to share with you.

Overall, they shared high praise with us about our school and our instructional program. During their interviews, our students shared that they loved being at Lee HS, felt that the teachers and staff really care about them and that they feel safe. Our parents shared similar concepts. They were impressed with the work we have done around the vision of our school, the addition of the Advancement Via Individual Determination, Professional Learning Communities and our Positive Behavior Intervention and Support program, “Lancers C. A. R. E” (Community, Achievement, Respect and Effort). They were also impressed with our drive towards authorization in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme.

As stated above, AdvancED’s broader goal is to help schools to continually improve. To this end, there were three areas they recommended we focus on to improve the educational and life experiences our students engage in while at Lee High School. What I am excited to tell you, is that these areas have already been identified by our staff and we have begun working to improve them. The first area of focus is to increase the amount of time our students actively engage in their learning while in the classroom. This means that our teachers have to continue to develop activities that move our students from being passive learners to active learners. An example would be for our teachers to lecture less and have the students work together to construct meaning and understanding of the curriculum. This aligns perfectly with one of my three foci: **Provide students an engaging and rigorous academic program**.

The second suggestion was to ensure that every student has, at minimum, one adult that knows them and advocates for them. This is aligned to my second focus: **Developing a responsive culture**. And lastly, that our teachers need to reflect and analyze student assessment data and use that analysis to determine which students have mastered the curriculum, and therefore; should be enriched, and which students struggled with the curriculum, and therefore, need
some intervention and more time to master the content. This suggestion aligns perfectly with our laser-like focus on Professional Learning Communities.

Lee is a wonderful school, with caring students and staff and a wonderful community who supports our endeavors. The external validation team saw that and has recognized us for it!

I am proud to be your principal and proud to be a Lancer!

Deirdre M. Lavery