SACSCASI defines accredited schools as “schools in motion; they are improving schools. While all schools today are expected to engage in a continuous process of improvement, a SACS-accredited school is different in that it meets a set of standards revealed by research and best practice as essential for a quality school, seeks feedback regularly from an external group of professionals conducting a Quality Assurance Review (a process of peer review), and continually demonstrates to its stakeholders that it is providing for quality assurance.”

School Name: Cypress Creek Elementary School
Principal: Sandy Russell
Peer Review Date: 2/12/2013

Best Practices/Quality Assurance Review Team:
Chair: Andrea M. Hall
Member: Melissa Cleveland
Member: Laura Herrera
Member: Joseph Ronca

Directions: At least one (1) recommendation must be provided for each of the first five (5) parts of the report. Reviewers will cite best practices from the District Strategic Plan for all recommendations and commendations and, where practical, reference the AdvancED Accreditation Standards for Quality Schools that are met.

Documents Reviewed: (check all that apply)
- ☒ Climate Survey
- ☒ Adequate Progress Performance Appraisal (DATA)
- ☒ Program Evaluation
- ☒ School Improvement Plan

A follow-up inquiry will be sent to schools one year after their peer review to determine their response to the recommendations provided in the BP/QA Peer Review Report.
PART II: COMPREHENSIVE SELF-EVALUATION

- Climate Survey
- Data – Adequate Appraisal
- Needs Assessment
- Program Evaluation

AdvancED Standards:

**Purpose and Direction, 1.1** The school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success; **1.3** The school’s leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.

**Teaching and Learning, 3.1** The school’s curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level; **3.2** Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice; **3.5** Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.

**Resources and Support Systems, 4.1** Qualified professional and support staff are sufficient in number to fulfill their roles and responsibilities necessary to support the school’s purpose, direction, and the educational program; **4.2** Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the school.

**Using Results for Continuous Improvement, 5.2** Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze, and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions; **5.5** Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.

A. Commendation(s)/Best Practices

1. The administration is to be commended for giving the school a clear vision and direction that promotes high standards and student achievement.

| Best Practice(s): | A.E. Standards 1.1, 1.3 |

2. The administration and teachers utilize current data to drive decisions through PLC time that is built into the master schedule and through regularly occurring data chats.

| Best Practice(s): | A.E. Standards 3.2, 3.5, 5.2, 5.5 |
3. The administration and teachers are to be commended for creating and utilizing a math manipulative room that provides resources that are aligned with the eight mathematical practices of Common Core State Standards and Thinking Math.

Best Practice(s): A.E. Standard 4.2

B. Recommendation(s)/Best Practices

1. Recommendation: Continue with efforts to promote vertical collaboration between grade levels and explore the possibility of increasing the frequency and consistency of the dialogue.

Rationale: Consistent vertical teaming will result in greater collaboration and increased student achievement.

Best Practice(s): A.E. Standards 1.3, 3.5, 5.2

2. Recommendation: Continue with efforts to pursue ways to provide enrichment activities for students who are performing on or above grade level.

Rationale: Enrichment activities are critical to ensure that all learners are provided the option to reach their fullest potential.

Best Practice(s): A.E. Standards 3.2, 3.5

PART III: PRIORITIZE IDENTIFIED NEEDS

• Use of Focus Questions
• Interviews with parents, community members, teachers and staff

AdvancED Standards:

Purpose and Direction, 1.2 The school leadership and staff commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.
Governance and Leadership, 2.4 Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school’s purpose and direction.

Teaching and Learning, 3.3 Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations; 3.4 School leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success; 3.7 Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the school’s values and beliefs about teaching and learning; 3.12 The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.

Using Results for Continuous Improvement

5.1 The school establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system; 5.3 Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data; 5.4 The school engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.

A. Commendation(s)/Best Practices

1. It is evident through interviews that all stakeholders are committed to a school culture that is based on shared values, beliefs, and goals.

Best Practice(s): A.E. Standards 1.2, 2.4, 3.3

2. The school-wide implementation of Thinking Math promotes the eight mathematical practices of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and is aligned with CCSS.

Best Practice(s): A.E. Standards 1.2, 2.4, 3.3

3. Kagan strategies are utilized school-wide to optimize the amount of active engagement, including the use of those strategies with adults during professional development.

Best Practice(s): A.E. Standards 3.3, 3.12

4. The life skills program at Cypress Creek Elementary promotes a culture of shared expectations and behavior.

Best Practice(s): A.E. Standards 1.2, 2.4
B. Recommendation(s)/Best Practices

1. **Recommendation:** Continue the collaborative work that occurs in grade levels with a progression towards vertical teaming to ensure that students can be successful at the next level.

**Rationale:** Vertical teaming and collaboration will ensure a seamless transition for students from one grade level to the next.

**Best Practice(s):** A.E. Standard 5.4

2. **Recommendation:** Continue utilizing Thinking Math strategies as a natural progression towards the full implementation of Common Core State Standards.

**Rationale:** The continued use of Thinking Math strategies and Common Core Math State Standards will result in a deeper level of student understanding and engagement and increased levels of student achievement.

**Best Practice(s):** A.E. Standard 3.3

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**PART IV: EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

**School Improvement Process/Plan**
- Performance Levels (Data) / Anticipated Barrier
- Strategies / Process Used to Determine Effectiveness
- Evaluation Tool / Professional Development

**AdvancED Standards:**

- **Governance and Leadership, Indicator 2.3** *The governing body ensures that the school leadership has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively; 2.5 Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school’s purpose and direction; 2.6 Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice and student success.*

- **Teaching and Assessing for Learning, 3.6** *Teachers implement the school’s instructional process in support of student learning; 3.10 Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across*
grade levels and courses; 3.11 All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.

**Resources and Support Systems, 4.4** Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school’s educational programs; 4.6 The school provides support services to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served; 4.7 The school provides services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.

**Using Results for Continuous Improvement, 5.2** Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze, and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions.

### B. Commendation(s)/Best Practices

1. The administration has made a concerted effort to involve all stakeholders in developing and supporting the school's vision, purpose, and direction.

**Best Practice(s):** A.E. Standards 2.5, 3.6

2. Students and school personnel make excellent use of available technology by utilizing Promethean boards, ladybugs, laptops, iPads, Google Chromebooks, and BYOT.

**Best Practice(s):** A.E. Standard 4.4

### B. Recommendation(s)/Best Practices

1. **Recommendation:** Cypress Creek should continue to explore avenues to obtain funding that would allow for additional technology and training such as grants, community donations, and PTA support.

**Rationale:** Providing additional technology to students will increase their level of engagement in the learning process and better prepare students for continuously evolving changes in the utilization of technology.

**Best Practice(s):** A.E. Standard 4.4
PART V: EVIDENCE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Observable Implementation of the Strategic Plan
  o Interviews
  o On-site Observations
  o Documentation

AdvancED Standards:
  Governance and Leadership, 2.1 The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the school; 2.2 The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.
  Teaching and Assessing for Learning, 3.6 Teachers implement the school’s instructional process in support of student learning; 3.8 The school engages families in meaningful ways in their children’s education and keeps them informed of their children’s learning progress; 3.9 The school has a formal structure whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the school who supports that student’s educational experience.
  Resources and Support Systems, 4.3 The school maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff; 4.5 The technology infrastructure supports the school’s teaching, learning, and operational needs.
  Using Results for Continuous Improvement, 5.5 Leadership monitors and communicates comprehensive information about student learning, conditions that support student learning, and the achievement of school improvement goals to stakeholders.

C. Commendation(s)/Best Practices

1. Cypress Creek pursues ways to involve families in their children's education through a process that fosters openness and ongoing communication.

Best Practice(s): A.E. Standard 3.8

2. The School Advisory Council and the Parent Teacher Association provide ongoing support to Cypress Creek through programs such as Math-O-Fun Night.

Best Practice(s): A.E. Standard 3.8

3. Cypress Creek communicates information to stakeholders through a variety of media including the school website, the Otter Blotter newsletter, and ConnectEd messages.

Best Practice(s): A.E. Standards 3.8, 5.5
B. Recommendation(s)/Best Practices

1. Recommendation: Continue to communicate information to all stakeholders to foster a greater understanding of national, state, and district initiatives, including VSET, Common Core State Standards, and Pinnacle.

Rationale: Strengthening the connection between the school, home, and community contributes to an increased level of understanding and greater student success, as parental and community involvement and support are vital to the ongoing success of students and schools.

Best Practice(s): A.E. Standard 5.5

PART VI
SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The Best Practices/Quality Assurance Peer Review Team found Cypress Creek Elementary school provides a warm, welcoming environment with a clear focus on student achievement and success. The administration actively supports and encourages teachers, empowering them to be leaders as well as continual learners. It is clearly evident through interviews that stakeholders support the school's vision, mission, and direction. The administration, faculty, and staff share the same purpose—to provide the utmost educational experience possible for the students of Cypress Creek. Ongoing collaborative efforts promote high levels of student achievement. Parents and community members are eager to offer support and provide assistance and resources. The Peer Review Team genuinely enjoyed our time at Cypress Creek Elementary. It was our pleasure to spend the day with this dedicated group of professionals.