



American Academy of Innovation

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School Accreditation Engagement Review

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Cognia Continuous Improvement System

Cognia defines continuous improvement as "an embedded behavior rooted in an institution's culture that constantly focuses on conditions, processes, and practices to improve teaching and learning." The Cognia Continuous Improvement System (CIS) provides a systemic, fully integrated solution to help institutions map out and navigate a successful improvement journey. In the same manner that educators are expected to understand the unique needs of every learner and tailor the education experience to drive student success, every institution must be empowered to map out and embrace their unique improvement journey. Cognia expects institutions to use the results and the analysis of data from various interwoven components for the implementation of improvement actions to drive education quality and improved student outcomes. While each improvement journey is unique, the journey is driven by key actions. The findings of the Engagement Review Team are organized by the ratings from the Cognia Performance Standards Diagnostic and the Levels of Impact within the i3 Rubric: Initiate, Improve, and Impact.

Initiate

The first phase of the improvement journey is to **Initiate** actions to cause and achieve better results. The elements of the **Initiate** phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Engagement and Implementation. Engagement is the level of involvement and frequency of stakeholders in the desired practices, processes, or programs within the institution. Implementation is the process of monitoring and adjusting the administrations of the desired practices, processes, or programs for quality and fidelity. Standards identified within Initiate should become the focus of the institution's continuous improvement journey toward the collection, analysis, and use of data to measure the results of engagement and implementation. Enhancing the capacity of the institution in meeting these Standards has the greatest potential impact on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Improve

The second phase of the improvement journey is to gather and evaluate the results of actions to **Improve**. The elements of the **Improve** phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Results and Sustainability. Results come from the collection, analysis, and use of data and evidence to demonstrate attaining the desired result(s). Sustainability is results achieved consistently to demonstrate growth and improvement over time (a minimum of three years). Standards identified within Improve are those in which the institution is using results to inform their continuous improvement processes and to demonstrate over time the achievement of goals. The institution should continue to analyze and use results to guide improvements in student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Impact

The third phase of achieving improvement is **Impact**, where desired practices are deeply entrenched. The elements of the **Impact** phase are defined within the Level of Impact of Embeddedness. Embeddedness is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are deeply ingrained in the culture and operation of the institution. Standards identified within Impact are those in which the institution has demonstrated ongoing growth and improvement over time and has embedded the practices within its culture. Institutions should continue to support and sustain these practices that yield results in improving student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Cognia Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

Accreditation is pivotal in leveraging education quality and continuous improvement. Using a set of rigorous research-based standards, the Cognia Accreditation Process examines the whole institution—the program, the cultural context, and the community of stakeholders—to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of learners. Through the accreditation process, highly skilled and trained Engagement Review Teams gather first-hand evidence and information pertinent to evaluating an institution's performance against the research-based Cognia Performance Standards. Review teams use these Standards to assess the quality of learning environments to gain valuable insights and target improvements in teaching and learning. Cognia provides Standards that are tailored for all education providers so that the benefits of accreditation are universal across the education community.

Through a comprehensive review of evidence and information, our experts gain a broad understanding of institution quality. Using the Standards, the review team provides valuable feedback to institutions, which helps to focus and guide each institution's improvement journey. Valuable evidence and information from other stakeholders, including students, also are obtained through interviews, surveys, and additional activities.

Cognia Standards Diagnostic Results

The Cognia Performance Standards Diagnostic is used by the Engagement Review Team to evaluate the institution's effectiveness based on the Cognia Performance Standards. The diagnostic consists of three components built around each of three Domains: **Leadership Capacity**, **Learning Capacity**, and **Resource Capacity**. Results are reported within four ranges identified by color. The results for the three Domains are presented in the tables that follow.

Color	Rating	Description
Red	Insufficient	Identifies areas with insufficient evidence or evidence that indicated little or no activity leading toward improvement
Yellow	Initiating	Represents areas to enhance and extend current improvement efforts
Green	Improving	Pinpoints quality practices that are improving and meet the Standards
Blue	Impacting	Demonstrates noteworthy practices producing clear results that positively impact the institution

Under each Standard statement is a row indicating the scores related to the elements of Cognia's i3 Rubric. The rubric is scored from one (1) to four (4). A score of four on any element indicates high performance, while a score of one or two indicates an element in need of improvement. The following table provides the key to the abbreviations of the elements of the i3 Rubric.

Element	Abbreviation
Engagement	EN
Implementation	IM
Results	RE
Sustainability	SU
Embeddedness	EM

Leadership Capacity Domain

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress toward its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to implement strategies that improve learner and educator performance.

Leadership Capacity Standards										Rating
1.1	The institution commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including the expectations for learners.									Initiating
	EN:	2	IM:	2	RE:	2	SU:	2	EM:	2
1.2	Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the institution's purpose and desired outcomes for learning.									Improving
	EN:	3	IM:	2	RE:	2	SU:	2	EM:	2
1.3	The institution engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice.									Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	3	RE:	3	SU:	2	EM:	2
1.4	The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support institutional effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	3	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	3	EM:	4
1.5	The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	4	EM:	4
1.6	Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	4
1.7	Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	3
1.8	Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the institution's purpose and direction.									Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	3	RE:	2	SU:	2	EM:	2
1.9	The institution provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	2	EM:	2
1.10	Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement.									Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	3	RE:	3	SU:	2	EM:	2

Learning Capacity Domain

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement and success is the primary expectation of every institution. An effective learning culture is characterized by positive and productive teacher/learner relationships, high expectations and standards, a challenging and engaging curriculum, quality instruction and comprehensive support that enable all learners to be successful, and assessment practices (formative and summative) that monitor and measure learner progress and achievement. Moreover, a quality institution evaluates the impact of its learning culture, including all programs and support services, and adjusts accordingly.

Learning Capacity Standards											Rating
2.1	Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the institution.										Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	1	SU:	2	EM:	2	
2.2	The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation, and collaborative problem-solving.										Initiating
	EN:	3	IM:	2	RE:	1	SU:	1	EM:	1	
2.3	The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs, and skills needed for success.										Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	1	SU:	1	EM:	1	
2.4	The institution has a formal structure to ensure learners develop positive relationships with and have adults/peers who support their educational experiences.										Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	2	SU:	2	EM:	2	
2.5	Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels.										Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	2	
2.6	The institution implements a process to ensure the curriculum is aligned to standards and best practices.										Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	2	SU:	2	EM:	2	
2.7	Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the institution's learning expectations.										Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	2	SU:	2	EM:	2	
2.8	The institution provides programs and services for learners' educational futures and career planning.										Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	3	RE:	2	SU:	2	EM:	3	
2.9	The institution implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners.										Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	4	
2.10	Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.										Improving
	EN:	3	IM:	3	RE:	4	SU:	2	EM:	2	

Learning Capacity Standards										Rating
2.11	Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to the demonstrable improvement of student learning.									Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	2	EM:	2
2.12	The institution implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.									Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	2	EM:	2

Resource Capacity Domain

The use and distribution of resources support the stated mission of the institution. Institutions ensure that resources are distributed and utilized equitably, so the needs of all learners are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning for all staff. The institution examines the allocation and use of resources to ensure appropriate levels of funding, sustainability, organizational effectiveness, and increased student learning.

Resource Capacity Standards										Rating
3.1	The institution plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the institution's effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	2	EM:	2
3.2	The institution's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	4
3.3	The institution provides induction, mentoring, and coaching programs that ensure all staff members have the knowledge and skills to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	4
3.4	The institution attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the institution's purpose and direction.									Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	2	EM:	1
3.5	The institution integrates digital resources into teaching, learning, and operations to improve professional practice, student performance, and organizational effectiveness.									Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	2	SU:	1	EM:	1
3.6	The institution provides access to information resources and materials to support the curriculum, programs, and needs of students, staff, and the institution.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	2	EM:	2
3.7	The institution demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the institution's purpose and direction.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	4

Resource Capacity Standards										Rating
3.8	The institution allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the institution's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	4

Assurances

Assurances are statements that accredited institutions must confirm they are meeting. The Assurance statements are based on the type of institution, and the responses are confirmed by the Accreditation Engagement Review Team. Institutions are expected to meet all Assurances and are expected to correct any deficiencies in unmet Assurances.

Assurances Met		
YES	NO	If No, List Unmet Assurances by Number Below
X		

Accreditation Status and Index of Education Quality®

Cognia will review the results of the Accreditation Engagement Review to make a final determination concerning accreditation status, including the appropriate next steps for your institution in response to these findings. Cognia provides the Index of Education Quality (IEQ) as a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of standards and review criteria. This formative tool for improvement identifies areas of success and areas in need of focus. The IEQ comprises the Standards Diagnostic ratings from the three Domains: Leadership Capacity, Learning Capacity, and Resource Capacity. The IEQ results are reported on a scale of 100 to 400 and provide information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria. Institutions should review the IEQ in relation to the Findings from the review in the areas of Initiate, Improve, and Impact. An IEQ score below 250 indicates that the institution has several areas within the Initiate level and should focus its improvement efforts on those Standards within that level. An IEQ in the range of 225–300 indicates that the institution has several Standards within the Improve level and is using results to inform continuous improvement and demonstrate sustainability. An IEQ of 275 and above indicates the institution is beginning to reach the Impact level and is engaged in practices that are sustained over time and are becoming ingrained in the culture of the institution.

Below is the average (range) of all Cognia Improvement Network (CIN) institutions evaluated for accreditation in the last five years. The range of the annual CIN IEQ average is presented to enable you to benchmark your results with other institutions in the network.

Institution IEQ	329.50	CIN 5 Year IEQ Range	278.34 – 283.33
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Insights from the Review

The Engagement Review Team engaged in professional discussions and deliberations about the processes, programs, and practices within the institution to arrive at the findings of the team. These findings are organized around themes guided by the evidence, with examples of programs and practices, and suggestions for the institution's continuous improvement efforts. The Insights from the Review narrative should provide contextualized information from the team's deliberations and analysis of the practices, processes, and programs of the institution organized by the levels of Initiate, Improve, and Impact. The narrative also provides the next steps to guide the institution's improvement journey in its efforts to improve the quality of educational opportunities for all learners. The findings are aligned to research-based criteria designed to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness. The feedback provided in the Accreditation Engagement Review Report will assist the institution in reflecting on its current improvement efforts and to adapt and adjust its plans to continuously strive for improvement.

Through the Cognia Accreditation Engagement Review at the American Academy of Innovation (AAI), themes emerged on the improving and impacting levels of the Standards Diagnostic. Due to continued Covid restrictions, the review was completed remotely. The Engagement Review Team (team) was also unable to officially conduct the eProve Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot™) classroom observations; consequently, no ratings for classroom observations were available. The School Assurances Report was completed and submitted. The team followed all processes and protocols for this school accreditation. The team offered the following insights regarding themes and suggestions to continue the path of school improvement.

The school values the relationships built between all stakeholders through inclusivity, which supports the learning and growth of each student through individualized learning. The vision of AAI, according to the introduction presentation, is to strive to empower the individual mind to improve the world by challenging the potential in individuals, institutions, and systems. However, this is different from what is on the website. Nevertheless, according to interviews, AAI focuses on incorporating emotional intelligence (EQ) into the learning environment through projects, capstones, and emersion week. The team learned through interviews with students and parents that AAI has created a safe space where learners can be true to themselves and feel included. This was represented by the variety of student-led clubs, surveys sent out where student voices are heard, and small group classes where students' needs are met. Through artifacts and interviews, it was shown that using competency-based education (CBE), the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) scores increased, student engagement was enhanced, and state test scores improved. AAI offers concurrent enrollment and dual credit enrollment with local colleges in addition to the CTE pathway.

The team suggests that social-emotional learning (SEL) could benefit the student body by helping them learn how to develop more cultural intelligence (CQ), which would more closely help align with AAI's vision statement on the website. Increasing the student body's CQ could further enhance the learning experience with the humanitarian project with CHOICE Peru. While students said they had at least one adult within the school they felt they could turn to in personal times of need, they admitted that consistent communication was lacking at times and therefore put a strain on some relationships. The teacher interviews voiced the same concerns regarding feeling as though not all communication was relayed completely or promptly. Finally, while individualized learning is a strong focus within AAI, the team encourages the administration to limit the amount of change that happens as frequently as it has in the past. During the interviews, teachers and students expressed feeling overwhelmed at times

due to the immediate changes that took place with the learning management system (LMS) and other structures in the school.

Student recruiting and enrollment numbers help to drive financial, academic, and professional development needs. During the interview with the board and the leadership team, it was stated that discussions take place at the monthly board meetings on how to help increase the enrollment of students through marketing, retain the current students and further growth within the educators. Teacher interviews indicated a strong collaboration among themselves through weekly professional learning community (PLC) meetings and departmental meetings. The leadership interviews and teacher interviews explained how the new instructional coach and curriculum coach for digital learning has served the needs of the teachers. This year, an academic response to intervention (RTI) program was put into place to further help serve the students and teachers at AAI. The teachers are also empowered to design and create programs where they feel a need for additional learning and growth among their peers. The team believes the school has taken on great leadership within the charter school world by taking on the bonding process in 2019 that allowed AAI to secure more space and rightful ownership of the school building and land.

The school is a project-driven school with a growth mindset. The school focuses on being a project-based learning (PBL) school using the CBE. The evidence presented via documents and interviews reflected on the success of personal growth students is accomplishing individually using the CBE method. Through yearly projects, students can track their growth and progress in a specific subject. When in high school, students complete a capstone project. Teachers interviewed discussed how projects are developed and how they collaborated on future ideas for projects. Student interviews reflected on how the yearly projects have helped them to develop more self-confidence through public speaking, as well as hone multiple 21st-century skills such as collaboration, communication, critical thinking, leadership, and flexibility.

The team suggests that AAI may benefit from incorporating a more global perspective into the projects to align with the EQ and possible CQ that can be taught. The team also suggests a way to transition from a project-focused school to a PBL school is to create driving questions for students to have a choice on how to design a solution for that question. This would allow for more creativity and transition from teacher-led projects to student-led and student-centered learning. In addition, PBL is cross-curricular learning. Through the evidence submitted, projects that took place within AAI were focused on a single subject at a time. Finally, the team suggests that students participate in pre and post-self-reflection when completing projects as this will help them to further develop a growth mindset.

In conclusion, the Engagement Review Team identified several celebrations. The positives exist because of the dedication and hard work of the leaders and administration team to creatively support teachers in ways that provide them with the opportunities to grow professionally and learn new strategies. The teachers actively collaborate to find new innovative ways to engage and meet the needs of the diverse learners at the school. Using the tools provided by Cognia, including the Cognia Performance Standards with Key Concepts and the i3 Rubric, in conjunction with the elements rating contained in this report for each Standard, will enable the school to stay on a path of continuous improvement.

Next Steps

Upon receiving the Accreditation Engagement Review Report, the institution is encouraged to implement the following steps:

- Review and share the findings with stakeholders.
- Develop plans to address the areas for improvement identified by the Engagement Review Team.
- Use the findings and data from the report to guide and strengthen the institution's continuous improvement efforts.
- Celebrate the successes noted in the report.
- Continue the improvement journey.

Team Roster

The Engagement Review Teams are comprised of professionals with varied backgrounds and expertise. To provide knowledge and understanding of the Cognia tools and processes, all Lead Evaluators and Engagement Review Team members are required to complete Cognia training. The following professionals served on the Engagement Review Team:

Team Member Name	Brief Biography (Lead Evaluator Only)
Kristina Brimer, M.Ed. Lead Evaluator	<p>Kristina is currently a graduate instructor at Moreland University. She has also mentored dozens of educators in the clinical teaching portion of their educational certification program. She has run over 50 worldwide professional development courses for educators to help better prepare them for the changing world after the COVID-19 pandemic. Kristina obtained a B.S. in Sociology from the University of West Georgia, her M.Ed. in Globalization in Education from Moreland University, and is working towards her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Capella University. She is an American and British certified educator in middle school and high school science that specializes in project-based learning (PBL). She has 12 years of experience teaching throughout Africa and 5 years of experience in leadership positions such as head of the science department and curriculum coordinator. While working in Egypt, she worked with local NGOs to set up a reading program for underprivileged students to help them learn English. Kristina is an active member of The National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS), International Honor Society in Psychology (Psi Chi), and International Honor Society in Education (Kappa Delta Pi). She has also published several journal articles focusing on the emotional intelligence (EQ) of third culture kids (TCKs).</p>
Joshua Bell, Principal	

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