

The following excerpts are from the Report of the Peer Review Team for EPCDS, Five-Year Accreditation using the SACS School Improvement Process:

- The student population of EPCDS is ethnically diverse, reflecting numerous cultural and religious differences. More than twenty-three different countries are represented by the unique composition of students. This can be seen in the long list of places such as Mexico, Ecuador, Columbia, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Brazil, France, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Kuwait, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Nigeria, Cameroon, South Africa, Thailand, China, Korea, Pakistan, India and Russia.
- Academic standards are extremely high with an emphasis on the teaching of fundamental skills coupled with encouragement for creative and critical thinking.
- The hands-on method to learning encourages self discovery and active participation. An individualized approach to learning allows each child to develop at his/her own pace and style.
- The computer laboratory is an integral part of the curriculum for the Lower, Middle, and Upper Schools.
- Because of the positive student/teacher ratio, the school is able to tailor and adjust the curriculum to meet and challenge the needs of the individual student.
- EPCDS has had at least one National Merit Scholar each year since 1999 with three in a class of 12 in 2000.

Comments:

The School Profile provides a comprehensive description of current levels of student performance. Demographic information is well-documented and provides a clear portrayal of school characteristics. Stakeholder perceptions are included with data identifying school strengths, limitations and emerging issues. The administrative head and governance board have developed an enthusiastic vision for El Paso Country Day School. It is a safe environment that promotes individualized learning goals. There is a strong emphasis on teacher interaction.

Commendations:

- The campuses are safe and orderly and well maintained.
- All faculty and staff are CPR certified and one staff member is a CPR trainer.
- Students indicate a source of pride and see themselves as at least a grade level ahead of their public school peers.
- Students said they feel able to talk to teachers and administrators about problems and/or concerns.
- There is a good communications flow from school to parent.
- Teachers' children get a tuition reduction which allows for a financial benefit.

- There is a good blend of socialization and academic focus.
- Teachers and administrators appear to enjoy their roles and genuinely like children and young people.
- Teachers indicated that one of the best things about the school is the cultural mix and sharing that occurs to create outstanding learning opportunities.
- Parents interviewed said the school environment was very caring and nurturing. They remarked the teacher attitudes are very positive. Many volunteer their time at the campus. All parents interviewed said the school was well worth the cost.
- Classrooms are bright, colorful and comfortable.

Comments:

The mission of the school reflects the initial intent in creating El Paso Country Day School as well as its on-going philosophy. By recognizing the need for an individualized, diverse and advanced curriculum, the school is able to provide instruction in a safe environment with a commitment to small classes and hands-on experiential learning.

Commendations:

- Parents are actively involved in student progress from teachers through conferences, emails, and personal contact from administrators.
- Many students are involved in Advanced Placement courses.
- Latin classes are provided with plans being made to videotape short clips for internal use and possible marketing.
- The "exchange program" allowing lower school teachers to visit the upper school and vice versa is very positive and promotes articulation among the grades.
- Field trips are well planned and designed to provide both academic and social benefits.
- Syllabi are required for each class at the high school and must meet administration approval and be posted on the website which allows for accountability.
- Spanish is incorporated into the curriculum beginning at the primary level.
- Saxon Math is a strong component of the curriculum.
- Specialty days are very positive and create powerful learning opportunities.
- Community service efforts are character building and positive.
- Students are actively engaged and learning is taking place at all levels.
- Students seem happy and to like school.

Comments:

El Paso Country Day School provides a very positive learning climate in which students are challenged collectively and individually. The student/faculty ratio enables higher level thinking and Socratic questioning. Students and faculty appreciate the benefits of the block schedule. A regular and constructive communication exists between faculty members and the principal. Opportunities to learn outside of classroom instruction exist. The teaching of study skills is the priority for the present year and the next.

Commendations:

- The school provides a positive academic environment by providing excellent teacher/student ratio.
- Tests, quizzes and other assessments are used to identify student's needs and progress. Assessment tools are used to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and teachers.
- Block scheduling allows adequate time for class work and homework, meets individual needs and helps develop a higher level of thinking, research and understanding.
- Bi-monthly staff meetings allow teachers to share information on students' educational, emotional and social needs.
- Students are provided after-school tutoring.
- Computer and science labs are user friendly and well-utilized with internet connections in every classroom.
- The assessment system uses nationally recognized test to evaluate student progress.
- Assessment information is shared with the professional personnel associated with the school.
- The school is in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal rules and regulations.
- The physical environment is safe and healthy.
- There is a development plan to maintain and improve the site.

Summary:

It is obvious that the administrators and faculty at EPCDS see their work as a passion rather than a job. The school has a fair and carefully delineated admissions procedure. There is excitement and enthusiasm among faculty and staff and a genuine interest in young people.