



Executive Summary

Global Paradigm International School

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Introduction

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

Description of the School

Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?

Global Paradigm School is a private international school owned by El Rabwa Company for Integrated Educational Services and is designed as a for-profit, proprietary school with Mr. Gaafar Hussein as its CEO and one of its owners. In September 2009, Mr. Gaafar appointed a group of founding members who met for a year to plan the foundation of the school. Their initial plans led to the opening of the school in September of 2010.

The school is a co-educational day school, which offers an educational program from Pre-K through Grade 12 for students of all nationalities. The basic curriculum was initially developed using the California Learning Standards and Framework and has since integrated the Common Core. The IB Diploma program now influences the rigor of our regular curriculum at all levels to some degree. The school is situated in a refined residential suburb in New Cairo, just twenty minutes away from the city center; the area includes a number of other private schools. The school houses a student body that is predominately, but not exclusively, Egyptian and includes several students who are special needs students. The school occupies an area of 8300 square meters, housing 44 spacious classrooms providing the latest technology in teaching methods; smart boards and/or projectors have been installed in all classrooms KG - 12. There are staff rooms, offices, and a Business Center for the administrative staff, 3 Science Labs, 3 Computer Labs, 1 library, 2 music rooms and 2 art rooms, prayer rooms, a 200- seat theater, a cafeteria, a multi-purpose court, a tennis court, a soccer pitch, a swimming pool and a gymnasium. The staff is made up of both local hire Egyptian professionals and para-professionals as well as a number of Ex-Pat teachers primarily from the United States. All teaching staff hold certificates and university degree for their respective fields and many have post-graduate degrees. Teachers providing instruction within the IB program are all trained IB instructors.

After our first two years when we faced the difficulty of operation in a tumultuous first year which was disrupted by the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, the school earned accreditation in 2012 and has encountered a number of challenges in the years since. These challenges have included:

Major Challenges 2012-2015

- Revision and Refinement Pacing Guides
- Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified Personnel
- Preparation for IB Diploma Authorization
- Expansion of Technology and Media Materials, accompanying software and hardware.
- Increasing Student Body and Marketing School
- Creating and Maintaining Effective Parent/Holder Communication
- Revising and Refining and Renovation of Student Management System
- Maintaining School-Wide systems for continuous improvement
- Refinement of Procedural/Operational Systems for effective operation of school
- Maintain culture of collaboration and professional learning community to enhance student learning
- Develop Culture of Professional Development and Training
- Increase the Use of Data to Inform decisions surrounding instruction and learning
- Maintain and Update Website as tool for communication

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- Develop systems to improve student career and college guidance
- Develop library and accompanying resources
- Refine and focus SIP and develop Annual Report Format
- Adjusting to a change in leadership

Over the past three years and continuing into our 7th year of operation, the school has made strong efforts in addressing many of the challenges and required actions outlined by the QAR team during our first accreditation visit in 2012 and in confronting many other issues which our school has determined are necessary to solve in order take our school toward the educational entity which our stakeholders aspire. The school has had difficulty in retaining expat teachers in particular in part because of the volatile political climate which has been a constant in Egypt for the past several years and due to the worsening economic situation which has made maintaining competitive compensation packages a challenge. To the latter point the school has put together a number of creative solutions to remain competitive with other international schools in recruitment and retention of personnel. The retention of faculty has led to making the revision and refinement of pacing guides and the update of curriculum a more difficult operation although the school continues annually to make this a priority. In addition, with the weak economic climate in the country increasing the student body number has been a challenge which has required innovative solutions from a financial planning approach but which has resulted in sustained gains as the student body now exceeds 725 with a target of a number approaching 850 for 2017-18 a viable goal.

The school developed an effective action plan in 2013 for the implementation of a framework and culture suitable to initiate an IB Diploma Program which was realized in 2015 with full authorization being granted. The school began this school year teaching its first IB Diploma student cohort. Part of the school's actions to meet this goal coincided with the school's need to address normal challenges: the school library, limited by physical space, put together a plan to expand its resources via e-books and digital resources which helped with expansion of technology advancement for students and staff and with the need to upgrade the library itself. As part of the requirement to train staff for the IB, an action plan for specialized training for designated IB teachers was developed as well as a more general PD action plan to enhance the teacher competencies of all teachers on staff.

Other school efforts to address challenges include the updating and upgrading of the school website which is now supervised by a webmaster and the expansion of the academic blogs which are now being maintained by all teachers KG through 12. These efforts have increased our parent/student and stakeholder communication effectiveness as has the establishment of a school Facebook page. The latter serves to help with the selling and marketing of our school and has a measurable impact on generating interest to increase school enrollment. The school made measurable gains in the upgrade of the student management system over the several years, augmenting the capabilities of the E-connect system to include the ability to generate progress and grade reports as well as making the teacher and parent tools more user-friendly. That said, to address one of the original action items noted by the QAR team in 2012, that is specifically developing a comprehensive student management system which would increase the access to student data while at the same time strengthening communication, the school has decided to abandon the E-connect system and purchase a more comprehensive school management system called Rediker which will provide the school with an integrated management platform. This system will be fully operational by the Spring semester 2016-17 with teacher training beginning in August of 2016. Blogs, website, discipline, grades, parent communication, school finance and accounts as well as master schedule design and generation will now be address via one system and provide all stakeholders with a more comprehensive tool to gain collect and storage and then retrieve student data with the end result making all stakeholders more informed as they make decisions regarding student learning.

The school continues to establish goal setting in all areas of operation especially as these goals relate to student learning. Instructional decisions related to student learning are consistently taken in a collaborative setting such as weekly staff and professional development meetings or in weekly grade and department team meetings. Collaboration is still one of the central values embedded in the school professional culture whether it be in deciding on overarching decisions like the selection of the school management system or in creating interventions for struggling students or in crafting measurable objectives for the school improvement plan. One significant development

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which the school initiated last year and which has had immediate positive effects is the creation of a College and Career Guidance office. The office adviser has done transcript audits with all students in grades 9-12 and has been working closely with the juniors and seniors in completing the litany of tasks which must be completed in order to prepare students for application and acceptance to universities and colleges. In addition, the adviser has also worked with freshman and sophomores in helping them set academic goals so that they may be in a position to begin the process of selecting a post-high school setting for either work or study. Throughout this process, parents have been apprised of all programs and opportunities addressed by the guidance office. The college counselor is available to assess each secondary student in choosing the electives necessary to prepare themselves for college. In addition to the college advisor, the school also established a counselor for students to address students needs apart from purely academics. This counselor has worked to help initiate programs like the anti-bullying initiative and drug awareness.

The school has made much progress over the past 6 years and now continues to maintain productive and well-functioning components that are taking root to create a learning environment which is dedicated to student learning. A recent challenge occurred during the 2014-15 the Executive Director resigned which created uncertainty within the school and the school community. But, with the efforts of the AD Team as well as the staff, the school demonstrated that a change in senior leadership would not impair the school's dedication to the school's mission and vision and underlining values. The community and the school staff was able to finish the year strongly, culminating in the wonderful graduation of our third graduation class. The school now is once again operating with full confidence and renewed vigor in the pursuit of our goals. The faculty is working together to create a school climate which is conducive to student learning. Overall, during the past six years we have grown for the better but understand that our goal of being the very best is yet to be achieved.

School's Purpose

Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.

The GPIS Mission is:

Our mission is to develop young citizens with active and creative minds, a sense of understanding and compassion for others, and the courage to act on their beliefs. Within a caring, respectful environment, the school is committed to instill in each student a desire to learn, to take appropriate risks, and to accept challenges. Creative and research-based instructional techniques are used to enhance life-long learning. All aspects of the school's organization, curricular, and co-curricular activities are student centered and designed to accommodate individual learning styles.

The school offers broad and challenging educational programs to students to assist them in contributing their wisdom, compassion and leadership in a global society. Our school conditions students to become cultural relativists who accept other cultures and are open-minded to interact with them. The school community is committed to develop resilient and adaptable students who are equipped with the knowledge, skills and ethics to become socially responsible adults.

The GPIS Vision is:

Global Paradigm International School is an international school committed to preparing distinguished students from Pre-K to G12 to excel in a future of their choice. In Global Paradigm International School the love and lure for learning is nurtured and fostered in a way where the individual acquires confidence and competence. In an enriched diverse community of students, teachers and parents, we at GPIS value every individual as an independent thinker and decision maker. We encourage respecting differences of others yet treasuring one's own traditions and values in order to present a responsible, self content, and an assertive global citizen.

The school community is committed to developing students who are resilient and adaptable, equipped with the knowledge, skills, ethical spirit and initiative to continue their education and become socially responsible adults. The mission has evolved to include those values and principles which are found within the philosophy of the IB program. While the school's mission was always to develop an environment that fostered world citizens, as the school worked toward the IB authorization, the concept of world-mindedness took on a very more active role in terms of how all of our teachers developed and designed learning activities so that students began to see their learning through the lens of inter-constructiveness and multi-culture contribution and impact. Of course, many, if not most, of our original school values were congruent with those learn-profile traits for which the IB program is renowned: balance, principled, open-minded, caring, honest, and knowledgeable among others.

Global Paradigm International School believes that in order for the school to succeed and achieve its objectives, not only are administrators, heads of departments, and teachers involved but also the support staff, students and parents are involved as well. Therefore, in developing the school's initial mission statement, all parties have had a part in the process; however, when it was first founded in Sept. 2009, the founding members, who are administrators, heads of departments and some of the teachers were the principal contributors and set the initial vision, mission and beliefs of the school . After the school began its operation, the parents and students became involved and feedback was essential; alterations/amendments to the school's vision, mission, and beliefs, with stakeholder input, will continue to be offered as needed. Copies of the Mission Statement, vision and core values have been distributed among faculty and staff for review and are presented in a variety of formats for stakeholder perusal. Periodic meetings and discussions are held to reflect on the adherence of school decisions and policies as they pertain to both the vision and the mission. The school continues to review the mission statement, along with

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input from stakeholders in formats like PTO meetings and in parent workshops focused on the mission and vision, on annual basis to assess the schools adherence to the mission.

In addition to the school's mission and vision, the school has outlined a number of objectives which are imperative to the mission's realization:

To fulfill the Mission Statement we aim:

- To enable each student to develop personally, socially, aesthetically and intellectually through active and innovative learning experiences
- To promote the independence and sense of responsibility important for life in a changing world
- To provide a secure moral framework where children can acquire the values which form the basis of a civilized society
- To prepare students to play an active part in building a caring community
- To develop knowledge, skills, concepts and appropriate attitudes in all aspects of the curriculum
- To continue their development in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
- To develop their ICT skills in all areas of the curriculum
- To develop study skills to acquire knowledge and be able to use it effectively
- To enjoy learning for life

Student Objectives:

- To be equipped with inter-personal skills, e.g. empathy, respect, co-operation, tolerance, world-mindedness
- To take opportunities to develop self-awareness, self-discipline and self-esteem
- To understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle
- To be able to question and argue rationally and develop skills in decision making, problem solving and personal organization.
- To develop skills and attitudes which will enhance their contribution to local and global citizenship
- To acquire a wide range of skills for the world of work, for continuing education, for home and family
- To have respect for the environment.
- To become principled, caring, and open-minded citizen
- To be inquirers, risk-takers who are knowledgeable and reflective

The school's Core Values are

- Honor
- Honesty & Respect
- Responsibility
- Tolerance
- Commitment

The school also embraces the IB Learner Profile Traits

- Principled
- Open-minded
- Communication

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- Knowledgeable
- Balanced
- Caring
- Reflective
- Inquiry
- Risk-taker
- Thinker

Our school is committed to creating and maintaining a caring community in which:

- the individual is valued and respected
- all can achieve their potential
- the climate is challenging and supportive
- effort and success are celebrated
- awareness of the local, national and international community is fostered

Global Paradigm School strives to be a model international school offering a broad and challenging educational program to students to assist them in contributing their wisdom, compassion and leadership in a global society. Global Paradigm School students come from middle class families, who are highly educated and whose parents hold prestigious positions in the community. The school offers a rigorous educational program, which follows California standard-based curriculum and the Common Core Standards. International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement courses are also offered in high school, although the latter offered as per student needs from year to year. Creative and research based instructional techniques are used to enhance life-long learning through technology, varied instructional strategies, and hands-on activities. All aspects of the school such as organization, curricular, and co-curricular activities are child-centered and designed to accommodate individual learning styles so that all may experience success. Arabic Language, Religious Studies, Civics, and the Social Studies National Curricula are mandated by the Egyptian Ministry of Education; the school is very keen that its students retain their sense of identity, traditions and cultural aspects. World Languages including French, German and Spanish are offered starting Grade 3; students choose one of these languages to study. Within the IB program English, Arabic, and French are currently offered. 100% of graduating seniors pursue university study in the United States, Europe, or within Egypt and the Middle East. Students in most grade levels perform at or near norm group levels in both English and Math; 11th graders and students taking the SAT perform slightly below average in English but nearly at average in Math.

Within the respective content areas, students also show acquisition of content and skills through a variety of assessments both summative and formative in nature. Authentic assessment is promoted with emphasis on assessment techniques that require problem-solving, critical inquiry and analysis, and collaboration learning. Projects, portfolios, presentations, as well as more traditional summative assessment models are used to assess students. Teachers also use a variety of formative assessment tools to monitor student learning and adjust instructional practices as needed. Emphasis for assessment is on real-world applications and critical thinking. Students in grades 6-12 are given final exams at the end of each semester; MAP testing is done twice yearly from grades 1-9; PSAT is administered to both 9th and 10th graders while 11th and 12th graders take SAT, SAT II; those students in the IB Diploma Program take IB external exams.

The current staff and administration recognize the importance of continuous improvement which is reflected in both the school improvement plan and professional development plan as well as in the emphasis on collaboration for improvement during grade level and department meetings which are held weekly at all levels. To help facilitate that goal common planning time is set aside in the elementary school master schedule for grade level meetings among respective grade level teachers. The central purpose of these meetings is to collaborate in developing best-practice instructional strategies to help all students achieve their academic potential. Time is also set aside for general staff development meetings once per week with the early release of students on Tuesday. This time is devoted to professional training and meeting time to collaborate for enhancement of student learning.

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The main focus of all teacher meetings is student learning. In such meetings all teachers develop SMART goals targeting student learning. Teachers review student learning data gleaned a number of sources: standardized tests like the MAP and PSAT, pre and post tests provided with instructional texts and resources, and from teacher-designed assessments. Using the student learning data teachers as part of both teams and departments set specific learning goals in order to help students improve. As part of their SMART goals, teachers plan formative assessments to help provide them with timely data as per student progress toward the respective goal. Using information from these assessments, teachers work collaboratively to adapt and adjust instruction to meet the learning needs of the students. Interventions are developed for students that have trouble with the required learning objectives in each course. Each teacher has set learning goals for each course taught to help students toward the school central goal of the development and achievement of each student's academic potential. In addition, students at all levels are asked to set individual learning goals tied to their academic development. teachers and students reflect on the data gleaned from assessments to measure performance and progress related to respective learning goals.

Performance expectations for student learning are based primarily upon the Common Core Standards and the IB Curriculum Framework. Teachers have used these learning standards to develop pacing guides designed to help students acquire key skills and concepts prescribed in the standards. Planning is done using the Backward Design Concept (Wiggins) Content for respective courses for use in developing learning activities for students comes from a variety of sources, the most evident being the text adopted by the school for respective subjects and grade levels. Some of the text-books are e-texts available to students on-line or are downloadable via a student password. The over-all goal of the school and Goal #1 of the school's improvement plan is that 'all students at Global Paradigm School will achieve their academic potential.

Parent are kept apprised of student progress and with school and class events and programs in a number of ways. The current school student management program as well as the new system to be fully implemented by 2nd semester 2016-17, allows parents direct access to teacher real-time grade books and has a communication process embedded within its operations. Teachers and parents also communicate via email and phone and each teacher maintains a class blog that updates parents and students at least weekly on work, tests, and projects and other goings-on in the course. In addition, important announcements are provided parents via the school website and through regular communiques via newsletter and direct emails from administration. Formal grade reports are sent home four times a year with schedule parent conferences held after each of the first three reports or on a quarterly basis. Parents are invited, however, to schedule conferences with teachers and administrators as needed to discuss their students' progress. After each grade report or as needed, grade level teachers refer struggling students to administration so that grade level teacher meeting might be held to develop specialized education plans to help such students. Parent conferences are held apart from the normal scheduled meetings with parents of struggling students to implement a plan of action. The school has a student council to enlist students directly in the process of contributing to the general weal of the school. The PTO serves parents as a vehicle to address formally parental concerns.

The school strives to embed its values and principles in all aspects of its operation particularly in its programs for students and student learning. With its core values as a foundation, GPIS is dedicated toward the improvement of student learning and in helping student realize their potential.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.

The school's most notable achievements in the last four years must include the graduation of our first four graduation classes, starting in 2013, followed by the classes of 2014, 2015, and 2016. All of these graduates have gone on to enroll in college and are continuing their educations with success and achievement. In a word, realizing that our graduates are now finding themselves equipped to deal with the rigors of the next challenges in their lives is foremost among our school's accomplishments to date. In addition, in the 5th year of our existence, our school was authorized as an IB Diploma Program World School in 2015. This accomplishment fulfills one of the initial goals and promises that we made to our stakeholders from the school's inception: to provide an IB curriculum to students who wanted to pursue the IB diploma. Still another area of progress about which our school is proud lies simply in the steady growth of our student body which speaks to our reputation within the Cairo community as a school that offers a quality educational environment to its students. The increase in enrollment has accomplished but not at the sacrifice of high expectations for new students or for students who continue their educational paths with us. The quality of our new students has been maintained. Still another achievement and area of improvement has been in our yearly enhancement of our technology with expansion of technology within all classrooms and in the addition of e-library resources to provide students with additional learning resources. Besides these accomplishments, we are happy that we were able to establish a college advisory office to the services offered to our students; the adviser has implemented transcript reviews to ascertain graduation requirements and conducted a number of college counseling sessions to help students with the application process. Related to this has been our efforts to establish a student mentoring program entitled the STAR program which focuses on providing each secondary student with an staff advocate on campus so that each student has an adult on campus who cares about him or her. Another area of accomplishment has been our implementation of a much improved school management system, Rediker, which has given us an integrated system for collection of student data, enhanced communication with stakeholders, and valuable tool to make the operation of the entire school more efficient and effective.

Components of our school that we have targeted for improvement include the continued refinement and enhancement of our academic programs so that every child may realize his potential, the increase emphasis on programs and procedures which ensure the safety and civility of the learning environment, and the continued development of programs and policies and services that foster strong relationships with all stakeholders. In addition to these focus areas, our school will continue to develop avenues and opportunities to hire and retain highly qualified staff and professionals and strive to make our technology and its hardware, software, and availability such that the technological skills of all stakeholders is enhanced. Also, we seek to improve and embed into our school culture those best-practice strategies and traditions that are focused to the end goal of improving student learning and seek to establish any other systemic component that will enable our school, its staff and students realize their mission and potential.

Additional Information

Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.

Global Paradigm International School has made steady improvement since our last accreditation visit and has made specific changes prompted by the QAR report of 2012 as well as self-reflection of our strengths and weaknesses so that we might evolve into a better, more effective school which fosters learning for all students. The school recognizes that it still has many areas in which to improve but is optimistic that improvement is possible so that all our students have the opportunity to grow and learn in order to realize their potential and promise.