



## MSA Executive Summary 2019

### **Overview**

During 2018-2019, CDS did a year-long self-study for the Middle States Association Commission on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS) Accreditation process. We did surveys of faculty, staff, students, and parents to collect data on the school's effectiveness on 12 standards of quality.

We had a planning committee to guide the study and assist in creating the five objectives in the **Plan for Growth and Improvement**. We had 12 Standards Subcommittees that analyzed the survey data, measuring CDS against each standard, and defined growth areas. The planning committee used the data and standards reports to create the five objectives for growth and improvement.

### **Standards Met**

The planning committee and CDS Administration concluded that CDS met all standards. Below are highlights of each standard, with emphasis on areas of growth.

#### **1. Standard 1: Mission**

**Strengths:** CDS has a mission statement which is introduced to all new staff during orientation. CDS has improved its messaging of its mission online and in its admission and marketing publications.

**Areas of Growth:** Not all faculty are fully aware of the mission. CDS can improve in messaging the mission to its community more frequently. The mission needs to be reviewed by the school community.

**Next Steps:** CDS will review the mission on a more consistent basis with the school community. CDS will work to communicate the importance of the mission, implementing the mission in all parts of the school, notably the academics and co-curricular activities.

#### **2. Standard 2: Governance and Leadership Standard**

**Strengths:** CDS provides clarity about the organization, good school leadership, and consistent quality in personnel through exceptional administration, faculty, and staff. CDS has clear policies and procedures with improved internal and external communication.

**Areas of Growth:** CDS recognizes that it should provide more professional development opportunities based on school and staff needs. More guidance and clarity needs to occur in recognizing the accomplishments of staff and students.

**Next Steps:** CDS needs to look to develop an agreed-upon philosophy about awards and recognition and create a consistent system of staff and student recognition. CDS will look to improve in-house, online, and external PD learning for faculty/staff, and infuse PLC time with more professional and staff learning relevant to their work.

#### **3. Standard 3: School Improvement Planning**

**Strengths:** There are good plans in place, giving the school direction and improvement.

**Areas of Growth:** CDS needs to take into consideration the school's capacities of time, energy, and resources when planning new initiatives, setting goals, and developing action plans.

**Next Steps:** CDS needs to revise its foundational documents and its many different plans to align with the mission and values. CDS should balance change efforts to avoid overtaxing the capacity of personnel, and needs to monitor changes to ensure they achieve the intended outcomes.

#### **4. Standard 4: Finances**

**Strengths:** CDS has historically, with past and new ownership, practiced excellent financial protocols, all while maintaining a quality academic program, excellent facilities, and ample resources. Nord Anglia's budget cycle helps CDS focus on long-term projections of income and costs, which is mitigated against risk.

**Areas of Growth:** None identified

**Next Steps:** None identified

#### **5. Standard 5: Facilities**

**Strengths:** CDS has excellent new facilities and excellent security. Each classroom is equipped with fans to assist with air circulation and temperature.

**Areas of Growth:** Counseling offices lack privacy since they have glass walls.

**Next Steps:** Analyze storage and decide how to use the all-school warehouse and house storage spaces.

#### **6. Standard 6: School Organization and Staff**

**Strengths:** CDS faculty and staff are committed to the school and dedicated to their work, taking pride in the outcomes of their efforts. CDS has a thorough hiring process to ensure that all members of the staff are eligible to work with children.

**Areas of Growth:** CDS needs to improve how it handles staff complaints and grievances. More needs to be done about new staff onboarding. CDS should analyze staff compensation and workloads.

**Next Steps:** CDS needs to reinforce the importance of every staff member in the school.

#### **7. Standard 7: Health and Safety**

**Strengths:** CDS provides adequate health care services for all students and staff, including having a part-time private physician for staff. Security systems and cameras provide for a safe environment. CDS provides extensive child protection and safeguarding training for staff throughout the school year.

**Areas of Growth:** CDS should provide more frequent CPR training and First Aid training. CDS needs to improve emergency drills as required by Nord Anglia Health and Safety team.

**Next Steps:** Analyze the current emergency protocols and identify areas of weakness that can be improved. Implement labeling of evacuation routes and practice drills for the staff and student body.

#### **8. Standard 8: Educational Program**

**Strengths:** EC: a child-centered approach to teaching and learning with interdisciplinary units focusing on exploratory play and learning. ES: a standards-based approach to learning using interdisciplinary units and the use of workshop model for literacy. MS: standards-based grading with a robust advisory associated with strong community service learning. HS: a wide variety of AP course offerings, an active college counseling program, and opportunities for global engagement.

**Areas of Growth:** CDS needs to continue working on curriculum alignment from grades EC-12 as well as the development of a stronger Ed Tech/STEAM program. The HS needs to develop a social-emotional learning component to its curriculum through an Advisory program.

**Next Steps:** CDS will look to focus on articulating the curriculum as an entire school.

#### **9. Standard 9: Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning**

**Strengths:** EC: routines of observational checklists to assess learning using evidence, rubrics, and observation of tasks. ES: Use of standards-based grading to evaluate learning, narrative feedback, and the use of student-led conferences to assess learning. MS: Use of standards-based grading to assess learning using power standards and aligned rubrics. HS: Common core standards and AP aligned rubrics, the use of online grading within Google Classroom, PSAT data to guide instruction.

**Areas of Growth:** CDS needs to create student learning outcomes derived from the mission as well as a comprehensive assessment policy at each stage of learning.

**Next Steps:** CDS should implement grading agreements, create a more cohesive mission and vision aligned to curriculum, and create an EC-12 assessment philosophy.

#### **10. Standard 10: Student Services**

**Strengths:** Student support is available to every student, using a Response to Intervention model. The cafeteria has reduced the amount of plastic use, using reusable plates, utensils, and glasses; plastics are not sold on the 5th and 22nd of every month to further reduce use and raise awareness. Bus transportation is personalized, using a door-to-door service, and employ a driver and monitor to ensure the safety of all students. Admissions use an inclusive admissions policy allowing all families to apply.

**Areas of Growth:** CDS recognizes that more nutritional information needs to be available in the cafeteria. Counseling and student support services need to be improved and coordinated so that both services are better aligned. Admissions needs to look at an overall comprehensive admissions policy, taking into account assessments for placement in upper-level grades.

**Next Steps:** Create a standard set of practices for the admissions assessment day. Work to coordinate and develop the integration of counseling and student support services into one department.

#### **11. Standard 11: Student Life and Activities**

**Strengths:** CDS enjoys a large number of students participating in extracurricular activities. There is pride in the CDS athletic programs. The band program is one of the best in Central America. Student activities such as MUN and JMUN are vibrant and competitive in the MS and HS. We have consistent participation in AASCA events and in Nord Anglia events like Global Games and Fine Arts Festival.

**Areas of Growth:** CDS recognizes that there is an inconsistent level of competitiveness throughout the athletics program. There is not a fully supported Drama/Performing Arts program other than Band, Choir, and Strings. Costs associated with the activities program seem high.

**Next Steps:** Identify and create budgets for student life activities such as athletics and performing arts. Better coordinate the schedule of activities using the facilities to ensure equal use through all houses. Create a handbook and policy to address athletic participation in high school.

#### **12. Standard 12: Information Resources**

**Strengths:** CDS has a variety of resources available for all ages, including a 1:1 ES tech program. Advanced levels of technology are available to teachers in the classroom, including Apple TVs, projectors, and speakers, to enhance learning. Teachers are assigned Macbook laptops.

**Areas of Growth:** CDS should analyze printers and copiers throughout the school. The LRC needs new laptops. CDS should invest in having access to different news and magazines subscriptions. CDs would benefit from frequent teacher training throughout the year, especially using Rubicon Atlas.

**Next Steps:** CDS will look to replace several hardware devices to better enhance learning. Thirty new laptops were purchased for the 2019-2020 school year. CDS will also look to utilize the space on the 2nd floor of the LRC to maximize the area in the LRC.

### **Growth and Improvement Plan**

Our self-study requires the school to take a deep dive into curriculum and instruction in at least two areas focusing on student performance, and at least two more areas that may or may not be based on improving student performance. Based on the standards reports and planning committee decisions, the team looked to focus on five areas for growth in the school: 1) Mission/Vision 2) Improvement in math 3) Improvement in students' literacy skills 4) Development of a STEAM program in EC-12 and 5) Development of a Performing Arts program. Below are the five objectives, for which we formed action plan teams, to develop a seven-year strategic growth and improvement plan.

**Organizational and Capacity Objective #1 By 2027, CDS will review and revise the school's Mission, Values, and Profile of a Graduate and ensure all policies, procedures, and curriculum are aligned.**

**Organizational and Capacity Objective #2 By 2027, CDS will leverage its collaboration with MIT by developing a robust and sustainable STEAM program from EC-12th grade, positioning CDS as the leader in innovative learning in Costa Rica.**

**Organizational and Capacity Objective #3 By 2027, CDS will build the performing arts program from EC-12 in order to fully take advantage of the Juilliard collaboration through Nord Anglia.**

**Student Performance Objective #4 By 2027, CDS will revise its math curriculum from EC-12, improving our students' performance and understanding of math concepts in the areas of numeracy, computational, and algebraic thinking.**

**Student Performance Objective #5 By 2027, CDS will have an EC-12 vertically aligned, skills-based, literacy curriculum, continuing to improve students' performance in the areas of reading comprehension and verbal reasoning on the MAP, PSAT, and SAT Tests.**

### **Conclusion**

The future is bright for Country Day School. We are excited about the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for this school and hope that through this study and implementation of the Growth and Improvement Plan, CDS will continue to be the top school in Costa Rica!

Sincerely,



**José Luis Menendez**

MSA-CESS Internal Coordinator

HS Principal