



# Lawton Academy of Arts and Sciences

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Lawton, Oklahoma

**September 29 – October 1, 2019**

**School Accreditation Engagement Review**

260173

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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 will be organized by the Levels of Impact within i3: Initiate, Improve, and Impact. The organization of the findings is based upon the ratings from the Standards Diagnostic and the i3 Levels of 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 stakeholders are engaged in the desired practices, processes, or programs within the institution. Implementation is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are monitored and adjusted for quality and fidelity of implementation. Standards identified within Initiate should become the focus of the institution’s continuous improvement journey to move toward the collection, analysis and use of data to measure the results of engagement and implementation. A focus on enhancing the capacity of the institution in meeting the identified 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 represent 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 (minimum of three years). Standards identified within Improve are those in which the institution is using results to inform their continuous improvement processes and using results over time to demonstrate 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 the culture of the institution. Institutions should continue to support and sustain these practices that are yielding results in improving student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

## Cognia Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

Accreditation is pivotal to leveraging education quality and continuous improvement. Using a set of rigorous research-based standards, the 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 Cognia 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. Using these Standards, Engagement Review Teams 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 Cognia’s Performance Standards. The diagnostic consists of three components built around each of the three Domains: **Leadership Capacity**, **Learning Capacity** and **Resource Capacity**. Results are reported within four ranges identified by the colors. 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.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
1.2	Stakeholders collectively demonstrate actions to ensure the achievement of the institution's purpose and desired outcomes for learning.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
1.3	The institution engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	3	RE:	3	SU:	4	EM:	
1.4	The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support institutional effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	3	SU:	3	EM:	
1.5	The governing authority adheres to a code of ethics and functions within defined roles and responsibilities.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
1.6	Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.									Initiating
	EN:	4	IM:	1	RE:	1	SU:	1	EM:	
1.7	Leaders implement operational process and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
1.8	Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the institution's purpose and direction.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
1.9	The institution provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
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:	4	RE:	2	SU:	1	EM:	

### 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.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
2.2	The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
2.3	The learning culture develops learners' attitudes, beliefs and skills needed for success.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
2.4	The institution has a formal structure to ensure learners develop positive relationships with and have adults/peers who support their educational experiences.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
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:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
2.6	The institution implements a process to ensure the curriculum is aligned to standards and best practices.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	3	RE:	2	SU:	3	EM:	
2.7	Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the institution's learning expectations.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
2.8	The institution provides programs and services for learners' educational futures and career planning.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
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:	
2.10	Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	
2.11	Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.									Impacting
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	4	SU:	4	EM:	

Learning Capacity Standards										Rating
2.12	The institution implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.									Improving
	EN:	1	IM:	3	RE:	4	SU:	2	EM:	

### 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.									Initiating
	EN:	4	IM:	2	RE:	1	SU:	1	EM:	
3.2	The institution's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness.									Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	1	RE:	1	SU:	1	EM:	
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.									Initiating
	EN:	1	IM:	1	RE:	1	SU:	1	EM:	
3.4	The institution attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the institution's purpose and direction.									Improving
	EN:	4	IM:	4	RE:	1	SU:	1	EM:	
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:	3	RE:	2	SU:	1	EM:	
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:	4	EM:	
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:	

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:	

## Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® Results

The Cognia eProve™ Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot) is a learner-centric classroom observation tool that comprises 28 items organized in seven environments aligned with the Cognia Standards. Classroom observations are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes. Trained and certified observers take into account the level of embeddedness, quality, and complexity of application or implementation; number of students engaged and frequency of application. Results from the eleot are reported on a scale of one to four based on the students' engagement in and reaction to the learning environment. In addition to the results from the review, the average results from all reviews for the previous year are reported to benchmark your results against. The eleot provides useful, relevant, structured, and quantifiable data on the extent to which students are engaged in activities and/or demonstrate knowledge, attitudes, and/or dispositions that are conducive to effective learning.

The insights eleot data provide an invaluable source of information for continuous improvement planning efforts. Although averages by eleot Learning Environment are helpful to gauge quality at a higher, more impressionistic level, the average rating for each item is more fine-grained, specific and actionable. Institutions should identify the five to seven items with the lowest ratings and examine patterns in those ratings within and across environments to identify areas for improvement. Similarly, identifying the five to seven items with the highest ratings also will assist in identifying strengths within and across eleot Learning Environments. Examining the eleot data in conjunction with other institution data will provide valuable feedback on areas of strength or improvement in institution's learning environments.

eleot® Observations		
Total Number of eleot Observations:		19
Environments	Rating	2018-19 Averages
<b>Equitable Learning Environment</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>2.82</b>
Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs	2.89	2.34
Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	3.53	3.30
Learners are treated in a fair, clear and consistent manner	3.89	3.45
Learners demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions and dispositions	3.00	2.18
<b>High Expectations Environment</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>2.71</b>
Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher	3.53	2.74

<b>eleot® Observations</b>		
<b>Total Number of eleot Observations:</b>	<b>19</b>	
<b>Environments</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>2018-19 Averages</b>
Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	3.79	2.95
Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work	3.32	2.43
Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	3.58	2.67
Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning	3.32	2.78
<b>Supportive Learning Environment</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>3.15</b>
Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful	3.68	3.07
Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	3.63	2.97
Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks	3.58	3.24
Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher	3.79	3.34
<b>Active Learning Environment</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>2.71</b>
Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and the teacher predominate	3.47	2.77
Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences	3.68	2.41
Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities	3.63	3.12
Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments	2.63	2.45
<b>Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>2.63</b>
Learners monitor their own learning progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored	3.05	2.43
Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work	3.47	2.93
Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content	3.63	2.90
Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed	3.26	2.25
<b>Well-Managed Learning Environment</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>3.20</b>
Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other	3.79	3.42
Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others	3.79	3.35
Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another	3.16	2.89
Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions	3.68	3.15
<b>Digital Learning Environment</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>1.79</b>

eleot® Observations		
Total Number of eleot Observations:		19
Environments	Rating	2018-19 Averages
Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	2.84	1.97
Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	2.26	1.79
Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and/or work collaboratively for learning	2.53	1.61

### Assurances

Assurances are statements 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. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus. The IEQ is comprised of the Standards Diagnostic ratings from the three Domains: 1) Leadership Capacity; 2) Learning Capacity; and 3) Resource Capacity. The IEQ results are reported on a scale of 100 to 400 and provides 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 their improvement efforts on those Standards within the Initiate 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 AIN institutions evaluated for accreditation in the last five years. The range of the annual AIN IEQ average is presented to enable you to benchmark your results with other institutions in the network.

<b>Institution IEQ</b>	<b>361.5</b>	<b>AIN 5 Year IEQ Range</b>	<b>278.34 – 283.33</b>
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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, examples of programs and practices and provide direction for the institution's continuous improvement efforts. The Insights from the Review narrative should provide contextualized information from the team deliberations and provide information about the team's analysis of the practices, processes, and programs of the institution from the levels of Initiate, Improve, and Impact. The Insights from the Review narrative should provide next steps to guide the improvement journey of the institution 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 their plans to continuously strive for improvement.

A number of themes aligned to the continuous improvement process of Lawton Academy of Arts and Sciences were identified by the Engagement Review Team. Areas of strength and opportunities offer a guide as the system continues the improvement journey. Interviews, observations, and a study of artifacts produced supporting evidence related to student learning success and overall operational effectiveness.

Relational systems that exhibit embedded and collective beliefs ground every component of the school's existence. For this particular review, it is appropriate and vitally relevant to the remaining narrative to discuss some of the background of the school. Established 20 years ago to meet the needs of gifted and talented students, this private institution has grown from nine original students and an initial K-2 (kindergarten to second grade) offering to a comprehensive PK-12 (pre-kindergarten to 12th grade) school with 180 students. The school's founding member is a lifelong educator who is considered and revered by those-in-the-know to be one of the original, and continual, pivotal and driving forces in gifted and talented education. As the school expanded, the founder/CEO/Superintendent both welcomed and continues to welcome additional family on board as both governing members and instructional leaders. The ensuing result is that the foundation and continued operation of the institution is built upon the leaders' personal and vocational vision for education. This perpetual vision is fueled by relational systems, planned for via collaborative relationships, and sustained through collective relational beliefs. As such, the embedded core ideology permeates and guides all aspects of the school and concomitant endeavors. All focus groups, the results of the 19 eleots, artifacts, and survey and inventory results evidenced consistent acceptance and promotion of the expectations for school relationships. The expressed beliefs exuded authenticity, fidelity, and commitment to the school's purpose and direction. There is a collective mindset characterized by an "everyone in" attitude. Many parents and family members are present at the school every day in one role or another, e.g., volunteering in the classroom or on the grounds, coaching, mentoring, tutoring, etc. Teachers lead in multiple capacities in terms of clubs, sports, and activities, and there is a study hall led by a staff member every day. Students are expected to participate in school events and offerings; this is evidenced by all interviews, surveys, eleots, and an observable learning system based on relationships and high expectations. Students are not permitted to opt out of academic or co-curricular expectations, but they are also fully supported and encouraged to seek out personally satisfying participation opportunities. Every elementary student plays an instrument; the school emphasizes a heavy correlation between music and success in the maths and sciences. Every secondary student participates in speech, robotics, and archery each year. Leadership, staff, parents, and student interviews consistently produced the maxim that "Robotics is

the school's football"; additionally, students learn to use advanced and specialized equipment. All students participate in physical education and secondary students are required to compete in a tier one physical or fine arts activity (e.g., speech and debate, robotics, archery, etc.). While the standards are very rigorous and the needs and interests very diverse, the collective relational beliefs that ground the school systems create a holistic environment that reflects supportive relationships, a cohesive community, and a palpable atmosphere of inclusivity. One interviewed parent described an overheard study group as characterized by students "challenging each other's ideas while remaining reflective and respectful of differing opinions." Even behavior and discipline consequences reinforce the expectation that all relational interactions should promote positive outcomes. There is an accepted school cultural practice of immediately addressing behavior or discipline concerns. Focus interviews with leaders, staff, and parents highlighted that this practice corrects a deviation from collective beliefs with encouragement and support. Student interviews supported the acceptance and modeling of this practice with one student noting it allows him to "express myself, focus on learning, be open and honest, and have the freedom to be me." Classroom elicits, schoolwide observations, and unscripted conversations reflected respectful, supportive, and healthy staff/student exchanges and peer interactions. A conversation with three secondary students produced the comment, the school is "hard, but worth it because the teachers make this place better than other schools." Staff, student, and parent focus groups agreed that school relationships are based on accountability, challenging yet supportive practices, equity, commitment, and appreciation of others. The continued accumulation of impactful summative qualitative and quantitative data will only further evidence the effectiveness of embedded relational systems driven by the collective beliefs of all stakeholders.

There is an explicit and consistent commitment to the continuous improvement journey. The Infinity Committee, implemented just over a year ago, is a stakeholder input committee made up of students from the middle through high schools, parents, volunteers, faculty, and leadership. Named as such because "although it had a beginning, it has no foreseeable finish", the Infinity Committee was originally established to address long-range succession planning and continuity. It has since expanded to include all relevant discussions including strategic planning, innovative problem-solving, input solicitation, collaborative action-planning, and change implementation. Evidence that extends the committee's direction was seen in school banners promoting positive change, end-of-year writing assignments to suggest change, and student interviews that affirmed students are listened to and their suggestions acted upon. School decision-making practices appeared to be supported by students, staff, and parents. The collection and analysis of communication and decision-making feedback data did not appear to adhere to a formal design and structure; however, anecdotal observations and student, staff, and parent focus groups suggested information and feedback are not perceived to be limited in any way. Opportunities for two-way communication were demonstrated via emails, a three-generation blog, an open-door policy mentioned in leadership, staff, and parent focus groups, a weekly newsletter, and in-person because *everyone* seems to be there *all the time*. A suggestion might be to continue the communication and feedback practices in place, in addition to the recent Cognia surveys and inventories, and simply document the communication and decision-making results. As one parent in the focus group stated, "They [school leaders] have learned a lot along the way." From the mission crafted by the founding members, *Creating the Leaders of Tomorrow*, to improvements since the last engagement review including more structured processes for progress monitoring, analysis and communication of achievement data, and ongoing initiatives in math, science, and reading, a dedication to the continuous improvement process remains in evidence in all the institution seeks to undertake. Support for the mission was evidenced via interviews with the leaders, staff, and parents. One participant from the parent focus group commented, "We vote with our checkbooks, there's a reason there's a waiting list to get in here." A student stated in the focus

interview, “you will feel connected, get excellent academics, really learn, and you’ll find something you’re good at.” Simply put, it was clear that all adults and students support both the mission of the school and its vision for continuous improvement. Anecdotal observations and the leader focus group offered evidence the school hires personnel who are committed to the vision and goals of the school. The leader focus group emphasized that they look for multi-talented, high-capacity, experienced educators who can adjust to the needs of gifted kids. The staff focus group participants made it very clear that staff members willingly choose to teach at the school; in fact, many of the current teachers are retired from a previous profession. Interviews, surveys, eleots, and observations indicate that improvement objectives are aligned to the school’s expectations for learning; this is on a continuous and expanding basis. Communication of the strategic improvement objectives was observed in multiple mediums e.g., digital and print platforms, verbal exchanges, daily practices, relational processes, etc. The allocation of all resources (i.e., human, material, operational, and fiscal) were undeniably aligned with student needs, the school’s mission, and organizational effectiveness. Supporting artifacts included policy manuals, staff and student handbooks, a regularly reviewed budget, certified affirmation of operational integrity and viability, and a written code of ethics. All student resources and materials are planned for and provided; focus interviews evidenced that these are often donated or purchased by families, staff, and/or the community. All curriculum and programs are fully supported, and it does not appear that any student lacks for anything that could further his/her success. Routine tasks are streamlined so that educators and students can get on with the business of teaching and learning. With the governing body fairly indistinguishable from the school’s leadership, the facilitation of the establishment, alignment, and implementation of processes and practices that advance the school appeared seamless. A commitment to research-based practices was evident in document review, eleots, observations, and focus interviews. The governing leaders were early proponents of understanding the brain development of children and the correlations to learning and success, the triangulation of data, and authentic assessments. Psychology is taught as a science, not a social science, and classroom observation noted the ease and satisfaction with which students operated at the highest levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. The commitment to the continuous improvement of learning consistently produces life, college/university, and career-ready leaders. Evidence for this was found in multiple data sources, e.g., nationally normed test scores, specialized secondary school placement, college and university acceptance, eleots, and focus interviews. Long-range succession and operational planning are a current focus of the school. The veteran leaders are mentoring the new leaders and many of the roles and responsibilities have been transferred as a result. Current operational endeavors include a grounds and facilities expansion for fine arts, athletics, and secondary students. A tour of the grounds highlighted that every inch of the current facilities is maximized for student use; there are no teacher or leader offices. The leader focus group and the executive overview revealed plans to finally increase tuition to acquire more staff and needed resources; the school remains committed to a no fundraising policy and instead seeks out life application alternatives, such as the student-led Friday night babysitting program. Twenty years ago, the school could effectively operate in a small space and with limited staff. Today, due to an exponential increase in growth (currently 25%) and continued student success, the school has embraced the critical need to plan for the continuous improvement journey of the future. The intentional consideration of best learning practices and the purposeful allocation of operational resources and human capital have become impactful, embedded practices that will be sustained by the continued and clear determination of learning and improvement needs.

The school embodies the belief that the learning environment is a multi-faceted organism. This living entity is comprised equally of academic, social, emotional, and physical elements. The success of the school’s learning environments was evidenced in all focus groups, eleots, qualitative anecdotal and

observation data, and longitudinal quantitative achievement data. Observations and conversations with students highlighted that students prefer the style of learning offered by the school because the schedule is flexible; this allows students to work on different subjects and projects during the day unlike the traditional school schedule. The physical environment reflected multiple examples of personalized learning activities and experiences, and evidence of learning activities was posted everywhere (e.g., hallways, classrooms, and common areas). The school offers subject ability groups that promote opportunities for all students to “bump up” or move depending upon need. Personal and collective character is a focus; this is further supported by a recent AdvancED Midwest region Values-Driven Award. The leaders, staff, and parents promote attitudes and skills needed for lifelong success. The students are taught to work together; there are no desks in rows, only tables. The mission of the school is evidenced in all learning environments which focus on creating life leaders; students are taught and mentored to become positive change agents. Acceptance of both success and failure is taught as integral to the learning process, competition and difficult projects are promoted supportively, and students are encouraged to think of school as their job. A number of examples that promote personal learning growth were observed, e.g., evidence of student projects, current and past awards in robotics, music, speech and debate, scholar dollars and credit points, etc. Customized learning plans and student self-monitoring are core principles of the school. Leader, staff, parent, and student interviews emphasized the importance of real-life experiences and helping students become marketable. The physical environment is nurtured with multiple opportunities for movement throughout the school day, additional breaks are added as needed, and the athletics program continues to expand (e.g., cross country, tennis, USA wrestling, running and archery clubs, etc.). The school’s curriculum adheres to a rigorous and accelerated format. It is understood and embraced that student success will be the outcome; both students and teachers mentor and tutor. Focus interviews, eleots, and document reviews evidenced the school is not just about producing productive, happy members of society; the driving intent is for these students to lead. Even though there are some students who may not qualify as gifted and talented under the traditional school umbrella, parent interviews evidenced that supports such as tutoring, mentoring, interventions, and individualized instruction allow their students to thrive and succeed. Students in the focus interview affirmed that the teachers help them decide what needs to be taken according to class level, plan individually, and practice accountability. Social and emotional supports are integrated into the daily operation of the school. Student interviews and observations highlighted that students are encouraged to express their feelings, ask for help, and take brain breaks if needed. Learning is continually assessed, and expectations are communicated on a wide-scale basis. The website lists core courses and focus areas at all grade levels and student achievement is highlighted via multiple vehicles (e.g., website, newsletter, blog, emails to parents, student learning plans). There was an observable focus in classroom eleots on learning comprehension, synthesis, analysis, and real-life application rather than memorization and regurgitation. Both site documentation and leader and staff focus groups underscored common and aligned grading practices and learning standards liked to expectations. The organization is rooted in educational environments that will continue to be sustained through effective and impactful practices that exhibit comprehensive actions in pursuit of both the science and art of teaching and learning.

Learning assessment and organizational adjustment practices and processes are interwoven into a timeline that covers immediate to long-range. Healthy amounts of formative and summative assessments and resulting adjustments were observed via artifact examination, the executive overview, and leader and staff focus groups; these highlighted a number of traditional assessments (i.e., the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), the American College Testing/Scholastic Aptitude Test (ACT/SAT) exam, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), subject area tests, etc.).

However, it was the additional assessments and expedient adjustments that truly highlighted the school's dedicated commitment to individualized, scaffolded, and progressive learning. Leader, teacher, and student focus groups, eleots, artifacts, and observations supported assessment and adjustment on both an individual and collective basis, and during both specific and ongoing time frames. The comment made in the closing meeting that the school hoped could be included in the final narrative was, "It's like individualized and differentiated instruction on steroids." The school adheres to a comprehensive set of standards compiled from national and state best practices, and these are adjusted and refined as needed. A binder provided during the review evidenced that all teachers have a copy of and are familiar with the progression of the standards. All instructional expectations and assessments are based on student's needs. The student and parent interviews affirmed that regular achievement and assessment feedback were provided. The school staff provides timely, online, cumulative, quarter and semester grades. Older students help edit younger students' work, and this peer review is tracked and documented by teaching staff. As one student in the interview described it, this process "works your brain out." There are established practices that encourage students to ask questions of teachers during instructional time, seek help from classmates, or attend scheduled tutoring sessions. As seen in the overview presentation, eleots, and spreadsheet artifacts, there are cumulative formative and summative subject data assessments (e.g., individualized math and reading skills mastery tracking per student and leveled groups that are constantly monitored and adjusted). This evidence exhibited multiple opportunities for staff to analyze and utilize data and current practices have been sustained to the point of being embedded. The school exhibited a concentrated focus on integrating available technology whenever conducive and beneficial to the learning process. Technological learning and related organizational needs are assessed and adjusted as student learning objectives and school projects warrant. Some evidence was observed in a more non-traditional manner, i.e., robotics is a collective school focus, and this requires extensive and advanced technology. The school tour evidenced complex and specialized equipment utilized for robotics, stage and set building, drama and the arts, and school projects. Much of the resulting output requires digital technology at a very high level. Like many institutions, a portion of the included eleot scores might be attributed to observed class segment, age and grade level, and/or instruction that does not necessarily need to partner with a digital resource. Digital artifacts and leader and staff interviews provided evidence of a technology plan; professional learning and resource replenishment and allocation are assessed and adjusted on an as-needed basis. There is a primary focus on students' future planning that is goal-oriented for both personal and vocational success and planning for the future is viewed as an integral process of the learning journey. A number of students in both the focus group and impromptu discussions were able to discuss specific plans including college/university destination, projected plan of study, and career goals. Graduation and promotion rates are communicated and celebrated, although the school does not always get the full credit for student success as some move on to the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics (OSSM) or other specialized learning institutions. Older students meet yearly with one of the instructional leaders and discuss a Marketability Report Card which is designed to assess a student's strengths, constraints, resources, and goals. Adjustments are then made as need indicates by both the student and the school. It was evident that all observed programs, practices, and supports were assessed and adjusted as warranted to promote successful life leaders and organizational effectiveness. The ongoing, embedded collection, organization, and analysis of learning assessments and organizational adjustments will further promote knowledge that is actionable, and thus continue to produce impactful results that are measurable and sustainable.

Collaboration and collegiality are exhibited in abundance, expectations are observably high, and staff and leaders support one another; however, there are not necessarily explicit and formal evaluation

and professional learning processes. Collegial collaboration was observed in multiple artifacts, e.g., shared instructional rubrics, vertical alignment in writing, literature, and a science-by-month three-year cycle, aligned posted schedules, core subject units taught according to staff specialization, etc. The team's analysis of focus group interviews, documents, stakeholder surveys, and observations indicate that these processes and activities are currently primarily sustained through informal relational systems and embedded collective beliefs. The school employs a number of practices that seek to enhance staff professional learning and promote best instructional practices. While most certainly extensive and inclusive, there was not yet triangulated evidence of comprehensive analysis and application of current practices. The school has conducted two rounds of eleot observations in the last year; the continuation of this practice with structured mechanisms for leader and teacher evaluative feedback could serve to highlight excellent instructional practices. Staff supervision and evaluation processes appeared familiar and informal; according to the rubric this computed to a lower score. However, it is difficult to argue with the success of both school and students. This anomaly is compounded by evidence from the staff focus group, in which members expressed both satisfaction with and full belief in the current system. This was evidenced via comments such as "they [the leaders] trust us 100%, but that also means they trust we will jump through the hoops as needed." While educational best practices advocate for a more formal, structured, data-driven evaluative and supervisory system, the larger educational community may have to just accept that, thus far, this school is one of the few successful exceptions. For future planning purposes, a suggestion might be to simply formulate a documentation, analysis, and communication system to track the supervision and evaluation processes. While evaluation and professional learning processes may not be formally analyzed, they are definitely continually monitored and adjusted. This is another instance where there is so much that is intuitive and embedded that it might be difficult for those who follow to transfer or replicate. Evaluations, supervision, and structured professional learning are conducted on a more informal and qualitative, albeit consistent and continual, basis. This can make it difficult to aggregate and analyze data; a more formal process could only benefit the school in terms of documented successful practices and organizational effectiveness. In the staff focus group, a teacher commented that the supervision and evaluation processes "may be informal, but I feel very appreciated and supported." Much of the professional learning appeared to occur in-house and be dependent upon skills and knowledge already within the institution. Teachers are not necessarily evaluated and mentored through formal processes; however, it is difficult to argue with the embedded and sustained success of the school. Some of the professional learning and evaluative supervision appeared to occur on an almost telepathic level, with any resulting adjustments to improve student learning happening almost instantaneously. While a lack of formalization computed to a lower score on the respective eleot standards, the very fact that overall results exhibit positive trends suggests that formalization would merely be a matter of design and completion. There is documented action research in many of the organizational processes, e.g., standards-based instruction, learner assessments, continuous improvement, etc. Applying the same standard to professional learning and evaluative practices might facilitate the implementation of the long-range succession plan. The school does not always specifically plan and systematically deliver professional learning, but this does not appear to preclude environments from being effective or successful. This dichotomy resulted in a somewhat split rubric score. Leader and staff interviews suggested that a lot of the professional learning is driven by current needs (e.g., new students with limited English skills, the mobility of a medical and military community, and assessment analysis). Both leader and teacher focus groups mentioned that much of the professional collaboration and learning is conducted as time permits or when a need is identified; again, this is more informal but does promote self-development, research, and intentional collaboration. Staff focus interviews produced commentary such as "we are encouraged to come to discussions with solutions rather than problems" and the founding members

“appreciate when teachers take a leadership role.” A suggestion might be to simply document and track the discussions, quick collaborations, and grade, subject, and school level meetings, even if this is done after the fact. The school might consider digital professional learning modules, an online module system with individualized pods that could address specific professional learning needs. Since the professional learning demands often shift based on staff and community elements, this would allow for rotation and ease of access while promoting the digital integration of resources that meet explicit professional learning needs. The development of a formal system to monitor and provide structured feedback for professional learning and evaluative processes could be beneficial to improving current practices and efforts; this would also have the dual benefit of preserving the embedded knowledge and wisdom of the founding members.

The history and continued operation of Lawton Academy of Arts and Sciences is grounded in relational systems formulated from the learning beliefs and educational expertise of the founding family. These components have been integrated and embedded into the core essence of the school. There is a plethora of evidence that the school community has established supportive and nurturing environments which exhibit shared values and a commitment to student learning, growth, and partnerships. The school’s dedicated focus on continuous improvement will continue to sustain its effective practices and further embed a culture of excellence that fully supports the whole child. The assessment and adjustment practices are integrated in a holistic commitment to efforts which promote success in all realms of student learning and development. The team hopes that this report will affirm and support Lawton Academy of Arts and Sciences as it continues on the improvement journey.

## 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 Priorities 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 professional experiences. All Lead Evaluators and Engagement Review Team members complete Cognia training and elect certification to provide knowledge and understanding of the Cognia tools and processes. The following professionals served on the Engagement Review Team:

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
<p><b>Carolyn Erickson,</b> <b>Lead Evaluator</b></p>	<p>Carolyn E. Erickson is currently the senior school climate specialist with Oklahoma City Public Schools. Ms. Erickson is a former high school teacher, secondary principal, community college instructor, and adjunct university professor. She attained a Bachelor of Arts in Asian studies with minors in Mandarin, Chinese, and French from Oklahoma City University, a Master of Arts in intercultural studies from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Master of Arts in educational administration from Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Currently, she is completing her doctoral dissertation in school administration at Oklahoma State University. Ms. Erickson's research interests include systems thinking, holistic systems leadership, school climate, and school culture; she recently published an article in <i>Frontiers in Education</i>. She has been fortunate to partner with Cognia on multiple occasions, once as the leader of a reviewed institution, twice as a lead evaluator, and five times as a team member.</p>
<p><b>Gemma Booth</b></p>	<p>Gemma Booth has served as the assistant principal for academics at Cascia Hall Preparatory School since 2019. Ms. Booth graduated in 2001 with a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Queens University, Belfast. The following year she completed a post-graduate certificate in education specializing in politics and history. She taught history and politics to students from 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades for six years in Northern Ireland. While there, she also successfully completed a Master of Arts in British history from Queens University. In 2008, she moved to the United States and was certified to teach history in North Carolina. She was appointed faculty liaison for the school at the North Carolina Association for Independent Schools (NCAIS), was a speaker at the NCAIS 2012 technology conference held in Greensboro, NC, and was awarded teacher of the year. In 2012, she moved to Tulsa and accepted a position as history teacher at Cascia Hall teaching AP European history and other elective history classes. In 2013, she was appointed department chair of the social studies department. This is her first time working with Cognia; however, during her 17 years as a teacher, she has been involved in various school inspections and accreditations on both sides of the Atlantic.</p>

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
<p><b>Darla Lynn</b></p>	<p>Darla J. Lynn currently serves as the South Campus principal at The Academy of Classical Christian Studies in Oklahoma City. The South Campus of the Academy serves students in Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grades. She began her career in education as a home school parent in 2004. She homeschooled her four children until 2015, in partnership with The Academy, when she joined the staff at The Academy in a full-time capacity. She served in several administrative staff positions before being appointed principal, including bookkeeper, uniform coordinator, and human resources director. Ms. Lynn became acquainted with the accreditation process in 2015 when The Academy began the process, receiving accreditation from Cognia in January of 2017. She has served on three engagement review teams in the spring of 2016, 2018, and 2019. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in industrial engineering from the University of Oklahoma.</p>
<p><b>Jennifer Wilson</b></p>	<p>Mrs. Wilson is a graduate of Auburn University and has been in education since 1988. She has taught most grade levels in elementary, middle, and high school and has teaching experience in England, South Carolina, and Oklahoma in both public and private schools. She has served on several Cognia and International Christian Accrediting Association (ICAA) review teams and is a published author. Mrs. Wilson currently serves as director of curriculum and accreditation for Lincoln Christian School in Tulsa, Oklahoma.</p>

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