

Report of the External Review Team for Harris County Schools

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Introduction

The External Review is an integral component of AdvancED Performance Accreditation and provides the institution with a comprehensive evaluation guided by the results of diagnostic instruments, in-depth review of data and documentation, and the professional judgment of a team of qualified and highly trained evaluators. A series of diagnostic instruments examines the impact of teaching and learning on student performance, the capacity of leadership to effect continuous improvement, and the degree to which the institution optimizes its use of available resources to facilitate and support student success. The results of this evaluation are represented in the Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) and through critical observations, namely, Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

Accreditation is a voluntary method of quality assurance developed more than 100 years ago by American universities and secondary schools and designed primarily to distinguish schools adhering to a set of educational standards. Today the accreditation process is used at all levels of education and is recognized for its ability to effectively drive student performance and continuous improvement in education.

Institutions seeking to gain or retain accreditation must meet AdvancED Standards specific to their institution type, demonstrate acceptable levels of student performance and the continuous improvement of student performance, and provide evidence of stakeholder engagement and satisfaction. The power of AdvancED Performance Accreditation lies in the connections and linkages between and among the conditions, processes, and practices within a system that impact student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Standards help to delineate what matters. They provide a common language through which an education community can engage in conversations about educational improvement, system effectiveness, and achievement. They serve as a foundation for planning and implementing improvement strategies and activities and for measuring success. AdvancED Standards were developed by a committee comprised of talented educators and leaders from the fields of practice, research, and policy who applied professional wisdom, deep knowledge of effective practice, and the best available research to craft a set of robust standards that define institutional quality and guide continuous improvement. Prior to implementation, an internationally recognized panel of experts in testing and measurement, teacher quality, and education research reviewed the standards and provided feedback, guidance and endorsement.

The AdvancED External Review Team uses AdvancED Standards, associated indicators and criteria related to student performance and stakeholder engagement to guide its evaluation. The Team examines adherence to standards as well as how the institution functions as a whole and embodies the practices and characteristics expected of an accredited institution. The Standards, indicators and related criteria are evaluated using indicator-specific performance levels. The Team rates each indicator and criterion on a scale of 1 to 4. The final scores assigned to the indicators and criteria represent the average of the External Review Team members' individual ratings.

The External Review is the hallmark of AdvancED Performance Accreditation. It energizes and equips the institution's leadership and stakeholders to achieve higher levels of performance and address those areas that

may be hindering efforts to reach desired performance levels. External Review is a rigorous process that includes the in-depth examination of evidence and relevant data, interviews with all stakeholder groups, and extensive observations of learning, instruction, and operations.

Use of Diagnostic Tools

A key to examining the institution is the design and use of diagnostic tools that reveal the effectiveness with which an institution creates conditions and implements processes and practices that impact student performance and success. In preparation for the External Review the institution conducted a Self Assessment that applied the standards and criteria for accreditation. The institution provided evidence to support its conclusions vis a vis organizational effectiveness in ensuring acceptable and improving levels of student performance.

- an indicator-based tool that connects the specific elements of the criteria to evidence gathered by the team;
- a student performance analytic that examines the quality of assessment instruments used by the institution, the integrity of the administration of the assessment to students, the quality of the learning results including the impact of instruction on student learning at all levels of performance, and the equity of learning that examines the results of student learning across all demographics;
- a stakeholder engagement instrument that examines the fidelity of administration and results of perception surveys seeking the perspective of students, parents, and teachers;
- a state-of-the-art, learner-centric observation instrument, the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) that quantifies students' engagement, attitudes and dispositions organized in 7 environments: Equitable Learning, High Expectations, Supportive Learning, Active Learning, Progress Monitoring and Feedback, Well-Managed Learning, and Digital Learning. All evaluators must be trained, reach acceptable levels of inter-rater reliability, and certified to use this research-based and validated instrument.

The External Review Team's findings and critical observations are shared in this report through the IEQ™ results as well as through the identification of Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities.

Index of Education Quality

In the past, accreditation reviews resulted in an accreditation recommendation on status. Labels such as advised, warned, probation, or all clear were used to describe the status of a school relative to the AdvancED Standards and other evaluative criteria. Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, AdvancED introduced a new framework to describe the results of an accreditation review. Consistent with the modern focus of accreditation on continuous improvement with an emphasis on student success, AdvancED introduced an innovative and state-of-the-art framework for diagnosing and revealing institutional performance called the Index of Education Quality (IEQ™). The IEQ™ comprises three domains of performance: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the capacity of leadership to guide the institution toward the achievement of its

vision and strategic priorities; and 3) use of resources to support and optimize learning. Therefore, your institution will no longer receive an accreditation status. Instead, your institution will be accredited with an IEQ™ score. In the case where an institution is failing to meet established criteria, the accreditation will be under review thereby requiring frequent monitoring and demonstrated improvement.

The three domains of performance are derived from the AdvancED Standards and associated indicators, the analysis of student performance, and the engagement and feedback of stakeholders. Within each domain institutions can connect to the individual performance levels that are applied in support of the AdvancED Standards and evaluative criteria. Within the performance levels are detailed descriptors that serve as a valuable source of guidance for continuous improvement. Upon review of the findings in this report and building on their Powerful Practices, institutional leaders should work with their staff to review and understand the evidence and rationale for each Opportunity for Improvement and Improvement Priority as well as the corresponding pathway to improvement described in the performance levels of the selected indicator(s).

The IEQ™ provides a new framework that recognizes and supports the journey of continuous improvement. An institution's IEQ™ is the starting point for continuous improvement. Subsequent actions for improvement and evidence that these have had a positive impact will raise the institution's IEQ™ score.

Benchmark Data

Throughout this report, AdvancED provides benchmark data for each indicator and for each component of the evaluative criteria. These benchmark data represent the overall averages across the entire AdvancED Network for your institution type. Thus, the AdvancED Network average provides an extraordinary opportunity for institutions to understand their context on a global scale rather than simply compared to a state, region, or country.

It is important to understand that the AdvancED Network averages are provided primarily to serve as a tool for continuous improvement and not as a measure of quality in and of itself. Benchmark data, when wisely employed, have a unique capacity to help institutions identify and leverage their strengths and areas of improvement to significantly impact student learning.

Powerful Practices

A key to continuous improvement is the institution's ability to learn from and build upon its most effective and impactful practices. Such practices serve as critical leverage points necessary to guide, support and ensure continuous improvement. A hallmark of the accreditation process is its commitment to identifying with evidence, the conditions, processes and practices that are having the most significant impact on student performance and institutional effectiveness. Throughout this report, the External Review Team has captured and defined Powerful Practices. These noteworthy practices are essential to the institution's effort to continue its journey of improvement.

Opportunities for Improvement

Every institution can and must improve no matter what levels of performance it has achieved in its past. During the process of the review, the External Review Team identified areas of improvement where the institution is meeting the expectations for accreditation but in the professional judgment of the Team these are Opportunities for Improvement that should be considered by the institution. Using the criteria described in the corresponding rubric(s) to the Opportunity for Improvement, the institution can identify what elements of practice must be addressed to guide the improvement.

Improvement Priorities

The expectations for accreditation are clearly defined in a series of the rubric-based AdvancED Standards, indicators and evaluative criteria focused on the impact of teaching and learning on student performance, the capacity of the institution to be guided by effective leadership, and the allocation and use of resources to support student learning. As such, the External Review Team reviewed, analyzed and deliberated over significant bodies of evidence provided by the institution and gathered by the Team during the process. In the professional judgment of the Team as well as the results of the diagnostic process, the Team defined, with rationale, Improvement Priorities. The priorities must be addressed in a timely manner by the institution to retain and improve their accreditation performance as represented by the IEQ™. Improvement Priorities serve as the basis for the follow-up and monitoring process that will begin upon conclusion of the External Review. The institution must complete and submit an Accreditation Progress Report within two years of the External Review. The report must include actions taken by the institution to address the Improvement Priorities along with the corresponding evidence and results. The IEQ™ will be recalculated by AdvancED upon review of the evidence and results associated with the Improvement Priorities.

The Review

The on-site Harris County External Review began on the afternoon of Sunday October 25, 2015 and extended through Wednesday October 28, 2015. Prior to arriving for the on-site review, the Team began its work with a conference call to ensure that each member of the five-person team was aware of and in-sync with all of the requirements for participating in and conducting the External Review. The Lead Evaluator explained the composition of the Workspace with particular attention being given to the artifacts and other documents placed there to facilitate the review. The Team reviewed the schedule and Team member assignments to ensure that all were well-prepared for the specific work they were to perform. Team members were asked to study the system and school Accreditation Reports with specific attention being given to their Standard assignment.

During the on-site phase of the review, the Team met with central office personnel, school board members, school level administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents, and community members. There are eight schools in the system consisting of one high school, one middle school, one alternative school, and five elementary schools with varying grade level configurations. All schools received visits from a member of the Team where interviews were held with the leadership team of each school. Team members spoke informally with randomly selected students and staff and engaged in classroom observations.

The External Review Team extends its heartfelt thanks to the Harris County School System for being well-prepared for the review. The system administered all of the AdvancED surveys and completed reports as required during the self-assessment phase of the process. All required documentation/evidence of the internal review were available for review in hard-copy format or electronically via a portal specifically set up for the review. The Team is most appreciative for all aspects of the process including the schedule and related logistics being thoughtfully planned and well executed. Travel arrangements, housing, and hospitality were excellent which made the Team comfortable and able to work effectively.

Stakeholders were interviewed by members of the External Review Team to gain their perspectives on topics relevant to the institution's effectiveness and student performance. The feedback gained through the stakeholder interviews was considered with other evidences and data to support the findings of the External Review. The following chart depicts the numbers of persons interviewed representative of various stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Interviewed	Number
Superintendents	1
Board Members	5
Administrators	26
Instructional Staff	86
Support Staff	5
Students	59
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	24
Total	206

Results

Teaching and Learning Impact

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement is the primary expectation of every institution. The relationship between teacher and learner must be productive and effective for student success. The impact of teaching and learning includes an analysis of student performance results, instructional quality, learner and family engagement, support services for student learning, curriculum quality and efficacy, and college and career readiness data. These are all key indicators of an institution's impact on teaching and learning.

A high-quality and effective educational system has services, practices, and curriculum that ensure teacher effectiveness. Research has shown that an effective teacher is a key factor for learners to achieve their highest potential and be prepared for a successful future. The positive influence an effective educator has on learning is a combination of "student motivation, parental involvement" and the "quality of leadership" (Ding & Sherman, 2006). Research also suggests that quality educators must have a variety of quantifiable and intangible characteristics that include strong communication skills, knowledge of content, and knowledge of how to teach the content. The institution's curriculum and instructional program should develop learners' skills that lead them to think about the world in complex ways (Conley, 2007) and prepare them to have knowledge that extends beyond the academic areas. In order to achieve these goals, teachers must have pedagogical skills as well as content knowledge (Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voxx, T., Jordan, A., Klusmann, U., Krauss, S., Nuebrand, M., & Tsai, Y., 2010). The acquisition and refinement of teachers' pedagogical skills occur most effectively through collaboration and professional development. These are a "necessary approach to improving teacher quality" (Colbert, J., Brown, R., Choi, S., & Thomas, S., 2008). According to Marks, Louis, and Printy (2002), staff members who engage in "active organizational learning also have higher achieving students in contrast to those that do not." Likewise, a study conducted by Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010), concluded that leadership in effective institutions "supports teachers by creating collaborative work environments." Institutional leaders have a responsibility to provide experiences, resources, and time for educators to engage in meaningful professional learning that promotes student learning and educator quality.

AdvancED has found that a successful institution implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning. The curriculum provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

Institutions with strong improvement processes move beyond anxiety about the current reality and focus on priorities and initiatives for the future. Using results, i.e., data and other information, to guide continuous improvement is key to an institution's success. A study conducted by Datnow, Park, and Wohlstetter (2007) from the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California indicated that data can shed light on existing areas of strength and weakness and also guide improvement strategies in a systematic and strategic manner (Dembosky, J., Pane, J., Barney, H., & Christina, R., 2005). The study also identified six

key strategies that performance-driven systems use: (1) building a foundation for data-driven decision making, (2) establishing a culture of data use and continuous improvement, (3) investing in an information management system, (4) selecting the right data, (5) building institutional capacity for data-driven decision making, and (6) analyzing and acting on data to improve performance. Other research studies, though largely without comparison groups, suggested that data-driven decision-making has the potential to increase student performance (Alwin, 2002; Doyle, 2003; Lafee, 2002; McIntire, 2002).

Through ongoing evaluation of educational institutions, AdvancED has found that a successful institution uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine strategies to improve student performance. The institution implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained, and the institution demonstrates progress in improving student performance and institution effectiveness.

Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

The system's curriculum, instructional design, and assessment practices guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.1	The system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.	3.00	2.68
3.2	Curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the system are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice.	3.00	2.50
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	3.00	2.55
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	3.00	2.73
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	2.80	2.57
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	3.00	2.48
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	2.00	2.60

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
3.8	The system and all of its schools engage families in meaningful ways in their children's education and keep them informed of their children's learning progress.	3.00	2.92
3.9	The system designs and evaluates structures in all schools whereby each student is well known by at least one adult advocate in the student's school who supports that student's educational experience.	2.00	2.40
3.10	Grading and reporting are based on clearly defined criteria that represent the attainment of content knowledge and skills and are consistent across grade levels and courses.	3.00	2.53
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.80	2.64
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	3.00	2.66

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

The system implements a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and uses the results to guide continuous improvement.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
5.1	The system establishes and maintains a clearly defined and comprehensive student assessment system.	3.00	2.66
5.2	Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions that support learning.	2.80	2.41
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	2.60	2.15
5.4	The school system engages in a continuous process to determine verifiable improvement in student learning, including readiness for and success at the next level.	3.00	2.46
5.5	System and school leaders monitor and communicate comprehensive information about student learning, school performance, and the achievement of system and school improvement goals to stakeholders.	2.80	2.72

Student Performance Diagnostic

The quality of assessments used to measure student learning, assurance that assessments are administered with procedural fidelity and appropriate accommodations, assessment results that reflect the quality of

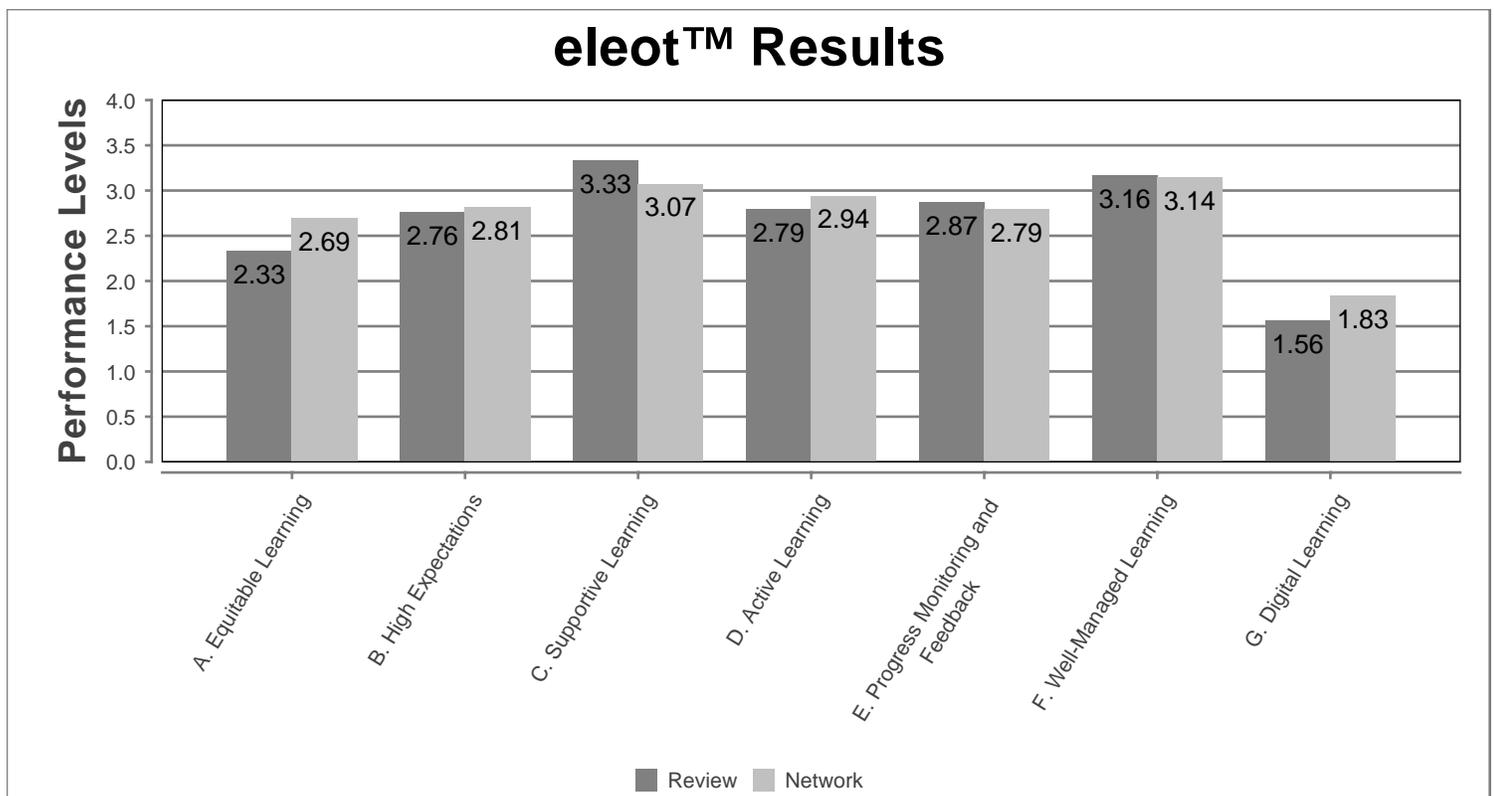
learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	3.00	3.28
Test Administration	3.40	3.50
Equity of Learning	2.20	2.44
Quality of Learning	3.20	2.97

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™)

Every learner should have access to an effective learning environment in which she/he has multiple opportunities to be successful. The Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot™) measures the extent to which learners are in an environment that is equitable, supportive, and well-managed. An environment where high expectations are the norm and active learning takes place. It measures whether learners' progress is monitored and feedback is provided and the extent to which technology is leveraged for learning.

Observations of classrooms or other learning venues are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes per observation. Every member of the External Review Team is required to be trained and pass a certification exam that establishes inter-rater reliability. Team members conduct multiple observations during the review process and provide ratings on 30 items based on a four-point scale (4=very evident; 3=evident; 2=somewhat evident; and 1=not observed). The following provides the aggregate average score across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments included in eleot™ as well as benchmark results across the AdvancED Network.



The Team conducted classroom observations in all schools of the Harris County School System. A total of 50 classroom observations were completed by the Team. The environments below are listed in rank order from the highest to the lowest. The first rating adjacent to the environment represents the Team rating and the rating in parenthesis is the AdvancED Network (AEN) rating.

1. Supportive Learning Environment--3.33 (3.07)
2. Well Managed Learning Environment--3.16 (3.14)
3. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment--2.87 (3.08)
4. Active Learning Environment--2.79 (2.94)
5. High Expectations Learning Environment--2.76 (2.81)
6. Equitable Learning Environment--2.33 (2.69)
7. Digital Learning Environment--1.56 (1.83)

The Supportive Learning Environment received the highest rating of all the environments assessed during the review. Students demonstrated or exhibited expressions illustrating that their learning experiences were positive. When teachers posed questions to ascertain students' understanding of concepts, students took risks in responding without fear of negative feedback.

The Well-Managed Learning Environment received the second highest rating. It was very apparent that students follow classroom rules and work well with their peers. When moving from one activity to another, their transitions were smooth and efficient and it appeared that students knew and understood classroom routines and behavioral expectations. However, the Team noted very few occasions where students had the opportunity to engage in student-led collaborative learning activities.

In the Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment, students were observed demonstrating and verbalizing their understanding of lesson content. They were quizzed on individual progress and responded to teacher feedback. Less evident was verification of student understanding of how his/her work was assessed.

In the Active Learning Environment, students were fully engaged in learning activities and had several opportunities to engage in discussions with their teachers. To a lesser degree were opportunities for students to make connections from content to real life experiences.

While examining the High Expectations Environment, the Team noted that students were tasked with challenging and attainable activities, knew, and strived to meet their teacher's expectations. Students were asked to respond to questions that required higher order thinking skills. The Team observed few instances where students received high quality exemplars.

In the Equitable Learning Environment, the Team observed only a few instances of students engaged in differentiated learning activities specifically designed to address their individual needs. Students had equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology and support, and were knowledgeable that rules and consequences were fair, clear, and consistently applied. Very few instances were noted where students had opportunities to learn about their own and other's background, cultures, and/or differences.

The environment receiving the lowest rating was Digital Learning. Even though the Team observed students using digital devices in some classrooms, pervasive system-wide evidence of student use was not found which resulted in the environment receiving the lowest rating.

The ratings of the seven learning environments show that students are exposed to high quality teaching and learning processes in classrooms throughout the system. However, the lower ratings on some of the descriptors suggest a need for a more focused approach to increasing opportunities for individualized learning through differentiated instruction, the use of high quality exemplars, expansion of opportunities for students to explore and learn about other diverse backgrounds, cultural differences and affording students more opportunities to utilize digital tools to conduct research, collaborate, and expand their creative and critical thinking skills.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.24	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	13.16%	31.58%	21.05%	34.21%
2.	3.32	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	34.21%	63.16%	2.63%	0.00%
3.	2.63	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	18.42%	42.11%	23.68%	15.79%
4.	1.13	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	0.00%	2.63%	7.89%	89.47%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.33						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.32	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	34.21%	63.16%	2.63%	0.00%
2.	3.00	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	23.68%	55.26%	18.42%	2.63%
3.	1.79	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	5.26%	18.42%	26.32%	50.00%
4.	3.13	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	26.32%	60.53%	13.16%	0.00%
5.	2.58	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	10.53%	50.00%	26.32%	13.16%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.76						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.45	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	50.00%	44.74%	5.26%	0.00%
2.	3.45	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	47.37%	50.00%	2.63%	0.00%
3.	3.21	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	31.58%	60.53%	5.26%	2.63%
4.	3.58	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	57.89%	42.11%	0.00%	0.00%
5.	2.95	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	15.79%	65.79%	15.79%	2.63%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.33						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.87	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	21.05%	47.37%	28.95%	2.63%
2.	1.95	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	2.63%	28.95%	28.95%	39.47%
3.	3.55	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	57.89%	39.47%	2.63%	0.00%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.79						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.76	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	7.89%	65.79%	21.05%	5.26%
2.	3.11	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	18.42%	76.32%	2.63%	2.63%
3.	3.05	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	13.16%	78.95%	7.89%	0.00%
4.	2.50	Understands how her/his work is assessed	5.26%	50.00%	34.21%	10.53%
5.	2.95	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	10.53%	78.95%	5.26%	5.26%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.87						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	3.66	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	71.05%	23.68%	5.26%	0.00%
2.	3.66	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	65.79%	34.21%	0.00%	0.00%
3.	3.13	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	44.74%	39.47%	0.00%	15.79%
4.	2.00	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	15.79%	7.89%	36.84%	39.47%
5.	3.34	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	42.11%	52.63%	2.63%	2.63%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.16						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	Average	Description	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Observed
1.	2.00	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	13.16%	26.32%	7.89%	52.63%
2.	1.55	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	13.16%	2.63%	10.53%	73.68%
3.	1.13	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	0.00%	2.63%	7.89%	89.47%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 1.56						

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop, implement, and evaluate formal structures in all schools that provide for long-term interaction with individual students that build strong relationships over time between students and school personnel. (Indicator 3.9)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.9

Evidence and Rationale

A review of artifacts and discussions with stakeholder groups revealed the lack of formal systemic structures whereby students are individually assigned to school personnel for advocacy and support. During various interviews, the Team was apprised of a number of organizations and activities in place that may engage in advocacy support for students. The External Review Team recognizes the importance of those structures and commends schools for their efforts. However, there was no evidence that ALL students were provided an opportunity to benefit from formal advocacy structures in ALL schools.

A student having the advocacy of school personnel benefits academically, socially, and emotionally. School personnel gain significant insight into a student’s needs regarding learning skills, thinking skills, and life skills.

Opportunity For Improvement

Develop consistent procedures and implement practices that ensure mentoring, coaching, and induction support is consistently provided throughout the district for all beginning and veteran teachers who need this support.

(Indicator 3.7)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.7

Evidence and Rationale

There was some evidence that mentoring, coaching, and induction activities are present to support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning. However, there was little to no evidence presented to demonstrate that a comprehensive teacher induction protocol with components for mentoring, coaching and induction support is in place and available for all teachers.

Critical to the success and acclimation of teachers is a well-designed protocol being implemented to ensure that teachers new to the system and veteran teachers have processes in place to assist them in their continued growth and development. Such programs generally work extremely well in conjunction with professional learning programs.

Opportunity For Improvement

Incorporate systemic and systematic professional development that is rigorous in the analysis and use of data to gain a deeper understanding of each student's academic strengths, needs and personal interests.

(Indicator 5.3, SP4. Equity of Learning)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 5.3

Evidence and Rationale

A review of artifacts and discussions with staff revealed limited evidence to show that professional learning for data analysis is designed to promote a deep analysis, interpretation, and understanding of student performance data.

Teachers with extensive and deep data analysis knowledge and skill are better equipped to plan and deliver differentiated instruction for each individual student.

Powerful Practice

Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations that are well-grounded in best practices.

(Indicator 3.3)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.3

Evidence and Rationale

Teachers consistently use instructional strategies that require students to apply knowledge and skills, self-reflect, and develop critical thinking skills. This was evidenced through discussions with instructional staff, parents and data collected during classroom visits that suggest:

- Students have equal access to classroom discussions and activities.
- Students know and strive to meet high expectations.
- Students are engaged in rigorous coursework and discussions.
- Students and parents demonstrate and/or express that learning experiences are positive.
- Students are actively engaged in learning activities.
- Students are visibly able to demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of lesson content.

The above are supported by observations of students (from special needs to Advanced Placement) receiving rigorous instruction on content specific Georgia Standards of Excellence. Lessons within instructional periods included both small and large group student discussions and activities such as journal writing based on a class novel and real-life experiences, combining like math terms, solving complex Chemistry equation, analyzing gene combinations and Socratic discussions on the history of political power, and Thoreau's beliefs about civil disobedience.

Teachers use an instructional process that informs students of learning expectations and standards of performance. Instructional processes include multiple measures for formative assessments that inform ongoing modification of instruction. The processes provide students with specific and immediate feedback about their learning. This was evidenced through discussions with instructional staff and data collected during classroom visits.

Instructional practices that are grounded in research-based best practices tend to produce desired student achievement outcomes that are critical to mastery of the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Powerful Practice

Teachers, staff and school leaders provide a variety of learning opportunities for students to grow and transition at all levels through a strategic focus on student needs as identified by student performance data. (Indicator 5.4, SP3. Quality of Learning)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 5.4

Evidence and Rationale

This was evident in staff interviews, observations, and student data reports. Team observations noted the application of professional learning initiatives which provided for consistent strategies to aid student learning.

Awareness of student needs and provisions for an array of learning opportunities promote and heighten student growth and success.

Leadership Capacity

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress towards its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its institutional 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 enact strategies to improve results of student learning.

Purpose and direction are critical to successful institutions. A study conducted in 2010 by the London-based Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) reported that "in addition to improving performance, the research indicates that having a sense of shared purpose also improves employee engagement" and that "lack of understanding around purpose can lead to demotivation and emotional detachment, which in turn lead to a disengaged and dissatisfied workforce."

AdvancED has found through its evaluation of best practices in more than 32,000 institutions around the world that a successful institution commits to a shared purpose and direction and establishes expectations for student learning that are aligned with the institutions' vision and supported by internal and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and overall institution effectiveness.

Governance and leadership are key factors in raising institutional quality. Leaders, both local administrators and governing boards/authorities, are responsible for ensuring all learners achieve while also managing many other facets of an institution. Institutions that function effectively do so without tension between the governing board/authority, administrators, and educators and have established relationships of mutual respect and a shared vision (Feuerstein & Opfer, 1998). In a meta-analysis of educational institution leadership research, Leithwood and Sun (2012) found that leaders (school and governing boards/authority) can significantly "influence school conditions through their achievement of a shared vision and agreed-on goals for the organization, their high expectations and support of organizational members, and their practices that strengthen school culture and foster collaboration within the organization." With the increasing demands of accountability placed on institutional leaders, leaders who empower others need considerable autonomy and involve their communities to attain continuous improvement goals. Leaders who engage in such practices experience a greater level of success (Fink & Brayman, 2006). Similarly, governing boards/authorities that focus on policy-making are more likely to allow institutional leaders the autonomy to make decisions that impact teachers and students and are less responsive to politicization than boards/authorities that respond to vocal citizens (Greene, 1992).

AdvancED's experience, gained through evaluation of best practices, has indicated that a successful institution has leaders who are advocates for the institution's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The institution's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction

The system maintains and communicates at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
1.1	The system engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a system-wide purpose for student success.	3.00	2.62
1.2	The system ensures that each school engages in a systematic, inclusive, and comprehensive process to review, revise, and communicate a school purpose for student success.	2.20	2.63
1.3	The school leadership and staff at all levels of the system commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.	3.00	2.89
1.4	Leadership at all levels of the system implement a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.	3.00	2.61

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

The system operates under governance and leadership that promote and support student performance and system effectiveness.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.1	The governing body establishes policies and supports practices that ensure effective administration of the system and its schools.	3.00	2.95
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	3.20	2.92
2.3	The governing body ensures that the leadership at all levels has the autonomy to meet goals for achievement and instruction and to manage day-to-day operations effectively.	3.00	3.12
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	3.00	2.97
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	3.00	2.67

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
2.6	Leadership and staff supervision and evaluation processes result in improved professional practice in all areas of the system and improved student success.	3.00	2.76

Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic

Stakeholder Feedback is the third of three primary areas of evaluation in AdvancED's Performance Accreditation model. The AdvancED surveys (student, parent, and teacher) are directly correlated to the AdvancED Standards and indicators. They provide not only direct information about stakeholder satisfaction but also become a source of data for triangulation by the External Review Team as it evaluates indicators.

Institutions are asked to collect and analyze stakeholder feedback data, then submit the data and the analyses to the External Review Team for review. The External Review Team evaluates the quality of the administration of the surveys by institution, survey results, and the degree to which the institution analyzed and acted on the results.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Questionnaire Administration	4.00	3.36
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	4.00	3.04

Findings

Improvement Priority

Revisit and revise the Strategic Plan to create reasonable goals and objectives upon which all schools can align and focus with relevant and attainable goals, objectives, strategies, and parameters within which they can successfully operate.

(Indicator 1.1)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 1.1

Evidence and Rationale

A review of the Strategic Plan revealed several elements that are not clear and which ultimately lead to a vague understanding of the goals, objectives, parameters, and strategies. The review also found many incomplete sections of the document that make it almost impossible to monitor from an accountability perspective. The Team was informed that an outside agency assisted in the development of the five-year plan in 2012, but there was no evidence showing that the plan is annually reviewed and updated by the agency or school system to ensure its completion, continued relevance and attainability of goals and objectives.

Revisiting and updating the Strategic Plan will provide a clearer overall focus for the system and its schools using reasonable but challenging and attainable goals, objectives, and strategies.

Resource Utilization

The use and distribution of resources must be aligned and supportive of the needs of an institution and the students served. Institutions must ensure that resources are aligned with the stated mission and are distributed equitably so that the needs of students are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes an examination of the allocation and use of resources, the equity of resource distribution to need, the ability of the institution to ensure appropriate levels of funding and sustainability of resources, as well as evidence of long-range capital and resource planning effectiveness.

Institutions, regardless of their size, need access to sufficient resources and systems of support to be able to engage in sustained and meaningful efforts that result in a continuous improvement cycle. Indeed, a study conducted by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Pan, D., Rudo, Z., Schneider, C., & Smith-Hansen, L., 2003) "demonstrated a strong relationship between resources and student success... both the level of resources and their explicit allocation seem to affect educational outcomes."

AdvancED has found through its own evaluation of best practices in the more than 32,000 institutions in the AdvancED Network that a successful institution has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, meets special needs, and complies with applicable regulations. The institution employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The institution provides a safe learning environment for students and staff. The institution provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff members to improve their effectiveness and ensures compliance with applicable governmental regulations.

Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

The system has resources and provides services in all schools that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students.

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.1	The system engages in a systematic process to recruit, employ, and retain a sufficient number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, and educational programs.	3.00	2.92
4.2	Instructional time, material resources, and fiscal resources are sufficient to support the purpose and direction of the system, individual schools, educational programs, and system operations.	2.80	2.93
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.00	3.05
4.4	The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning in support of the purpose and direction of the system.	3.00	2.63

Indicator	Description	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
4.5	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of information resources and related personnel to support educational programs throughout the system.	3.00	2.74
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	2.00	2.54
4.7	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of support systems to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of the student population being served.	3.00	2.66
4.8	The system provides, coordinates, and evaluates the effectiveness of services that support the counseling, assessment, referral, educational, and career planning needs of all students.	3.00	2.60

Findings

Improvement Priority

Equalize technology equipment and infrastructure among all schools and provide technology training and support for effective infusion of instructional technology.

(Indicator 4.6)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.6

Evidence and Rationale

The system provides technology infrastructure and equipment for all schools. However, a review of the Accreditation Report, interviews with the various stakeholder groups, and classroom observations indicate a need to strengthen the infrastructure and increase technology access to realize effective infusion of instructional technology practices into instruction.

Access to and pervasive and effective use of instructional technology will support and strengthen instruction for the 21st Century learner.

Opportunity For Improvement

Address the inadequate and sub-standard physical condition of the systems transportation compound.

(Indicator 4.3)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.3

Evidence and Rationale

A walkthrough of the transportation facility and discussions with the superintendent and board members

revealed a need for major enhancements to the compound. The systems operates more than 100 school buses and has only one service bay to maintain its fleet. Additionally, overnight and summer parking of the vehicles necessitate the use of off-site locations until such time that a modern and adequate facility can be realized.

Enhancing the facility will significantly improve and provide an adequate modern facility to house and maintain the transportation fleet and provide an ideal work environment that will lead to increased productivity and improved servicing of vehicles.

Powerful Practice

The Board, through its funding priorities, continues to manage austerity reductions in a manner that embraces programs of study that provide for a well-rounded curriculum and instructional support.

(Indicator 4.4)

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.4

Evidence and Rationale

A review of artifacts and conversations with Board members and other stakeholder groups consistently revealed that the Board places a high priority on maintaining fine arts programs and other elective programs in all schools and minimizing a reduction in its instructional staff.

Priorities such as this attest to the fact that the school systems truly embodies the system's purpose when it states in its Accreditation Report: "Despite budgetary restrictions, we have continued to offer Art, Music, and PE at the elementary levels. We believe that [these] programs contribute to academic achievement and produce well rounded students."

Conclusion

As the Team reviewed documents, conducted interviews, and made general observations during the visit several themes became apparent. Schools were admirably implementing the curriculum as evidenced by above-norm student performance on state and national assessments. Even though the school community was rather small with a limited number of businesses with which to partner, there was wide-spread support and pride for the system and its schools. Members of the school board and the superintendent collegially worked together to provide and maintain a solid organizational foundation upon which to continuously build and improve.

Even though some of the facilities were aged, they were well-maintained and provide physical environments conducive to teaching and learning. However, there was a dire need to address the inadequate and out dated transportation facility. Having more than 100 school buses, there was only one service bay with which to service and maintain all the buses. The system has implemented creative ways in the use of the facility but the physical conditions in which the mechanical staff has to work are less than desirable.

There were a few challenges facing the Harris County School System, as there was a need to secure funding to address the transportation facility. There was a need to establish structures whereby each student is assigned an advocate as required by AdvancED Standards. The system recognized its need to find additional creative ways to address and close the achievement gap between African American students and other sub-groups with specific emphasis on African American males. Finally, the system is further challenged to provide equity in providing digital technology resources at all schools.

The Improvement Priorities offered to the system are important; and when acted upon will demonstrate forward progress in its efforts to further realize continuous improvement. The External Review Team identified other Opportunities for Improvement that the system may choose to address. The Improvement Priorities, in conjunction with the Opportunities for Improvement, can be viewed as a guide to ensure continuous improvement of the Harris County School System and the realization of its Vision and Purpose.

Improvement Priorities

The institution should use the findings from this review to guide the continuous improvement process. The institution must address the Improvement Priorities listed below:

- Develop, implement, and evaluate formal structures in all schools that provide for long-term interaction with individual students that build strong relationships over time between students and school personnel.
- Equalize technology equipment and infrastructure among all schools and provide technology training and support for effective infusion of instructional technology.
- Revisit and revise the Strategic Plan to create reasonable goals and objectives upon which all schools can align and focus with relevant and attainable goals, objectives, strategies, and parameters within which they can successfully operate.

Accreditation Recommendation

Index of Education Quality

The Index of Education Quality (IEQ™) provides a holistic measure of overall performance based on a comprehensive set of indicators and evaluative criteria. A formative tool for improvement, it identifies areas of success as well as areas in need of focus.

The IEQ™ comprises three domains: 1) the impact of teaching and learning on student performance; 2) the leadership capacity to govern; and 3) the use of resources and data to support and optimize learning.

The overall and domain scores can range from 100-400. The domain scores are derived from: the AdvancED Standards and indicators ratings; results of the Analysis of Student Performance; and data from Stakeholder Feedback Surveys (students, parents, and staff).

	External Review IEQ Score	AdvancED Network Average
Overall Score	292.20	278.34
Teaching and Learning Impact	283.81	268.94
Leadership Capacity	311.67	292.64
Resource Utilization	285.00	283.23

The IEQ™ results include information about how the institution is performing compared to expected criteria as well as to other institutions in the AdvancED Network. The institution should use the information in this report, including the corresponding performance rubrics, to identify specific areas of improvement.

Consequently, the External Review Team recommends to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission that the institution earn the distinction of accreditation for a five-year term. AdvancED will review the results of the External Review to make a final determination including the appropriate next steps for the institution in response to these findings.

Addenda

Individual Institution Results (Self-reported)

Institution Name	Teaching and Learning Impact	Leadership Capacity	Resource Utilization	Overall IEQ Score
Creekside School	333.33	354.55	300.00	333.33
Harris County High School	309.52	309.09	271.43	302.56
Harris County-Carver Middle School	319.05	327.27	285.71	315.38
Mulberry Creek Elementary School	271.43	318.18	314.29	292.31
New Mountain Hill Elementary School	319.05	336.36	300.00	320.51
Park Elementary School	342.86	372.73	300.00	343.59
Pine Ridge Elementary School	314.29	354.55	314.29	325.64

Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
<p>Dr. James W Brown</p>	<p>Dr. James W. Brown is a graduate of Florida A and M University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education and a Master of Education in Guidance Services. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Florida State University in the area of Educational Management Systems. He has held employment as a music teacher/band director in Nassau and Gadsden counties in Florida. He also served as a visiting professor at the graduate level in the College of Education at Florida State University. Administrative positions held include curriculum coordinator, assessment coordinator, assistant principal, assistant superintendent for employee relations, assistant superintendent for academic services, and deputy superintendent of schools in the Gadsden School District. He began his association with SACS in the early 1970s serving on school visiting committees and later chairing school visits. He has continued that association to the present time where he is a member of the SACS CASI Florida Council. He is an AdvancED Lead Evaluator and Special Reviewer and has led numerous district and school external reviews. Even though retired, he continues his association with schools and school districts throughout the United States as a consultant for school improvement, organizational development, program evaluation, efficiency reviews, and other areas of educational leadership.</p>
<p>Mr. Tony Pickett</p>	<p>Tony Pickett is employed with Henry County Schools in McDonough, Georgia. His experience in public education includes service as a middle and high school teacher, Coordinator of Career, Technical and Agricultural Education, and Director of Administrative Services. Currently, he serves as Assistant to the Superintendent for Strategic Planning & Development.</p>
<p>Dr. Daniel Sybrant</p>	<p>Dr. Sybrant has served as an educator for 33 years. During this time, he served as a public school teacher, elementary principal, high school principal and 19 years as a public school superintendent. He currently holds the position of Director of Public School System Accreditation for AdvancED and also serves as the Montana Director for AdvancED/NWAC. He obtained a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Nebraska Omaha in 1980, a Masters of Education degree from Montana State University in 1986 and Doctorate of Education from Montana State University in 2012.</p>
<p>Dr. April Childers</p>	<p>Dr. April Childers is the Deputy Superintendent of Floyd County Schools. She began her career 22 years ago as a high school mathematics teacher. Other positions held in education include elementary gifted education teacher, instructional coach, data analyst and director of strategic planning and accountability. Dr. Childers' education includes a Masters of Arts and Educational Specialist in Math Education, Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction, and Leadership certification along with endorsements in gifted education, reading, and teacher support specialist. Dr. Childers has written several grants that were funded for Floyd County Schools including \$1.2 million for professional development for math and science teachers. Dr. Childers is the co-chair for Floyd County School's AdvancEd review scheduled for 2015-16 school year.</p>

Member	Brief Biography
<p>Mrs. Gina C Haynes</p>	<p>Gina C. Haynes holds a Specialist Degree in Curriculum from Lincoln Memorial University and a Masters and B.S. degree from University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Mrs. Haynes has taught for sixteen years at Boynton Elementary as a SIA, kindergarten, fourth grade, fifth grade teacher, and served as an Academic Standards Coach for two years before moving into administration. She was an Assistant Principal for two years and is in her fourth year as Principal of Boynton Elementary School in Catoosa County. During her first year as Principal, she guided her school in their Advanced Ed accreditation. She is looking forward to serving as one of the Advanced Ed team members because of her experience with guiding her own school through the process.</p> <p>Mrs. Haynes is a member of the National Education Association as well as the Georgia Association of Educators. During her time as Academic Standards Coach, she conducted workshops in Catoosa County for educators in the North West Georgia region called "Write Away Workshop" which focused on how to develop a daily writing program in the classroom. She was selected as the Boynton Teacher of the Year in 2005-06 as well as the Catoosa County Teacher of the Year in 2006. She was also selected to "Who's Who Among America's Teachers and Cambridge Who's Who Among Educators.</p>
<p>Dr. Sylvia R. Jackson</p>	<p>Dr. Jackson is currently employed as the Director of Gadsden's Technical Institute (GTI). During the course of her 30-year career as an Educator, she served as a middle and high school science teacher; high school lead guidance counselor; high school assistant principal for curriculum, assessment, and federal programs; high school principal; curriculum director for both small (Gadsden County Public Schools) and large school districts (Anaheim Union High School District; and a university summer adjunct instructor (California Lutheran University-Human Growth and Development). She has completed Action Research (CA – Integrated Science Curriculum) for and written and received several state (Orange County Middle School STEM Science Grant, FLDOE RTTT) grants both in the State of California and Florida. She has served as a committee member on numerous university (California Lutheran Educators Committee and FAMU-COE Redesign and Restructuring Committee), community college (Oxnard College Educators Committee and Tallahassee Community College Outreach Community Committee), and district education committees (Havana Middle School Restructuring Committee, Panhandle Area Education Consortium Advisory Board).</p> <p>She is a graduate of the Gadsden County Public School system. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology from Indiana University, a Psychiatric Nursing License from Camarillo State Hospital, and my teaching certification in Life Science from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She has a Master's of Science degree in Guidance and Counseling, Master's of Arts in School Administration, and a Doctorate of Education Leadership, all of which were earned at California Lutheran University. She has written high school curriculum for both English and English as a Second Language science instruction; and presented at the National Science Teachers' Association Conference and numerous local organizations within the learning communities she has served.</p> <p>During her tenure with the Gadsden County Public Schools System, she authored the Race to the Top Grant, the Gadsden Teacher Evaluation Model, and the School Leaders/Non Classroom Teachers Evaluation Models (http://www.gcps.k12.fl.us/). She served on the Panhandle Areas Education Consortium (PAEC) Advisory Board for four years and is currently serving on the Gadsden County Development Council. She is also a trained Clinical Educator certified by the State of Florida. Her current District responsibilities included supervision of the day to day operations of Gadsden Technical Institute and overseeing the Career and Technical programs at school sites.</p>

Next Steps

1. Review and discuss the findings from this report with stakeholders.
2. Ensure that plans are in place to embed and sustain the strengths noted in the Powerful Practices section to maximize their impact on the institution.
3. Consider the Opportunities for Improvement identified throughout the report that are provided by the team in the spirit of continuous improvement and the institution's commitment to improving its capacity to improve student learning.
4. Develop action plans to address the Improvement Priorities identified by the team. Include methods for monitoring progress toward addressing the Improvement Priorities.
5. Use the report to guide and strengthen the institution's efforts to improve student performance and system effectiveness.
6. Following the External Review, submit the Accreditation Progress Report detailing progress made toward addressing the Improvement Priorities. Institutions are required to respond to all Improvement Priorities. The report will be reviewed at the appropriate state, national, and/or international levels to monitor and ensure that the system has implemented the necessary actions to address the Improvement Priorities. The accreditation status will be reviewed and acted upon based on the responses to the Improvement Priorities and the resulting improvement.
7. Continue to meet the AdvancED Standards, submit required reports, engage in continuous improvement, and document results.

About AdvancED

AdvancED is the world leader in providing improvement and accreditation services to education providers of all types in their pursuit of excellence in serving students. AdvancED serves as a trusted partner to more than 32,000 public and private schools and school systems – enrolling more than 20 million students - across the United States and 70 countries.

In 2006, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), both founded in 1895, and the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) came together to form AdvancED: one strong, unified organization dedicated to education quality. In 2011, the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) that was founded in 1917 became part of AdvancED.

Today, NCA CASI, NWAC and SACS CASI serve as accreditation divisions of AdvancED. The Accreditation Divisions of AdvancED share research-based quality standards that cross school system, state, regional, national, and international boundaries. Accompanying these standards is a unified and consistent process designed to engage educational institutions in continuous improvement.

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