Report of the External Review Team for Cobb County School District

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Date: November 16, 2014 - November 19, 2014

AdvancED®

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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 External Review occurred November 16-19, 2014. Prior to the onsite review the External Review Team analyzed the district Accreditation Report, and began to identify potential themes from the Standards and Indicators. Significant challenges and areas for improvement identified by the district were reviewed. Team members conducted preliminary individual rating of all 41 Indicators, and the External Review Team identified potential themes related to the domains of Teaching and Learning Impact, Leadership Capacity, and Resource Utilization.

In lieu of an online team conference two separate process overview documents were electronically distributed to team members. The first highlighted group norms and expectations, conflict of interest and ethics policies and expectations, and logistical issues related to the External Review. The second document summarized highlighted strengths and needs of the district as identified in district self reports and documents.

The Lead Evaluator had frequent communication with the district accreditation coordinator prior to the External Review. This resulted in an effective review schedule, availability of evidence(s), and an overall efficient and smooth review process.

The 20 person External Review Team conducted an organizational meeting on November 16, 2014, and then met informally with members of the district leadership team that evening. During the organizational meeting the Associate Lead Evaluator presented an overview of Georgia specific educational issues, regulations and expectations. The district Accreditation Report was reviewed and the External Review Team developed potential themes under the three domains of:

1) Teaching and Learning Impact
2) Leadership Capacity
3) Resource Utilization

For each domain potential Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities were highlighted. Key interview questions were developed.

The External Review Team spent the next day (Day One; November 17, 2014) in the district central office receiving leadership team presentations and interviewing central office and building leadership personnel, parents, and board members. The Team also examined extensive evidence offered in support of the district's Self Assessment Report. The Team met for several hours in the evening to review the presentations, interviews and evidence. All of the indicators were reviewed and rated. Potential Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement, and Improvement Priorities were reviewed and revised. Questions and "look-fors" in the upcoming school reviews were identified.

On Day Two (November 18, 2014) the External Review Team conducted extensive classroom observations in 20 district schools and interviewed students and instructional staff. Two Team members were assigned to each school. The External Review Team spent the evening work session conducting evidence reviews and indicator ratings. Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement and Improvement Priorities were determined.

The final day (Day Three; November 19, 2014) consisted of reviewing eleot™ data, reviewing indicator average ratings and comparing them with AdvancED Network average ratings, and then finalizing Powerful Practices, Opportunities for Improvement and Improvement Priorities.

Five additional schools received observer reviews similar to the previous day's process. The External Review Team conducted a two-day total of 25 individual school reviews and 270 formal classroom observations using the eleot™ observation tool. The remainder of the day involved report writing and oral exit report preparation. The oral exit report was presented in the afternoon at a called school board meeting.

The External Review Team extends its gratitude to the Cobb County School District leadership team for their hospitality and receptivity to the review process. They graciously met and greeted the Review Team on the Sunday evening prior to the review and this helped to establish a professionally supportive and friendly environment for the entire review. The school instructional staffs and support staffs were all well prepared and knowledgeable regarding the review process. The External Review Team was well received in all classrooms and the related interviews were candid, transparent and informative.

The district was well prepared for the review. The Accreditation Report was submitted in a timely manner and served as the basis for the External Review. Leadership staff presentations were informative, and the evidences offered to support the district's self assessments were appropriate. Any and all information requested by the External Review Team was made available. In summary, the district clearly communicated its commitment to continuous improvement through its preparation and its planning for the review.

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	7
Administrators	172
Instructional Staff	346
Support Staff	26
Students	256
Parents/Community/Business Leaders	37
Total	**845**

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.	2.40	2.69
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.	2.10	2.55
3.3	Teachers throughout the district engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.	2.35	2.54
3.4	System and school leaders monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices of teachers to ensure student success.	2.20	2.70
3.5	The system operates as a collaborative learning organization through structures that support improved instruction and student learning at all levels.	2.25	2.57
3.6	Teachers implement the system's instructional process in support of student learning.	2.15	2.48
3.7	Mentoring, coaching, and induction programs support instructional improvement consistent with the system's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.	2.25	2.67

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.	2.95	2.97
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	2.46
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.	1.80	2.57
3.11	All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.	2.20	2.60
3.12	The system and its schools provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.	2.15	2.63

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.	2.05	2.67
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.	2.10	2.48
5.3	Throughout the system professional and support staff are trained in the interpretation and use of data.	2.05	2.14
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.	2.55	2.45
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.	3.60	2.85

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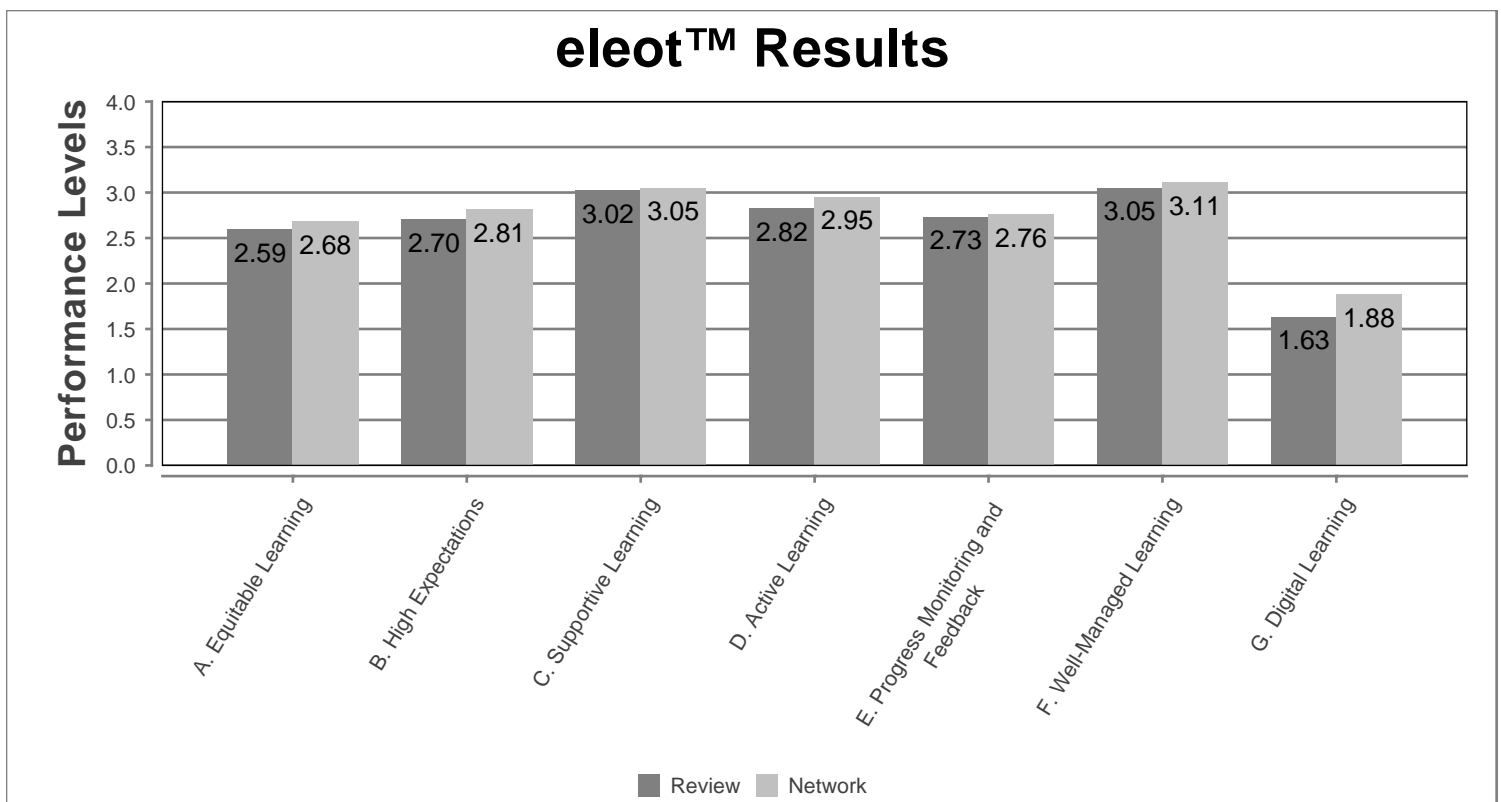
learning, and closing gaps in achievement among subpopulations of students are all important indicators for evaluating overall student performance.

Evaluative Criteria	Review Team Score	AdvancED Network Average
Assessment Quality	3.80	
Test Administration	3.80	3.62
Equity of Learning	2.95	2.52
Quality of Learning	3.35	3.06

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.

eleot™ Results

Performance Levels	A. Equitable Learning	B. High Expectations	C. Supportive Learning	D. Active Learning	E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback	F. Well-Managed Learning	G. Digital Learning
Review	2.59	2.70	3.02	2.82	2.73	3.05	1.63
Network	2.68	2.81	3.05	2.95	2.76	3.11	1.88

■ Review ■ Network

The External Review Team conducted 270 classroom observations using the eleot™. The classroom learning environments are ranked below from highest to lowest. Cobb County School District average scores are presented first and the AdvancED Network (AEN) average scores are in parentheses.

-Well Managed Learning Environment: 3.05 (3.11)

-Supportive Learning Environment: 3.02 (3.05)
-Active Learning Environment: 2.82 (2.95)
-Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment: 2.73 (2.76)
-High Expectations Environment: 2.70 (2.81)
-Equitable Learning Environment: 2.59 (2.68)
-Digital Learning Environment: 1.63 (1.88)

All of the learning environment ratings were slightly below the respective AdvancED Network (AEN) averages; however, it is likely that all are within one standard deviation of the respective AEN averages.

While eleot observation data reveals differences in the classroom learning environments across the district, the data also shows high degree of consistency with regard to some components. The eleot™ rating scale ranges from a low of "1" (Not Observed) to a high of "4" (Very Evident). The numerical values for the various learning environments provide a relative ranking of learning opportunities available for students; therefore, lower rating scores indicate this item was less observed than items with higher numerical ratings. The lower rated items are also those considered to be worthy of further examination by school and district officials in terms of enhancing classroom learning environments and instructional strategies.

Well-Managed Learning Environment
The Well-Managed Learning Environment area received the relatively highest rating and is a perceived strength of the district. Students were observed to "speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and peers (3.38),"to "follow classroom rules and work well with others (3.29)", and they demonstrated a clear understanding of "classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences (3.29)."

Supportive Learning Environment
The Supportive Learning Environment data suggests that many of the students are exposed to learning environments which are positive, permit risk-taking in learning (i.e., attempting to answer or ask questions without fear of negative feedback), and which provide support and assistance to understand content. However, opportunities for students to receive support in the form of being "provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback" were less evident. This observation was corroborated by the Student Survey (Middle and High) statement (item 17): "All of my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs" wherein only 38% responded "Strongly Agree/Agree." However, on the Elementary Student Survey 87% responded favorably to the statement "My teachers use different activities to help me learn." These statements suggest that there is a substantial difference between the elementary and secondary levels.
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On the higher end of the environment items students exhibited "positive attitudes about the classroom and learning" and are "provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks."

Active Learning Environment
The Active Learning Environment lowest sub item was "Makes connections from content to real-life experiences" suggesting the need to focus on connecting instruction to real world application. Relative strengths included that students are "actively engaged in the learning activities" and that they have "several

opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students."

Progress Monitoring Learning Environment
There was one relatively low rated item: "Understands how her/his work is assessed." The highest rated item was "Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content."

High Expectations Learning Environment
The overall rating for the High Expectations Learning Environment domain again was close to the AEN average suggesting the presence of high expectations in many classrooms as demonstrated through the complexity of questions, level of challenge, opportunities for students to use higher order thinking skills, etc. Instances in which observers detected that students knew and were striving "to meet the high expectations established by the teacher were evident/very evident in many classrooms. Similarly, instances in which observers detected that students were "tasked with activities and learning that is challenging but attainable," were evident/very evident in many classrooms.

Observers infrequently detected teacher use or references to proficient models or exemplars which is a powerful way to help students understand learning expectations. This component was rated at 2.01 on a 4 point scale. Instances in which students were "asked and responds to questions that required higher ordering thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)," was Evident/Very Evident less frequently as well.

Equitable Learning Environment
Classroom observations revealed that students were seldom provided, "differentiated opportunities and activities to address individual needs," rated at 2.26 on a 4 point scale. This item is relatively lower than many of the items in this grouping. The extent to which students have "equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources technology," (3.26 on a 4 point scale) suggests this component is evident to a large extent. All students had the opportunity to ask questions and participate in discussions that occurred during direct instruction. Observers noted, however, that questions and discussion were often times limited to four or five students in a class of 25-30 students. Teachers' questions typically were not directed to individuals; instead, directed to the whole class inviting volunteers to call out responses. Observers noted that teachers infrequently directed questions to specific students.

Observations revealed that students know that rules and consequences are fair, clear, etc., as this component was rated 3.12 on a 4 point scale. Observers noted that students not following procedures or complying with teacher instructions very seldom resulted in a loss of instructional time. Instances in which students were provided opportunities to learn about their own and others' backgrounds/culture differences were very seldom observed (rated 1.73 on a 4 point scale). Students were infrequently provided opportunities to discuss content with their peers, share perspectives, relate learning to real world experiences, etc.

Digital Learning Environment
This was the lowest rated (1.63) area. There was little observed use of "digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning." It is useful to keep in mind that this item measures student use of technology for learning. It does not assess the availability of technology in the classroom nor teacher use of

technology.

The classroom learning environment ratings were slightly below the AdvancED Network averages; however, all are most likely within one standard deviation of the respective AEN averages. The schools and classrooms were well managed. The students exhibited a clear awareness of rules and routines at all levels. The observation data suggests that many of the students are exposed to learning environments which are positive and support risk-taking in learning (i.e., attempting to answer or ask questions without fear of negative feedback). Observers noted the presence of high expectations in many classrooms as demonstrated through the complexity of questions, level of challenge, and opportunities for students to use critical thinking skills. Students were observed to be striving "to meet the high expectations established by the teacher."

Several of the relatively lower rated environment descriptor items suggest that the district should focus on increasing student-centered instruction and group learning activities. Other areas of continuous improvement that could benefit from a targeted focus involve the use of exemplars and helping students to better understand how their work assessed. Additionally, opportunities for students to receive support in the form of being "provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback" were less evident. Taken together the district is encouraged to examine the availability of differentiated instruction and individualization for many students.

eleot™ Data Summary

A. Equitable Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	2.26	Has differentiated learning opportunities and activities that meet her/his needs	19.26%	24.07%	19.63%	37.04%
2.	3.26	Has equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support	37.41%	53.70%	6.30%	2.59%
3.	3.12	Knows that rules and consequences are fair, clear, and consistently applied	33.70%	50.37%	10.00%	5.93%
4.	1.73	Has ongoing opportunities to learn about their own and other's backgrounds/cultures/differences	7.78%	15.19%	19.26%	57.78%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.59						

B. High Expectations			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.02	Knows and strives to meet the high expectations established by the teacher	28.89%	47.78%	20.00%	3.33%
2.	3.01	Is tasked with activities and learning that are challenging but attainable	28.52%	48.89%	18.15%	4.44%
3.	2.01	Is provided exemplars of high quality work	13.70%	18.89%	22.59%	44.81%
4.	2.86	Is engaged in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks	23.33%	45.93%	24.44%	6.30%
5.	2.61	Is asked and responds to questions that require higher order thinking (e.g., applying, evaluating, synthesizing)	20.00%	38.15%	24.44%	17.41%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.70						

C. Supportive Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.13	Demonstrates or expresses that learning experiences are positive	31.48%	52.22%	14.44%	1.85%
2.	3.24	Demonstrates positive attitude about the classroom and learning	37.04%	50.74%	11.48%	0.74%
3.	3.00	Takes risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback)	30.00%	47.04%	16.30%	6.67%
4.	3.21	Is provided support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks	35.93%	50.37%	12.22%	1.48%
5.	2.51	Is provided additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge for her/his needs	17.78%	38.89%	20.37%	22.96%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.02						

D. Active Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	2.95	Has several opportunities to engage in discussions with teacher and other students	31.48%	40.00%	20.37%	8.15%
2.	2.34	Makes connections from content to real-life experiences	18.89%	27.78%	21.48%	31.85%
3.	3.16	Is actively engaged in the learning activities	40.00%	39.63%	17.04%	3.33%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.82						

E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	2.71	Is asked and/or quizzed about individual progress/learning	17.78%	48.52%	21.11%	12.59%
2.	2.89	Responds to teacher feedback to improve understanding	21.85%	52.96%	17.78%	7.41%
3.	2.96	Demonstrates or verbalizes understanding of the lesson/content	24.44%	50.37%	21.48%	3.70%
4.	2.41	Understands how her/his work is assessed	13.33%	42.22%	16.30%	28.15%
5.	2.70	Has opportunities to revise/improve work based on feedback	22.22%	41.48%	20.00%	16.30%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 2.73						

F. Well-Managed Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	3.38	Speaks and interacts respectfully with teacher(s) and peers	48.89%	41.11%	8.89%	1.11%
2.	3.29	Follows classroom rules and works well with others	44.44%	41.48%	12.59%	1.48%
3.	2.77	Transitions smoothly and efficiently to activities	30.37%	36.67%	12.22%	20.74%
4.	2.51	Collaborates with other students during student-centered activities	27.78%	27.04%	13.70%	31.48%
5.	3.29	Knows classroom routines, behavioral expectations and consequences	42.59%	45.93%	9.26%	2.22%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 3.05						

G. Digital Learning			%			
Item	**Average**	**Description**	**Very Evident**	**Evident**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Not Observed**
1.	1.75	Uses digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning	8.52%	16.30%	16.67%	58.52%
2.	1.59	Uses digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning	7.78%	12.96%	9.26%	70.00%
3.	1.56	Uses digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning	6.67%	12.96%	9.63%	70.74%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale: 1.63						

Findings

Improvement Priority

Design, implement and evaluate a systematic and sustainable instructional process that clearly incorporates use of the frameworks for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
(Indicator 3.3, Indicator 3.6, Indicator 3.11)

Evidence and Rationale

Artifacts included in the district's compilation of evidence included the Frameworks for School Success, the Framework for Student Success and the 14 Strategies for Student Engagement. According to the Superintendent's Executive Summary, the Framework for School Success "establishes district expectations for teaching and learning relative to curriculum, instruction, and assessment." The Framework for Student Success "provides a protocol for teachers to follow during the instructional process." Included in the listing of 14 engagement strategies are a range of instructional practices such as pacing, monitoring student progress, connection to student aspirations, friendly controversy, problem-based learning, positive relationships, physical movement, and the use of humor.

Interviews indicated these curricular documents were developed by district level staff and shared with school principals. Even though these foundational documents were presented to support the district's expectations for planning, delivering, and assessing instruction, interviews at both the system and school level revealed inconsistencies in the levels of understanding and use of these documents. Very few opportunities were provided for internal stakeholders beyond the district level to offer input into the design, communication, and monitoring of these critical. Information in the district's Standards Overview and the Accreditation Report also indicated a need for school-level training on these curricular documents as well as a plan to "establish, model, and promote 14 research-based engagement strategies." Both of these district assessed foci for needed improvement indicate the necessity for additional attention to designing, implementing, and evaluating

stakeholder inclusive processes to monitor the system's work in support of student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Additionally, a wide variety of curricular resources are available from the Georgia State Department of Education to support the district's improvement initiatives. These include items such as the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) Frameworks in English/Language Arts and Mathematics, the Formative Instructional Practices (FIP) modules, and the Formative Item Bank (FIB). These documents specifically address the expectations for student mastery of knowledge and skills outlined in the mandated curriculum while also promoting both rigor and equity. However, interviews indicated very little knowledge and use of these documents to support the district's work in developing curricular processes and expectations.

Clearly defined processes help to ensure the effective implementation of initiatives once introduced. The inclusion of representatives from the various applicable stakeholder groups during the development of these processes supports both awareness and buy-in. Once decisions are made, to promote the idea of "inspecting what you expect", processes should also include plans for providing professional learning as well as mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating implementation. As the district continues to grow in both student and staff populations, and as accountability measures change, it is imperative to have clearly defined processes in place to ensure an effective degree of system-wide consistency in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Improvement Priority

Develop, implement and evaluate a comprehensive system-wide and sustainable assessment process that includes the collection and analysis of diagnostic, formative, and summative data to guide continuous improvement programs, practices, and initiatives.
(Indicator 5.1)

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews and leadership staff presentations revealed the district is changing software learning system platforms which contain assessment data used to drive instructional decisions. This was observed at school-based sites as well. This platform transition has resulted in a recognized gap of district approved systemic common benchmark assessment and data.

It was also observed at schools that a systemic culture of school specific common formative assessments is not consistent across all schools. At one school a principal stated "The staff has developed protocols to use when analyzing data, to use when they develop strategies and interventions and to use to reflect during data teams and grade level meetings." Another school principal noted that "Our data teaming infrastructure is teams of teachers in PLCs; but, the schedule varies from grade-to-grade, and honestly from school-to-school." The use of data teams and data walls were described in interviews as "commonplace"; however, they were not observed to be consistently used.

District-wide implementation of a systemic assessment process offering standardized assessments (a learning system with a balanced assessment framework) will provide diagnostic and formative metrics which may

effectively guide teacher differentiation and individualization practices.

Improvement Priority

Establish universal grading and reporting practices within the district to ensure consistency from school to school.
(Indicator 3.10)

Evidence and Rationale

Evidence from interviews with stakeholders, observations, and a review of handbooks, policies and practices indicated many inconsistencies in grading and reporting measures. The district's published grading policy identifies the numerical equivalents for letter grades in grades 4-12. However, beyond the policy, the External Review Team found that the implementation of grading and reporting practices appear to be based on individual school and individual teacher determination rather than on clearly defined criteria that are consistent throughout the system.

Evidence garnered through stakeholder interviews at the school level revealed inconsistency in the use of rubrics for the standards-based report card in K-3. These inconsistencies often resulted from various interpretations of the meaning of the descriptors on the rubric. One teacher commented "We switched to standards based grading; but, it was difficult for parents to comprehend. With dialogue and interaction, it is improving,"

Teachers at various schools, because of these inconsistencies, have created and are utilizing their own rubrics to identify student mastery levels. Such variations in documents may lead to unclear descriptions of actual student performance levels which may become a major factor in planning for individualized instruction as well as in communicating accurate information in the case of student transfers from one school to another in the district.

Common grading practices will ensure a system-wide approach to reporting and will also provide consistency in understanding and interpretation for parents and students who may transfer to other schools within the system.

Opportunity For Improvement

Develop, implement and evaluate a formal structure to ensure that each student in the district has an adult advocate in their school who supports their social, emotional, and academic learning experiences.
(Indicator 3.9, Indicator 3.12)

Evidence and Rationale

The district's Self Assessment rating in the area of having a formalized process for supporting student advocacy indicated a need for significant growth and improvement. Interviews with stakeholders also indicated a need for a formal structure to provide an adult advocate for all students in the building who supports the social, emotional, and academic learning experiences of the child. Observations in the schools revealed cultures that evidenced positive relationships between the students and the adults. School level staff described

programs where some students were involved in various club activities and/or athletic programs where the advisor or coach often served in the capacity of an advocate. During other school observations, team members learned about school level focus on student success where every student in the building was identified as a small stakeholder or scholar. Some schools are implementing "The Leader in Me" initiatives where programs support the emotional, social, academic development of the student while promoting leadership skills. In other instances, school staff indicated the Response to Intervention (RTI) process was the conduit to addressing the specific needs of identified students. However, each of these programs, while quite effective, do not address every student in the building and are not pervasive practices across the district.

Site-based activities such as advisor-advisee programs and club memberships where every student in the school is a member of an adult advised club have proven effective in terms of fostering long term positive relationships between students and adults. In schools where such a culture of adult advocacy for student is pervasive, students thrive and take pride in their effort, growth, and ability to productively struggling in rigorous learning environments. Establishing, implementing, and evaluating a formal student advocacy structure that addresses the academic, social, physical, and emotional needs of each individual student will increase the likelihood of success not only in school, but also in life beyond school.

Opportunity For Improvement
Develop, implement and evaluate a systemic and systematic process to use data from multiple sources to improve student learning outcomes.
(Indicator 5.2)

Evidence and Rationale
Reviews of district generated documents and multiple school reviews identified a gap between district-level perceptions of school data collection and analysis and actual local school implementation. In order for district administrators to continuously monitor academic improvement across all schools, the district needs to standardize the metric measured by grade level and subject. Individual schools have developed their own structures and procedures for data analysis that informs instruction and student learning. The inconsistent data collection methods in place have resulted in the inability of the district to adequately monitor and compare progress. Interviews with teachers and principals revealed that professional development involving data collection, monitoring, and analysis was inconsistent as well.

The implementation of a district-wide comprehensive evaluation plan will provide a structured framework to include all academic and operational initiatives. In turn, the district monitoring will result in measurable, comparable, and consistent student achievement across schools.

Opportunity For Improvement
Engage stakeholders representing the various grade level bands (elementary, middle, and high) in collaborative conversations about district-wide curricular, instructional, and assessment initiatives before implementation decisions are finalized.
(Indicator 3.1, Indicator 3.5)

Evidence and Rationale

A review of curricular, instructional, and assessment artifacts, as well as numerous interviews with stakeholders indicates inconsistent practices related to soliciting input prior to the implementation of new initiatives. For example, stakeholders were not aware of the expectation for the use of the Cobb Teaching and Learning System (CTLS), the Frameworks for Student Success and School Success, and 14 Strategies for Student Engagement. Additionally, there was little evidence of the CCGPS Frameworks being used instructionally although district leadership indicated they were pervasively used. An involvement of school-level administrators, teachers and teacher leaders can help bridge the gap between district expectations and school-level implementation of curricular, instructional, and assessment initiatives. Assisting teachers with the use of state and district-provided resources can ensure that the system's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences.

Structures should also be in place to facilitate vertical collaboration to align best practices used from elementary through high school to ensure student success at the next level. Frequent collaboration across grade levels, content areas and other system divisions can help facilitate a smooth transition to each grade level for students.

Powerful Practice

The district thoroughly and effectively communicates comprehensive information about student learning, school effectiveness, and the achievement of system goals.
(Indicator 5.5)

Evidence and Rationale

The district has developed and widely disseminated its Strategic Plan. The plan includes district learning target goals and historical achievement rates, district priorities for 2014-15, key strategies to be used for the next 3-5 years, as well as key actions to be taken in the next 1-3 years. Additionally, the district uses an aligned and standardized format to communicate all school strategic plans. These two page templates contain essential information from the system and school that are accessible to the public, teachers, and staff.

The district annually publishes a Parent Information Guide. This comprehensive guidebook includes instructional overviews and opportunities in the district as well as practical information related to discipline policies and calendars.

Interviews with multiple stakeholders confirmed that "the word gets out in a variety of ways," as stated by one respondent. Parents reported that "'If you want the information, you just have to pay attention. You have to try hard not to know what's going on."

Relevant information communication is important to developing ownership and trust among all stakeholders in the district and provides a foundation for continued external support of initiatives.

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.	1.95	2.67
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.	2.85	2.69
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.	2.55	2.87
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.	2.50	2.64

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.	2.90	2.96
2.2	The governing body operates responsibly and functions effectively.	1.90	2.99
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.	2.15	3.20
2.4	Leadership and staff at all levels of the system foster a culture consistent with the system's purpose and direction.	2.70	3.00
2.5	Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the system's purpose and direction.	2.65	2.69

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.	2.65	2.78

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	3.95	3.43
Stakeholder Feedback Results and Analysis	3.35	3.12

Findings

Improvement Priority

Develop and implement a comprehensive process to review board policies and procedures to ensure recognition and preservation of the appropriate roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent. (Indicator 2.2, Indicator 2.3)

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews with school board members indicated that board policies are reviewed as needed; however, a process to ensure the regular and systematic review of current policies to support the system's purpose and the effective operation of the system is not a regular practice. Interviews with district leadership revealed that training for board members regarding the purpose and expectations of adopted policies has not been developed. School board members stated that the school board attorney provides advice and direction regarding the review and revision of policies which require attention due to new statues and directives from the state. However, the revision or development of new policies is typically done as an immediate response to new laws established by the state legislature or Georgia State Board of Education and does not include an ongoing, systematic protocol to systematically review all policies. Designing and implementing administrative protocols and practices for reviewing all system policies would enable the board to have up-to-date policies in place that

would support student learning and organizational effectiveness.

Opportunity For Improvement

Engage representatives of all stakeholder groups to review and revise the district's purpose and direction to focus on student success.
(Indicator 1.1)

Evidence and Rationale

Based on observations and multiple interviews with administrators and teachers it appears that the district's theme of "One Team...One Goal...Student Success" is the mantra that is embodied at both the district and school levels. However, there was no clear evidence provided as to whether or not the theme or the mission, vision, and values statements served as the district-wide purpose and direction. Based on stakeholder interviews, the slogan appears to be embodied by all staff district-wide, despite their not being actively engaged in its development. This mantra (slogan) was developed at the administrative level; not with the involvement of multiple stakeholders. In interviews with principals, teachers, support staff, parents, and board members, many did not know how the theme has evolved into the current purpose and direction statement. Several interviewees responded that "it came down from the district." While it appears that this slogan has readily encouraged a stronger team atmosphere by staff across the district, if the district is able to utilize input from representatives by all stakeholder groups, the cohesion expressed by staff will also be embraced by students and parents.

Interview evidence suggests that stakeholders believe that the district's purpose and direction focuses on student success. While, 94% of Staff Survey respondents "agree/strongly agree" that their "school's purpose and direction is clearly focused on student success," only 73% of middle and high school students "agree/strongly agree" that their school explains their purpose and direction to them and their families. Based on multiple stakeholder interviews, many individuals indicated that they were not involved in developing the district wide slogan. However, it must be noted that several principals indicated that they did provide input into the development of the district's current mission, vision, and value three years ago. According to their Self Assessment Report "within the past three years, the Cobb County School District has revised its values and belief with input from all stakeholders….Schools in turn aligned their values and beliefs to this district via the same process." There are clear indications that the district has the capacity and willingness to engage all stakeholder groups in this process. This engagement will increase ownership of the district's purpose and will enhance efforts to make systemic changes in the years ahead.

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	2.98
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.	2.45	2.98
4.3	The system maintains facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment for all students and staff.	3.60	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.	2.20	2.67

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.	2.85	2.82
4.6	The system provides a technology infrastructure and equipment to support the system's teaching, learning, and operational needs.	2.25	2.64
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.	2.25	2.65
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.	2.35	2.64

Findings

Opportunity For Improvement

Develop, implement and evaluate a systemic and systematic plan to ensure district resources are used to support achievement for all students.

(Indicator 4.2)

Evidence and Rationale

School administrators indicated that the district uses a standardized allotment process to assign instructional staff to schools, with some administrative flexibility. The administration noted that this flexibility allows administrators to focus on school specific priorities. Schools also have external school specific levels of access to funding sources that provide additional materials, technology and even staff members. From multiple interviews there emerged a perception that this external funding resulted in an imbalance of resources among the schools. While interviews with staff and parents indicated that funding was adequate, they expressed a concern with large class sizes and inconsistent resources among schools throughout the district. When resources are targeted to address instructional priorities at all levels across the district, the system should experience more consistent gains in student achievement.

Powerful Practice

The district has implemented exemplary practices for maintaining safety, cleanliness and a healthy environment for all students and staff.

(Indicator 4.3)

Evidence and Rationale

Interviews with staff and parents supported External Review Team observations that the district ensures that its school environments are safe, clean and well maintained. The Transportation Department has approximately 1,200 buses with 1,000 in use and 80,000 students eligible to ride. The district utilizes a computer software program to minimize bus ride time. With the recent addition of stop arm cameras, there has

been a reduction in the number of individuals running stopped school buses. The number of bus discipline incidents have been reduced with the implementation of the Safe Rider Program. Bus drivers have a sense of ownership and pride and have developed better relationships with parents and students, which has resulted in improved student bus behaviors. The district has invested in field coordinators who work with building administrators to resolve incidents of student misbehavior.

Area Assistant Superintendents take time to meet with maintenance staff to discuss issues, compliance and safety measures. External Review Team school visits and observations revealed many dated buildings; however, they were extremely clean and well-maintained. The district and schools maintain a tracking system for work orders to ensure issues are immediately addressed. Maintenance and custodial staff often meet to discuss scheduling and priority issues as they relate to maintaining facilities and eliminating potential hazards.

Parents stated that the schools are safe and the district is mindful of potential safety concerns. Elementary principals indicated safety as a top priority. To provide a safe learning environment, the district has increased the presence of law enforcement by recently adding 11 officers with fully equipped cars. To enter the school buildings after the school day begins, visitors must press a button to gain access, and once entered school personnel continue to monitor campus visitors.

Students spend a great deal of time in a school building. While a safe, healthy and well-maintained building is an expectation, the district maintains a level of quality that enhances the learning environment for all students.

Conclusion

The prevalent organizational theme that emerged during the External Review may be summed up as: "Cobb County School District is a system of schools rather than a school system." The district has a new superintendent, leadership team and organizational structure in place. It has developed a common focus theme around its new slogan: "One Team. One Goal. Student Success." The district has a strong record of information communication and the current leadership team recognizes the need to involve all stakeholders in revisiting its primary purpose and mission. This involvement will increase ownership of the district goals and strategies as it moves forward.

In order to further strengthen district leadership the board needs to develop and implement a comprehensive process to review board policies and procedures to ensure recognition and preservation of the appropriate roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent. The board appears committed and dedicated to strengthening its continuous improvement efforts in a process of becoming one effective system rather than a large district with multiple subsystems.

Improvement Priorities also highlighted the need to develop a system wide instructional process (frameworks for curriculum, instruction, and assessment) incorporating systemic supervision and monitoring. Related to this theme is the need to develop systemic grading practices that reflect content and skill proficiency and that are consistent throughout the district. Finally, it is incumbent on the district to develop and implement a comprehensive, system wide, and sustainable assessment process that is used to guide continuous improvement programs, practices, and initiatives.

Observations and eleot™ ratings clearly support that the district's classrooms and schools are well managed and safe and effective learning environments for students. Fiscal resources are used to support and enhance instructional practices and programs. The buildings were all exceptionally clean, well maintained, and inviting learning environments.

The district's new leadership has expressed its commitment to strengthen its instructional process and to support teachers and principals. A prime example are the efforts underway to restore the 2% salary cuts that were imposed upon all staff during recent lean budget years. This action is being received favorably by building level staff and is impacting the self-described "low morale" of many employees. One of its major challenges is how to effectively reach out to and involve multiple stakeholders as it moves forward to develop and implement systemic changes in instructional practices. This involvement is needed in every area from periodically revisiting it mission and purpose to systemic changes in its district continuous improvement processes.

The identified Improvement Priorities are all related to developing systemic and systematic continuous improvement processes that will result in improved student achievement outcomes. The processes involve everything from developing district-wide ownership of its mission to implementing sustainable system-wide practices related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The development of these processes can be time consuming; however, the district appears poised to take on the challenges inherent in the years ahead.

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:

- Design, implement and evaluate a systematic and sustainable instructional process that clearly incorporates use of the frameworks for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive process to review board policies and procedures to ensure recognition and preservation of the appropriate roles and responsibilities of the board and superintendent.
- Develop, implement and evaluate a comprehensive system-wide and sustainable assessment process that includes the collection and analysis of diagnostic, formative, and summative data to guide continuous improvement programs, practices, and initiatives.
- Establish universal grading and reporting practices within the district to ensure consistency from school to school.

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	258.78	282.79
Teaching and Learning Impact	252.62	274.14
Leadership Capacity	267.50	296.08
Resource Utilization	261.88	286.32

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
Acworth Elementary School	319.05	327.27	371.43	330.77
Addison Elementary School	304.76	390.91	342.86	335.90
Allatoona High School	228.57	281.82	271.43	251.28
Argyle Elementary School	271.43	281.82	357.14	289.74
Austell Elementary School	338.10	345.45	300.00	333.33
Awtrey Middle School	314.29	281.82	357.14	312.82
Baker Elementary School	309.52	363.64	285.71	320.51
Barber Middle School	295.24	300.00	300.00	297.44
Bells Ferry Elementary School	304.76	363.64	328.57	325.64
Belmont Hills Elementary School	266.67	236.36	314.29	266.67
Big Shanty Elementary School	261.90	300.00	271.43	274.36
Birney Elementary School	295.24	300.00	300.00	297.44
Blackwell Elementary School	295.24	300.00	357.14	307.69
Brumby Elementary School	319.05	336.36	342.86	328.21
Bryant Elementary School	242.86	272.73	328.57	266.67
Bullard Elementary School	295.24	327.27	328.57	310.26
Campbell High School	252.38	336.36	300.00	284.62
Campbell Middle School	290.48	290.91	271.43	287.18
Chalker Elementary School	333.33	336.36	357.14	338.46
Cheatham Hill Elementary School	333.33	363.64	342.86	343.59
Clarkdale Elementary School	309.52	327.27	328.57	317.95
Clay Elementary School	266.67	345.45	300.00	294.87
Compton Elementary School	333.33	363.64	400.00	353.85
Cooper Middle School	323.81	318.18	300.00	317.95
Daniell Middle School	342.86	363.64	285.71	338.46

Institution Name	Teaching and Learning Impact	Leadership Capacity	Resource Utilization	Overall IEQ Score
Davis Elementary School	308.00	390.91	400.00	344.19
Dickerson Middle School	319.05	327.27	328.57	323.08
Dodgen Middle School	352.38	336.36	371.43	351.28
Dowell Elementary School	266.67	309.09	257.14	276.92
Due West Elementary School	319.05	354.55	328.57	330.77
Durham Middle School	380.95	390.91	385.71	384.62
East Cobb Middle School	276.19	263.64	300.00	276.92
East Side Elementary School	338.10	372.73	371.43	353.85
Eastvalley Elementary School	266.67	300.00	300.00	282.05
Fair Oaks Elementary School	295.24	336.36	300.00	307.69
Floyd Middle School	276.19	309.09	300.00	289.74
Ford Elementary School	380.95	381.82	342.86	374.36
Frey Elementary School	309.52	236.36	357.14	297.44
Garrett Middle School	185.71	181.82	185.71	184.62
Garrison Mill Elementary School	280.95	390.91	285.71	312.82
Green Acres Elementary School	219.05	190.91	214.29	210.26
Griffin Middle School	314.29	290.91	257.14	297.44
Harmony-Leland Elementary School	304.76	318.18	228.57	294.87
Harrison High School	295.24	281.82	342.86	300.00
Hayes Elementary School	295.24	300.00	285.71	294.87
Hendricks Elementary School	285.71	354.55	257.14	300.00
Hightower Trail Middle School	280.95	336.36	328.57	305.13
Hillgrove High School	285.71	290.91	328.57	294.87
Hollydale Elementary School	266.67	336.36	285.71	289.74
Keheley Elementary School	361.90	400.00	300.00	361.54
Kell High School	347.62	354.55	300.00	341.03
Kemp Elementary School	300.00	390.91	342.86	333.33
Kennesaw Elementary School	276.19	309.09	314.29	292.31
Kennesaw Mountain High School	319.05	354.55	371.43	338.46
Kincaid Elementary School	309.52	327.27	328.57	317.95

Institution Name	Teaching and Learning Impact	Leadership Capacity	Resource Utilization	Overall IEQ Score
King Springs Elementary School	328.57	363.64	328.57	338.46
LaBelle Elementary School	261.90	281.82	271.43	269.23
Lassiter High School	390.48	390.91	385.71	389.74
Lewis Elementary School	295.24	336.36	357.14	317.95
Lindley 6th Grade Academy	242.86	281.82	242.86	253.85
Lindley Middle School	314.29	290.91	357.14	315.38
Lost Mountain Middle School	295.24	309.09	328.57	305.13
Lovinggood Middle School	304.76	300.00	257.14	294.87
Mableton Elementary School	371.43	345.45	400.00	369.23
Mabry Middle School	304.76	327.27	314.29	312.82
McCall Primary School	271.43	281.82	300.00	279.49
McCleskey Middle School	304.76	327.27	357.14	320.51
McClure Middle School	290.48	254.55	314.29	284.62
McEachern High School	276.19	300.00	300.00	287.18
Milford Elementary School	257.14	327.27	242.86	274.36
Mount Bethel Elementary School	276.19	400.00	400.00	333.33
Mountain View Elementary School	347.62	363.64	300.00	343.59
Murdock Elementary School	257.14	300.00	242.86	266.67
Nicholson Elementary School	309.52	309.09	285.71	305.13
Nickajack Elementary School	304.76	300.00	271.43	297.44
North Cobb High School	300.00	318.18	385.71	320.51
Norton Park Elementary School	300.00	318.18	242.86	294.87
Osborne High School	300.00	336.36	371.43	323.08
Palmer Middle School	295.24	281.82	328.57	297.44
Pebblebrook High School	271.43	281.82	285.71	276.92
Pickett's Mill Elementary School	371.43	381.82	385.71	376.92
Pine Mountain Middle School	276.19	272.73	271.43	274.36
Pitner Elementary School	261.90	318.18	285.71	282.05
Pope High School	304.76	300.00	385.71	317.95
Powder Springs Elementary School	276.19	272.73	271.43	274.36

Institution Name	Teaching and Learning Impact	Leadership Capacity	Resource Utilization	Overall IEQ Score
Powers Ferry Elementary School	238.10	263.64	285.71	253.85
Riverside Intermediate School	319.05	309.09	300.00	312.82
Riverside Primary School	314.29	363.64	342.86	333.33
Rocky Mount Elementary School	295.24	327.27	342.86	312.82
Russell Elementary School	285.71	290.91	271.43	284.62
Sanders Elementary School	261.90	245.45	257.14	256.41
Sedalia Park Elementary School	285.71	318.18	300.00	297.44
Shallowford Falls Elementary School	342.86	381.82	400.00	364.10
Simpson Middle School	304.76	345.45	285.71	312.82
Smitha Middle School	271.43	363.64	257.14	294.87
Smyrna Elementary School	285.71	363.64	371.43	323.08
Sope Creek Elementary School	338.10	363.64	357.14	348.72
South Cobb High School	300.00	290.91	300.00	297.44
Sprayberry High School	242.86	272.73	300.00	261.54
Still Elementary School	347.62	400.00	328.57	358.97
Tapp Middle School	285.71	336.36	271.43	297.44
Teasley Elementary School	257.14	290.91	257.14	266.67
Timber Ridge Elementary School	347.62	363.64	357.14	353.85
Tritt Elementary School	323.81	372.73	342.86	341.03
Varner Elementary School	357.14	381.82	385.71	369.23
Vaughan Elementary School	366.67	363.64	385.71	369.23
Walton High School	380.95	363.64	300.00	361.54
Wheeler High School	319.05	272.73	314.29	305.13

Team Roster

Member	Brief Biography
Dr. George W Griffin	Dr. Griffin holds B.A. and M.Ed. degrees from Duke University. He received his Ph.D.in Special Education from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Primary areas of concentration included the education of students with learning disabilities and/or behavior problems, and educational administration. During his 40-year education career Griffin has been a special education teacher, high school principal, central office program director, state department program director, and university professor. He has extensive experience in alternative school programming; having served as a school director and statewide program director for services for violent and assaultive youth in North Carolina. Griffin has served as the Department Chair in the Department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Technology at North Carolina Central University. He has also served as a Special Education Due Process Hearing Officer in North Carolina. Griffin is the author of several entries in the Encyclopedia of Educational Leadership and Administration as well as a contributor to several special education textbooks and professional journals. Dr. Griffin is an independent educational consultant. He serves as a Lead Evaluator with AdvancED and has lead reviews in numerous schools and school districts throughout the United States and in the Middle East. He was the keynote speaker and a session presenter at the first AdvancED International Learning Disabilities Conference (May, 2013) in Beirut, Lebanon. He has also presented interactive training sessions at AdvancED Global Education Conferences in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt.
Mr. Anthony Duane Pack	Mr. Anthony Pack has been the Superintendent of Monroe County Schools since July 1, 2008. Since coming to MCS, Mr. Pack has continued the process of Building a Performance Culture through the use of Aligned Continuous Improvement Plans, Balanced Scorecards, Visual Reporting, and Annual Reports. Mr. Pack serves as the Middle Georgia Regional Educational Services Agency (RESA) Board of Controls Chairman. He is on the Board of Directors for the Georgia School Superintendents Association (GSSA). He is on the Monroe County Board of Health. He is a member of the Board of Directors for the Central Georgia American Red Cross. Mr. Pack also serves on the Mercer University Tift College of Education Board of Visitors, his alma mater.
Dr. Barbara J Remondini	Dr. Remondini is the Vice President of Operations, Mountain - USA. Prior to this assignment, Barbara served as the Vice President of Accreditation - Public School Systems for AdvancED. From 2010-2013, Dr. Remondini was the Assistant Superintendent in the J.O. Combs Unified School District, San Tan Valley, AZ, where she was responsible for the Human Resources, Curriculum and Instruction, and Professional Development Departments. From 2001 to 2010, Dr. Remondini was the Principal of Brimhall Jr. High in Mesa, AZ. From 1996 to 2001, Dr. Remondini served as the Assistant Principal of Lynn Middle School in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Barbara has taught grades 4-7, specializing in Math and Science. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction and Ph.D. in Educational Administration, all from New Mexico State University. She is currently an adjunct faculty member for Northern Arizona University in the Educational Leadership Department.

Member	Brief Biography
Dr. Cynthia A Anderson	As a public school educator, Dr. Anderson served as an elementary school teacher, Instructional Lead Teacher, elementary school principal, Director of Professional Learning, Director of Elementary Curriculum, and Director of Middle Grades Curriculum. She holds degrees from Auburn University, the State University at West Georgia, and the University of Georgia. Dr. Anderson recently retired after 36 years in a public school system. Currently, she serves as a Field Consultant for the Georgia Office of AdvancED and has served as the Lead Evaluator for numerous External Review Teams in districts throughout the South and Midwest as well as schools within the state of Georgia. In the past, Dr. Anderson has taught undergraduate and graduate classes for Clark-Atlanta University; Clayton State College and University, and the University of Georgia. Currently, she serves as an Assistant Professor for Mercer University where she teaches coursework specifically in the areas of curriculum and instruction, assessment and data analysis, and teacher leadership. Additionally she supervises pre-service teachers during field experiences such as practicum, student teaching, and internship.
Dr. Evie Barge	Dr. Barge has been in education for 25 years. She taught at the middle school level for nine years with five years as an assistant principal, two years as Director of Elementary Curriculum and nine years as an elementary principal. Currently, Dr. Barge is the proud principal at Cloverleaf Elementary School in Bartow County. Dr. Barge received her Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership from Liberty University in 2012.
Mrs. Cora Ives Brettel	Cora Brettel presently serves as Principal of Worth County Primary School in Sylvester, Georgia. Sylvester is a small farming community located in rural south west Georgia. Worth Primary houses PreK – 2nd grades and has an enrollment of 1032 students. Mrs. Brettel holds a Master in Early Childhood and a Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership. She taught Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th grades for 18 years. She has served as a PreK Director, middle school assistant principal and primary school assistant principal. Mrs. Brettel has held local and state positions with Georgia Association of Educators and currently serves on the Educational Advisory Committee for Darton College.
Mr. Randall Cook	Randall holds a Bachelor's Degree in History from Trevecca University, and a Master's in Middle Eastern Studies and Religions from Missouri. He has been an educator for 24 years; twelve years of those as the Social Studies Specialist for Lee County School District. He has also been an AP US and AP European Instructor. He served on the Florida Council of Social Studies Supervisors and the Florida Council for the Social Studies, and serves presently on the National Council for the Social Studies. Randall served as Chairman of the Florida AdvancED-SACS/CASI State Council for the last year, and served on the Florida AdvancED-SACS/CASI State Council for the last six years, and also served on the Review Committee for the Council. He has also taught Standards Training at Summer Institutes for SACS. He continues to lead in Pre-K reviews to meet Florida DOE Standards for the Council, to be a Lead Evaluator for school External Review Teams, and to conduct readiness visits for schools desiring to be accredited. He has served on District External Review Teams in Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky and South Carolina. Also, on every District External Review Team in Florida on which he has served, he has been the Associate Lead Evaluator for most of them.
Ms. Vinice Davis	Vinice is currently the Vice President of Improvement Services with AdvancED, where she is responsible for the implementation of the Diagnostic Review process and ensures these institutions have the support needed to ensure continuous improvement. Vinice has served in several operations roles in education over the past nine years and worked as a consultant before transitioning into the education sector. Vinice has a BBA from the Goizueta Business School at Emory University in Atlanta, GA and an MBA from the Yale School of Management in New Haven, CT.

Member	Brief Biography
Dr. Robert Dechman	Bob is a graduate of Florida State University, with a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Social Studies Education. There he also earned a Specialist's degree in Educational Leadership. He also holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Valdosta State University.

Bob has held employment as a social studies teacher in middle and high school in both Florida and Georgia, and as a general studies teacher in 2 juvenile justice schools in Florida. During this time, Bob wrote programming to establish a new juvenile justice facility for which he served as the Educational Services Director for three years. As an administrator, Bob served for 10 years as a middle school assistant principal at Thomas County Middle School in Georgia, and currently serves as the Director of Federal Programs, Assessment and Accountability with Thomas County Schools.

He has been involved with SACS-CASI since 2014, participated on 2 external review teams and has served as the chair for the Thomas County School District Accreditation process. |
| Dr. James L Driscoll | Dr. James Driscoll was born and raised near Detroit, Michigan. Dr.Driscoll earned his Bachelor's Degree from Arizona State University. Upon graduating, Dr. Driscoll started teaching in the Gilbert Unified School District at the elementary and junior high school levels. Dr. Driscoll earned his first Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Northern Arizona University. After years in the classroom, Dr. Driscoll received an administrative assignment as a Dean of Students at Augusta Ranch and Canyon Rim Elementary Schools, before accepting an assistant principalship at Mesquite High School in the Gilbert Unified School District. Dr. Driscoll left Gilbert Public Schools to accept his first directorship as Special Education Area Director for Mesa Public Schools. Dr. Driscoll earned his second Master's Degree, this time in Human Relations from Northern Arizona University. Dr. Driscoll earned his third Master's Degree in Special Education (Consultation and Collaboration) from Arizona State University.
Dr. Driscoll is happily married to his wife, Kristin, who is a fellow educator. Kristin recently concluded her pursuit of her first Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Northern Arizona University as well as her principal certification requirements. |
| Dr. Billy K Floyd | Billy K. Floyd, Ed.D. Southeast Regional Vice President, USA
Billy K. Floyd currently serves as the AdvancED Southeast Regional Vice President and is responsible for providing support and professional services to the schools and districts in the seven Southeast States as well as Puerto Rico. He presently serves on the AdvancED International Council as the Past President. He has worked with international schools for the past ten years serving as the Lead Evaluator for many schools in Latin America, the Mid-East, and Europe. His prior professional experiences includes serving as the AdvancED State Director of SC, Director of District Services for the SC School Boards Association, 23 years as a School Superintendent in SC, and School Administrator at the District/Secondary/Elementary levels. Dr. Floyd acquired his Doctorate in Educational Administration and Supervision from The University of South Carolina, Ed.S in Educational Administration from The University of South Carolina, M.Ed in Supervision from Georgia Southern University and his BA degree in Mathematics from Newberry College in Newberry, SC. |
| Mr. Clifford Jones | Mr. Jones has been involved in the administration of public schools creating an environment to allow educational professionals to work collaboratively in a framework of growth and support to increase student achievment. He strives to blend the fundamentals of educational best practices with proven business strategies. This blend is enhanced by his personal educational background having earned a M. Ed. and EMBA from Michael Coles Business School at Kennesaw State University. He has been a teacher, assistant principal, and principal. He currently works in the district office of Fulton County Schools in Georgia as the executive director of accountability. |

Member	Brief Biography
Mrs. Annette Nobles	Annette Nobles currently works as a guidance counselor at North Dodge Elementary School in Eastman, GA. Annette began her career as a Registered Nurse later choosing to pursue an education degree and has worked in the field of elementary education for 28 years. Annette has an AD in Nursing, a BS in Early Childhood Education, and an MEd. in Special Education and School Counseling. Annette worked in the K-5 classroom for three years as a special education teacher and later as a regular education teacher. She has worked the past 11 years as an elementary school counselor. She has served on multiple GAAPS Teams and assisted with the opening of a new school in Bartow County several years ago. Annette works closely with her school administration to implement many state and federal initiatives.
Mr. Bradford W Parker	Mr. Parker presently serves as the principal of Los Alamos High School in Los Alamos, New Mexico. During his 26 years, Mr. Parker has taught both at the middle and high school levels. He is in his twentieth year of school administration having been seven years at the elementary level, nine years at the middle school level and three years at the high school level serving as both the principal and athletic director. Three years were spent at the New Mexico Public Education Department serving both in the Continuous School Improvement Bureau and the Career and Technical Workforce Education Bureau as the NM State Apprenticeship Director and Carl Perkins Grant Monitor. Mr. Parker earned a bachelors degree in Biology from West Virginia University, a bachelors degree in Secondary Education and a masters degree in Education Administration from the University of New Mexico. For years, Mr. Parker served the Santa Fe Community College students as an adjunct faculty member. Mr. Parker led overseas AdvancED visits to Mizawa, Japan, Vicenza, Italy and Bahrain. Prior to his entry into education, Mr. Parker served in the US Navy as a Supply Officer onboard the USS Stein (FF-1065).Having commanded a US Navy Reserve unit attached to Defense Depot Tracy in California, he retired from the Navy Reserves as a full Commander.
Dr. Dana C Riley	Dr. Riley recently retired as the Director of Teaching and Learning for Carroll County Schools where she directed the elementary curriculum, state assessment, and Pre-K programs. In addition, she directed the SACS accreditation process for the system in 2014. She has experience in leadership at the building and central office levels and worked for a regional service agency (RESA) in the areas of professional learning and school improvement. At the RESA, she developed three endorsement programs; designed and taught numerous courses; and workshops; worked with schools and systems in their school improvement efforts, and directed a multi-system literacy and arts competition. She has also served as an adjunct professor at the University of West Georgia. Dr. Riley lives in Newnan, GA with her husband of 36 years and has 3 adult children.

Member	Brief Biography
Dr. Lya Snell	Dr. Snell is a District and School Effectiveness Administrator at the Georgia Department of Education. She has served a Coordinator of Learning and Leadership Services for the Henry County School District in Georgia, a Director of Curriculum in the Butts County School District in Georgia, and a Mathematics Educator in Alabama and Georgia. Dr. Snell has served on state and national committees aimed at improving instruction through innovative teaching and learning. She has served on numerous AdvancED visits across the nation to support continuous improvement efforts in schools and districts. She received a B.S. and M.Ed. from Alabama State University, both in Mathematics, an Ed.S. from Central Michigan University in General Administration , and a Ph.D. from Mercer University in Educational Leadership. She has participated in numerous outreach activities in a variety of counties in Georgia and serves on a number of boards which deal with K-12 Mathematics, as well as STEM education. Working in partnership with the Georgia Department of Education and Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics, and Computing (CEISMC), Dr. Snell led efforts to improve teacher effectiveness with implementing instructional strategies related to integrating mathematics, science, engineering and literacy with the Mathematics and Science Partnership Grant. Dr. Snell has led professional learning on differentiating instruction to help administrators and teachers meet the needs of all learners, innovating with technology to enhance student achievement, using a teacher evaluation system to drive best instructional practices, and analyzing district and school-level data to drive continuous school improvement efforts. As a mathematics educator, she has taught Calculus, Differential Equations, Linear Algebra, Integrated Mathematics, Trigonometry, and numerous courses developing teachers' Depth of Mathematical Knowledge in K-12. As an educational leader, she has taught courses on a variety of school reform, educational pedagogy, and innovative teaching and learning topics to superintendents, central office administrators, principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders, state legislatures, state department of education officials, local and state community leaders, teachers, parents, students, and a variety of community stakeholders. In all of the positions Dr. Snell has held, she has maintained a commitment to high expectations for student-centered, standards-based instruction. Her efforts have consistently contributed to increases in student achievement, as well as competitive programs of excellence that inspire student innovation and high levels of student learning.
Mrs. Terry Stanilonis	Terry's career in education began in 1980 teaching students in kindergarten and first grade. In 1999 Terry earned her first Master's Degree in School Guidance. Serving as a school counselor in both the elementary and secondary settings, prepared Terry for her current position in the Division of Human Resources for the School District of Clay County. In 2007, she earned her second Master's Degree in Educational Leadership and assumed the role of Instructional Personnel Specialist which involved the tracking of teacher certification and maintaining records for NCLB "highly qualified". In addition, Terry's duties involved clearing applications for new instructional hires and providing support for non-education majors hired as teachers under the temporary certificate status. In 2009 Terry transitioned to her current role as Supervisor of Instructional Personnel. Terry's primary role is implementing the Master Teacher Contract for over 2,800 teachers. This includes monitoring and maintaining salaries for both instructional and administrative personnel. In addition, Terry, through position control, coordinates the process for reappointing staff as well as managing the Instructional Job Board posting opened and available positions. After serving the school district for 35 years, Terry plans to retire June, 2015. "I leave the district with a sense of accomplishment and gratitude. Meeting my former students for new teacher pre-employment orientation(s) is the perfect ending to a wonderful career."

Member	Brief Biography
Ms. Do Not Use Steele	Ms. Steele has spent 35 years in education and has served as a teacher, principal and curriculum director. Throughout her career she has been involved in teacher educationand professional development. At this time she is a trainer in a secondary reading model (CRISS), Orton-Gillingham reading program, Facilitative Leadership and has worked with Dr. PhilScheltey as a facilittor in leadership training sessions. She is also a trainer in RTI, PBIS and Charater Counts. Ms. Steele has taught at Flagler College in St. Augustine, Florida and continues to be involved as an active student, teacher and school leader. In 1999 she was awarded a Distinguished Principal of the Year Award in Florida. She is proud to have been a principal in both Florida and Michigan. As a principal in East Lanisng Michigan she led a 65 million dollar high school building design and construction project. Working on external review teams is always rewarding.
Mr. David Wallace Thacker	David resides in Cleveland, Tennessee, a small town about 20 miles north of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and about 80 miles south of Knoxville, Tennessee. Although Cleveland is relatively small, the city is best known for being the home of Lee University, a private liberal arts university. David is pursuing an Ed.D. in curriculum and instruction from Liberty University, as he already holds a B.A. from Lee University, an M.A. from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC), and an Ed.S. from Tennessee Technological University. Currently, he is employed by Whitfield County Schools in Dalton, Georgia, as an Instructional Coach Coordinator for the district's five middle schools, and he serves on the district's Teaching and Learning Team. David previously taught middle school reading and language arts for six years, high school English for six years, and college English classes for UTC and for East Tennessee State University. His current position allows him to work directly with teachers in academic areas to enhance instructional strategies, direct professional learning experiences, and assist with the analysis and interpretation of student data for the purpose of increasing achievement.
Mrs. Holly Wingard	Holly Wingard has worked in both a large metropolitan school district and in a small rural district in South Carolina. After 34 years, she has retired from the school system. She has taught, served as a guidance counselor, senior counselor, testing coordinator, administrative team member, and Advanced Placement coordinator. She has served on SACS/AdvancED review teams for over 25 years, serving as a school Lead Evaluator in South Carolina and in other states. She serves as a consultant to districts preparing for AdvancED reviews. Mrs. Wingard has an undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia and an M.ED from the University of South Carolina.
Dr. Lisa S Younce	Dr. Younce has had a variety of experiences in the field of education. She is currently the Assistant Superintendent for the Public Schools of Robeson County. Prior to this, she was a District and School Transformation Coach for the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). She was the Director of Student Services for Jackson County Public Schools in western North Carolina where she was responsible for the Exceptional Children Department, English as a Second Language, School Counselors, Social Workers, Nurses, and Safe Schools. Prior to becoming a Director, she was a principal of a K-8 school and the School of Alternatives K-12, which housed multiple programs including a high school program, a program for students with autism, and day treatment programs. She has also been an Assistant Principal, School Counselor and a Spanish teacher. She has a BSed in Spanish K-12, MAed in School Counseling K-12, EdS in Administration and an EdD in Educational Leadership, all from Western Carolina University. She has experience leading AdvancED school visits and has participated in numerous district visits in several states.

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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